# Chapter 4: High Research Standards in Volunteer and Consultancy Work

In previous chapters, you learned about using high research standards in your personal family history work. These standards also apply to volunteer and consultancy work and professional research. In this chapter, you will learn about the following:

* Using the Genealogical Proof Standard to help others with their family history work
* Tools for family history consultants in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
* Available opportunities for volunteer and consultancy work
* Training options for volunteer and consultancy work

## Volunteer and Consultancy Options

### Study Questions

SQ: Think for yourself: How will volunteer work in your community or church help you meet your personal, professional, or educational goals?

SQ: What types of organizations (genealogical, historical, church, community) might need genealogical volunteers?

SQ: What FamilySearch opportunities are available to family history consultants and volunteers?

Many opportunities to act as a consultant or volunteer in family history work exist. Family history consultants are skilled teachers who assist patrons in doing their own research, teach them how to navigate online databases, help them locate research materials, and answer reference questions. Many libraries and archives also seek volunteers for help with digitizing, transcribing, proofreading, indexing, cataloging, and shelving materials.

## Volunteering in Your Community and Worldwide

You can serve your community by volunteering to help with genealogical projects or volunteering to teach family history research skills. The possibilities are endless. You may enjoy serving as a volunteer for a position that has been in place for a while or you might choose to volunteer by designing your own volunteer experience with a local information institution. As you read about the following volunteer opportunities, consider which opportunities would work best for you.

### Volunteer Opportunities

**NOTE**: As a family history student, you will often learn a little about a topic but will feel inspired to learn more. Spending a little exploration time now can help you become a better genealogist and consultant in the future. However, sometimes you will not have time to do any exploration in addition to your weekly studies. When this occurs, you are invited to make a note to further explore the topic at a later date. Visiting the websites below is **optional**.

More than 5,400 FamilySearch centers exist throughout the world, where patrons can receive personalized help, access technology, and access exclusive records. You might consider volunteering at a FamilySearch center. See if there is a [FamilySearch center near you.](https://www.familysearch.org/centers/locations/)

Anyone can volunteer online with FamilySearch. FamilySearch is in need of volunteers to improve records, improve place-names, test content, add names and sources to the Family Tree, translate pages, and act as a research volunteer. You can [read more about the options available at FamilySearch.](https://www.familysearch.org/en/info/volunteer)

If you have a cemetery nearby, you might consider photographing and transcribing tombstones and cemetery records and sharing them at [Find a Grave](https://www.findagrave.com/).

Consider uploading photos of your ancestors at [Dead Fred](https://deadfred.com/) to share with others.

[WorldGenWeb](https://www.worldgenweb.net/)provides free genealogical resources for many countries throughout the world. Opportunities for volunteers include contributing original content, answering research questions, providing assistance to find local resources, or maintaining a local website.

If your town or country has an archive, public library, historical or genealogical society, community college, or senior center, you might offer your services. Organizations need help with transcription, digitization, teaching patrons, helping patrons, cataloging, and much more. Watch for opportunities near you. You could inquire whether the organization has a project that needs volunteers.

[Conference Keeper](https://conferencekeeper.org/volunteer//) includes many online transcribing and indexing projects.

A great site to check for future volunteer opportunities is [Cyndi’s List](https://www.cyndislist.com/volunteer-projects/). This list is updated as new or ongoing volunteer opportunities become available.

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### Family History Consultancy for Members of The Church

One way to serve your community as a volunteer is to be called as a Temple and Family History Consultant or Temple and Family History Leader for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If you have not been formally called to serve as a ward or stake family history consultant, you could reach out to the leader assigned to your ward and/or stake to ask what you might do to help. Ponder what you learn as you read and/or browse the following items. Keep in mind that some of the consultant tools you may read about are only available for persons officially called as ward or stake consultants.

Serving as a family history consultant is an important calling because you are called to forward the work of salvation within your ward or stake.1 See The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [Handbook](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/general-handbook/25-temple-and-family-history-work?lang=eng) for information about the calling as a Temple and Family History Leader or Consultant **(optional)**.

The Church has created tools to help you in that calling. The main tool at your disposal is the Planner. It is available through FamilySearch and will help you magnify your calling. You cannot access the planner without being called as a family history consultant, but you can read about the planner in the article [How to Use the Planner](https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/how-to-use-familysearch-planner/)**(optional)**.

Family history consultants help members identify their ancestors and prepare information for temple ordinances.2 In this sacred responsibility, they often help members with their family trees. In this responsibility and with the permission of individual ward members, consultants are given access to a member’s family tree on FamilySearch as a ‘helper.’ This allows the consultant to better tailor their instruction and efforts for each individual patron. It also gives the consultant access to the patron’s family tree so that they can help patrons submit names for temple ordinances.

### The Family History Guide: A Tool for Training and Teaching

A valuable resource for family history consultants is called [The Family History Guide.](https://www.thefhguide.com/) This is a free website that offers a vast array of tools, resources, and educational materials to help people with their research. The website is offered in many languages, offers help for all ages, and has information for all stages of experience in family history work. This includes step-by-step guidance on everything from getting started with family history to advanced research techniques and research guidance for numerous countries.

The website also offers training for those who would like to help others with their family history. It includes a volunteer instructor program for consultants, activity suggestions for a variety of ages and situations, and consultant training tools. Consultant training tools on the website include the following: tips and worksheets for preparing your own class, training tips, videos and online classes on family history work, tips for working with different audiences, and flyers, brochures, and posters to use in your teaching, and much more.

Study and notice the tabs across the top of the website. You might also wish to watch this [short introductory video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTZo29nTumA) and explore the website when you are able.

## Using the Genealogical Proof Standard



You will be asked many questions as a family history consultant or volunteer. The Genealogical Proof Standard provides a map for teaching others about the GPS. As you teach others, consider how you can use the elements of the GPS to encourage them in their personal family history research.

GPS 1: How can a beginner implement GPS 1? Have more experienced people you are teaching taken the time to conduct reasonably exhaustive research? What tools and resources could you teach either person about to help them fulfill GPS 1?

GPS 2: Have those you are teaching taken the time to add citations to their work? Consider how you could teach them about the importance of citing their work and about how to write citations.

GPS 3: Teach about thorough analysis and correlation. What three things need to be analyzed and correlated? What tools could you teach that will help with correlation?

GPS 4: How can you teach the importance of resolving conflicts?

GPS 5: Have those you are teaching shared their family history work in writing? Teach about the importance of writing using strong conclusions and writing with “accuracy, clarity, and readability.”3

1. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,  Handbook 2: Administering the Churched, 2010 edition (Salt Lake City, UT: Intellectual Reserve Inc., 2010), 27.
2. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,  Handbook 2: Administering the Churched, 2010 edition (Salt Lake City, UT: Intellectual Reserve Inc., 2010), 28.
3. Elizabeth Shown Mills, CG, CGL, FASG, FNGS, FUGA, “Good Genealogical Writing,” OnBoard 4 (May 1998): 16 cited in “Skillbuilding: Good Genealogical Writing,” (bcgertification.org : accessed 16 March 2023).

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