



Increasing Capacity to Engage Youth & Family Volunteers

READY-SET-GO ▶ Resource Guide












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“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.” -Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Did you know the number of youth who want to volunteer is at an all time high? Today, there are significantly more people who want to volunteer than there are opportunities that exist. **While this is a good problem to have, it is up to us as community members to meet this challenge together.**

In 2012, generationOn, the youth activation enterprise of Points of Light, launched the Ready-Set-Go! initiative. The initiative seeks to provide organizations with the capacity, resources and tools to more effectively engage youth and family volunteers. Ready-Set-Go! will create much needed volunteer opportunities and supercharge your organization. The initiative was piloted through five HandsOn Network Action Centers and more than 115 community-based organizations.

The ideas, best practices and strategies contained in this resource are a result of the five-city Ready-Set-Go! pilot. This guide brings together the expertise of more than 20 volunteer managers, builds upon your existing skills in volunteer management, and provides you with concrete strategies to increase your impact through youth and family volunteers.

This program was piloted in partnership with and co-authored by:



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Spotlight On Research: How Young People Become Engaged Citizens -Marilyn Price-Mitchell, Ph.D.

Have you ever wondered how children and teens learn to become engaged citizens? Research demonstrates that citizenship doesn't happen by chance. We develop young citizens when we instill positive values, offer meaningful opportunities for service, and scaffold them with adult support.

3 Types of Citizens

	Responsible Citizen Contributes to food drive
	Leader Organizes food drive
	Innovator Explores why people are hungry and acts to solve root causes

We want all children to become responsible citizens—to care for neighbors, protect the environment, and vote in elections. We encourage these habits by instilling positive values during childhood, like empathy, compassion, and a commitment to democratic ideals. But character education is not enough in today's global society! When children grow to become leaders and innovators for social change! Through service, we can help young people engage in all three types of citizenship!

Teaching Responsibility, Leadership and Innovation Through Service

Our work to educate children who become 21st century citizens is more important than ever. Recent research shows that civically-engaged young people are the smallest group of today's purposeful youth, those who have found something meaningful in which to commit themselves. We also know that when adolescents dedicate themselves to social or political causes, the legacy of that engagement is sustained throughout a lifetime.

When children are young, they learn how to fit into society. Through simple service projects, they begin to identify with the needs of others. They learn empathy and compassion. They learn to be responsible members of society – to recycle, donate to food banks, and help people in need. Alongside them are adults who organize and manage service activities, teach them about giving, reinforce positive values, and model good citizenship. The more children participate in service, the more **responsible citizenship** is reinforced.

When children grow to middle and high school years, they merge what they have learned about social roles with who they want to become. Their two identities—social and psychological—join together during adolescence. They develop greater cognitive abilities, like planning, organizing, and strategizing. These abilities help adolescents engage with meaningful goals. To find meaning in service in adolescence, teens need to be engaged differently than younger children.

Research shows that adolescents thrive when they are at the center of civic action, learning how to be **leaders** and **innovators**, moving beyond the simple act of volunteering and becoming civically engaged. To become civically engaged, adolescents require a different kind of adult scaffolding than children do. Adults should share power and decision-making with young people, allow them to learn from mistakes, and reinforce their belief in themselves.

Children Develop Civic Identities by Overcoming Challenges

Studies show that as children mature, they acquire initiative through mastery of experiences outside of traditional classrooms. Adolescents learn best from real-world challenges experienced through volunteering and service-learning. A recent study shows that civically-engaged college students view their most transformative service experiences to be those that pushed them beyond their comfort-zones during their teen years. Young people described the emotional, social, and intellectual challenges of civic engagement, saying that the most life-changing ones brought them face-to-face with people different from themselves.



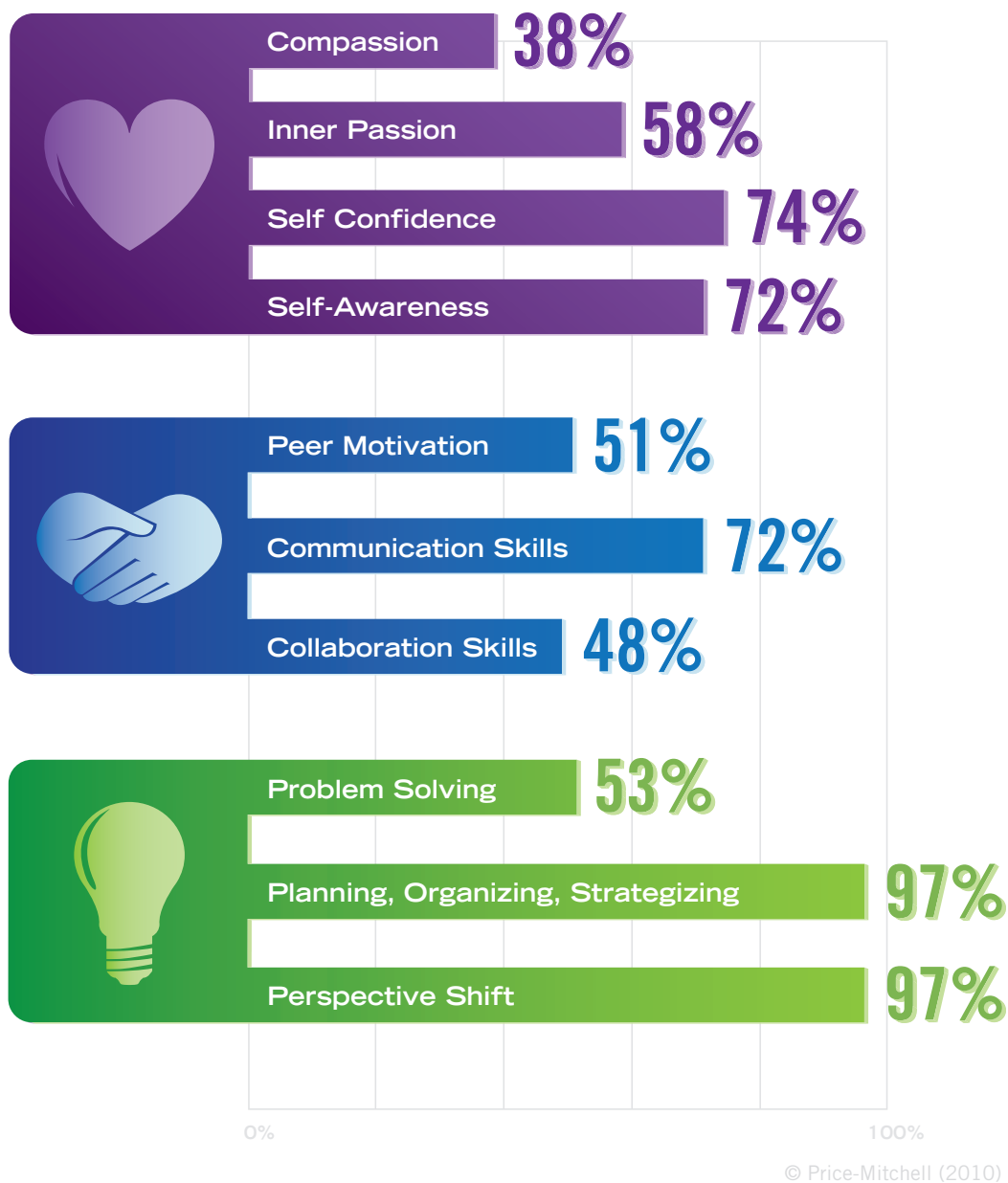
As adults, our tendency is to solve problems for children. But even young children gain from overcoming challenges during their service experiences. They learn to get along with peers or how to persevere to get a project finished. Adults help children progress toward an engaged civic identity by guiding and encouraging them. As children become teens, the role of adults must change from being **character educators** to **facilitators of learning**.

As one young teen described, **“I needed to learn how to think, not what to think.”** He valued adults who listened without judgment and who encouraged him to believe in his abilities.

As we engage children in service, each stage of development builds upon the next. We have learned a lot from young adults who are committed citizens. Most were instilled with positive values, especially compassion for others, at a young age. As they reflected on their teenage years, their compassion for others grew through meaningful service opportunities. But what is most remarkable is that through service, they had many other developmental gains. Not only did they develop the capacity to become engaged citizens, but they also developed the emotional, social, and intellectual skills that enabled them to be leaders and innovators in the 21st century careers of their choices.

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A sample of teens who were highly engaged in social causes were studied. This chart shows the percentage of them who experienced the following developmental gains.



Teens' perspectives about themselves and the world changed after engaging in meaningful, face-to-face interactions with diverse groups, witnessing human suffering first-hand, and connecting in new ways with the environment. With a belief they could make a difference, these teens turned their experiences into action on behalf of their chosen causes. ***All children have the capacity to change themselves and the world through service!***

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Marilyn Price-Mitchell, Ph.D., is a developmental psychologist who studies positive youth development and youth civic engagement.

Ask the Expert: Advice from Teens for Adults Who Work with Teens

GenerationOn's National Youth Advisory Council is composed of teens from across the United States. Each member acts as an ambassador and advisor to generationOn and serves as a role model for other youth in their community.

Here's some expert advice that will help you be more effective at elevating teen volunteers to become leaders in your community.

Malaika Worsham - Ann Arbor, Michigan



Malaika is a seasoned volunteer activist. She has given her time at many different organizations such as the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels and Washtenaw Teens for Tomorrow, a nonprofit focused on engaging youth in the community. Malaika is also a member of a national youth group, the Junior State of America and an active participant in her school's government.

If I'm doing my job wrong, how do you tell me?

"If you notice someone is doing their job wrong, the best way to handle it is to tell them what they are doing incorrectly in a friendly way. When you tell them this make sure you show them how to do it the correct way. You could also have another teenager help them out, so they will learn how to do it correctly from their peers. You don't want to yell, scream, or criticize their work. You just want to tell them how you expect them to do it."



Rachel is the founder of a service-learning project, Literacy for Little Ones, where she delivers book packages to newborns at two Central Wisconsin hospitals. She is an avid violin player, and through her work with Suzuki Violin, she has raised money so that children in Bolivia could purchase violins. Rachel also enjoys playing her violin for nursing home residents, local charities, and organizing teen volunteers to become leaders in their community.

How do you tell a teen when they're dressed inappropriately?

“Telling a teen they're dressed inappropriately can be awkward for both the adult and the teen, so by letting the teen know ahead of time how you expect them to be dressed will save both parties from an uncomfortable situation. If setting guidelines for how the teen should dress doesn't work, try to speak to the teen one-on-one, and not in front of their peers. Explain to the teen what clothing article they're wearing that is inappropriate for the situation, and then ask them if they have anything else they could change into that would be appropriate. It's important to emphasize why the clothing item isn't appropriate, and give them suggestions as to what they could wear that would be better. By giving the teen an example, the teen might be able to find an outfit that meets the clothing expectations. Try to end the conversation on a positive note, like saying that they're doing a great job working, so that they understand that what they're doing is important.”

What are the top five myths adults have about teenagers?

- Myth 1 - “Teens only care about themselves.** Many teens have a passion for a variety of things in the world, they just aren't sure how to express this feeling so it can come across differently.”
- Myth 2 - “Teens can't accomplish big things.** Teens today are one of the biggest driving forces in service. We may not have money or tons of extra time, but we have a fresh perspective and a true passion to make a change in our world.”
- Myth 3 - “Teens spend too much time on social media.** Social media is one of the major ways teens in our society interact. Although it's not always the best, many times it can be used to create positive outcomes.”
- Myth 4 - “Teens don't want to volunteer.** For most teens, they would love to volunteer, but they don't know how to get started. A lot of teens aren't sure what to expect and need to be guided in the right direction.”
- Myth 5 - “Teens can't be trusted.** Teens do make mistakes, but if teens are given large responsibilities in a volunteering situation, most will try their best and rise to the occasion.

Liu Zhen Huang - New York City, New York



Liu Zhen Huang first began her volunteer work with Asian American for Equality, a nonprofit that works to help new immigrants from China. Most recently, Liu worked independently with students in her community including Asian Americans from her own school to educate them about staying in school.

What are five elements of a volunteer experience that will bring teens back to volunteer again?

5 ELEMENTS

- 1) “Flexibility with times that correspond to the volunteer’s schedule”
- 2) “Working on a project that the volunteer is personally passionate about”
- 3) “Working in a supportive environment and staying socially connected to others”
- 4) “Learning new things, including new skills”
- 5) “Obtaining the positive feeling that makes the volunteer realize their impact on earth”

Clay Hurdle - Lake Park, Georgia



Combining his two passions for the Spanish language and reading, Clay created a bilingual reading program, BASE, for elementary school children at local libraries and schools in his community. Every week he dedicates some of his time to helping Hispanic students in his neighborhood learn English. He also volunteers at the local Second Harvest Food Bank and is an active member and leader at his local 4-H Club.

How can an adult empower youth volunteers to change the world?

“This answer is simple: adults can empower youth volunteers, as well as other volunteers, to change the world by leading by example. Although adults in every walk of life may not know it, youth are constantly watching them. Young people have been on this earth for a short time compared to the moms, dads, businesspeople, politicians, and teachers of the world. We as youth haven’t quite ‘learned the ropes’ yet. Therefore we look to those with more experience than us as examples of how we should live. If adults lead by example showing kids that it’s ok to stand up for what you believe in and to be passionate about something, then the world will be on a faster pace towards improvement as youth will be inspired to make their positive marks on the world for the next generation.”

What are the top five things adults should not do when managing teen volunteers?

“When adults manage youth volunteers, they should have one word in mind: equality. **First**, adults should never talk down to youth. Namely, adult project managers should never be condescending to a volunteer just because they are young. Adults should say “please” and “thank you” to youth volunteers just like they would to an adult volunteer. **Second**, project managers ought to give youth a bit of autonomy when it comes to their assignments. Adults should trust their youth volunteers to complete their jobs just as any other volunteer would. **Third**, youth volunteers should not receive certain jobs simply because of their age. Adult volunteers are just as capable of taking out the trash at an event as youth are. Simply, youth should not be discriminated against because of their age and in turn assigned the ‘less desirable’ jobs of an event. **Fourth**, youth volunteers should be privy to the same benefits as adult volunteers. Perhaps your event has a coffee rest area; youth should be allowed to take warm beverage breaks just like adults do. **Fifth**, youth volunteers should not be barred from interviewing with the media. Youth have just as powerful a voice as adults do. Young people can promote an event and express their belief in a project through their words just as well as older volunteers. Additionally, media will see the deep impact that a service project can have on all ages and types of people through a youth volunteer interview.”



Mohit Jain was inspired by his grandfather's battle with Alzheimer's and is now leading his community and state to a healthier tomorrow. He is also actively involved in facilitating volunteerism in his Omaha community, creating a website to encourage local youth to become more civically engaged.

How are social media and volunteerism related?

Social media plays three specific roles in volunteerism. This includes building the capacity of an organization, maintaining the capacity of an organization, and finally attracting volunteers that would not typically want to be involved with volunteering into the volunteering community. It can help build the capacity of an organization because each Twitter, Facebook, or Tumblr account becomes a network of students and adults whom nonprofits can advertise to with a simple share. One organization can build the capacity for the organization by showing these ideas. Secondly, as an organization builds its capacity, social media can help keep a daily link to the volunteers through group reminders. This helps keep a bond intact between the two different groups of people. Finally, social media can help include people that are not typically involved in a certain line of service. Social media can help incite the interest of certain people.



What are ways that teens like being recognized for their good work?

The best way to recognize good work is to show teens the measurable outcomes that the work has had, possibly directly from the recipient of the work. In a fast-paced world, teens like to see tangible results that they can touch and feel, so that it doesn't present the illusion that there time was wasted in the endeavor. Additionally, good work should often be awarded. Studies have shown that there is an increase in productivity and positive feedback from members when teens are regularly award. Whether this means taking all the volunteers to dinner once a month, or presenting the teen with an award, the actual medium has shown to be marginally different. It's the positive feedback that a teen's work is appreciated and has tangible results that makes it useful for teens. **This is the best way to recognize the good work of teens!**

Effective Community Partnerships: Working Effectively with Partners from Beginning to End

Whether you are a HandsOn Action Center, or an organization that relies heavily on the work of volunteers, creating effective partnerships is an essential step towards success in engaging youth and family volunteers. If you're just getting started, this section will help you find and establish relationships with the most beneficial partners. If you've already had some practice creating partnerships, this section will help you refine your process and provide you with strategies for sustaining and strengthening existing relationships.



Realize it or not, you probably have experience creating partnerships. Perhaps you have approached a service-learning coordinator at a school to get information. Maybe you have had a conversation with a youth pastor about how her students serve in the community. These are both great examples of how partnerships begin to form. Your role as a volunteer center, a volunteer coordinator, or a community organization is to establish and build upon these relationships to develop thriving networks of connected individuals that will ultimately have a huge impact within your organization. These networks, if well constructed and maintained, will become your best ally in forming productive volunteer programs and healthy communities.

In this section, you'll find:

- ➔ Research on how healthy partnerships build strong communities
- ➔ Examples of partnerships and the benefit and challenges of each type
- ➔ Strategies for launching and maintaining effective partnerships
- ➔ Best practices for working with educators and schools
- ➔ Tips on how to trouble shoot sticky situations

Why Partner?

Without a doubt, **creating meaningful partnerships takes extra time, effort, and communication.** Initially, it can be difficult to see the value in putting in this extra work, but the research shows that good community partnerships are the basis for strong communities. Partnerships increase awareness of important issues, promote nonprofit organizations, and build networks of committed volunteers. Community partnerships are especially important when working with youth.

POSITIVES

“Community organizations have resources and technical capacity that most schools lack. Also, local organizations provide expertise on local issues.” (Lyngstad, 2009)

“Partnerships can play a crucial role in presenting youth with adult role models or mentors.” (Lyngstad, 2009)

Partnerships create larger networks of volunteers and connect individuals, facilitating the process of recruitment, advertisement, and awareness.

Young people will be less likely to engage in risky behavior if:

- *They perceive that adults in the community value youth.*
- *They are given useful roles in the community.*
- *They serve in the community one hour or more per week.*

Partnership Types

There are many different types of partnerships. You may want to partner with schools or organizations. You may want to connect with a large group of volunteers or stay small. No matter what type of partnership you seek, you will need to think about the benefits and challenges of each. **As you read over the following charts, consider your organizational capacity and how you are equipped to manage each type of partnership.**

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The chart below shows some ways to partner directly with youth and families.

PARTNERSHIPS	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES	
	LONG-TERM	<p>More opportunity to create a larger impact over a longer period of time for both volunteer and organization.</p> <p><i>Volunteer: "The organization counts on me to be there each week, so I will honor that commitment."</i></p>	<p>Vital to develop new tasks that recognize growth of the volunteer and establish diverse roles to ensure volunteer remains energized and committed.</p> <p><i>Volunteer: "I've been volunteering here for six months and am excited for more responsibility. week, so I will honor that commitment."</i></p>
	SHORT-TERM	<p>More energized, motivated volunteers</p> <p><i>Volunteer: "I'm only here for a short term time, so I have to be effective and efficient to make each moment count."</i></p>	<p>Not as sustainable, recruitment process never ceases. More difficult to control quality.</p> <p><i>Volunteer: "I probably won't ever see these people again, so I'm concerned if my work isn't my best."</i></p>
	INDIVIDUAL	<p>Good way to connect personally with volunteers</p> <p><i>Volunteer: "The organization values me and is counting on me. I must do good work."</i></p>	<p>Recruitment and management can be more time consuming because of one-on-one approach.</p> <p><i>Volunteer: "It seems this volunteer manager is really stressed out, do they really have time for me?"</i></p>
	ESTABLISHED GROUP	<p>More efficient, better teamwork, bigger impact</p> <p><i>Volunteer: "I know and am comfortable with my fellow volunteers so we can have fun and do positive work."</i></p>	<p>Require stronger management and planning up front. Potential for miscommunication, dissatisfaction and unfinished product.</p> <p><i>Volunteer: "I got instructions for one project, but all of my friends are over there, so I'm going to join them. No one will notice."</i></p>

Continued ▼

The chart below shows some ways to partner directly with organizations.

Partnership Type	Benefits	Challenges
Schools	Direct connection to a broad, diverse group of youth. Schools, teachers, advisors, and administration are natural allies—often have service requirements and know how to match students/families with appropriate volunteer opportunities.	Operate on a different time frame, occupied with rigorous standards, may not have mutual goals.
Neighborhood Associations/ Community Groups	Localized group, already have strong connection to community—will be committed to improving neighborhood.	May be challenging to find projects/opportunities within their specific neighborhood or desired service area.
Faith-Based Organizations	Group dynamic, motivation, and availability are all pre-determined. Volunteers will likely be committed and willing to volunteer long-term. Natural link to more volunteers—facilitates future recruitment.	Some organizations have religious restrictions or limitations to work around.



Partnering with Schools: Advice from an Expert

Heather de Koning Foley



Heather de Koning Foley has been teaching Visual Art in the NYC public school system for nine years. She currently teaches at PS 132 The Coselyea School in Brooklyn, NY. She is also the Head Service Coach and coordinates all service-learning activities including mentoring her leadership groups, The PS 132 Community Kids and CAT (Community Art Team). The Community Kids write and maintain a blog “PS 132 Gives Back”. Visit www.ps132community.blogspot.com.

At PS 132 we’ve worked with volunteers from all paths. Everything from parents to high school students to Goldman Sachs employees. We’ve brought our students to food pantries, delivered meals to the elderly, visited senior citizen homes, helped clean up local parks and planted a garden at our local library. Partnering with nonprofits has been a wonderful and enriching experience. ***Here are a few tips that might help, especially if you’ve never partnered with a school or hosted student volunteers before.***

Bring your enthusiasm!

Students gain so much from seeing adults volunteer. It underlines that what the students are doing is important and meaningful.

Be flexible

Most schools are operating on a consistent schedule but we do have last minute changes, tests, field trips, vacations, etc. We also usually have to get approval from our principal so it might take us a little while to make a time commitment.

Come prepared

If you are coming to present a lesson or do an activity with students, you want to try the activity yourself first to see if it makes sense and can be finished in a set time period. Make sure you have all your supplies, or arrange with the teacher ahead of time to make sure things are available.

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Engage

Kids notice everything about you. This is an opportunity to become a role model for them. Partner with a student and work as a team. They take small talk to heart and the littlest things can make the biggest impressions. ***P.S. Remember you're in a school, keep language clean and age-appropriate.***

Put students to work

Students want to help and be involved. If we're coming to volunteer at your organization, make sure there's something for everyone to do.

We have time and talent, but limited funds

Most nonprofits tell us that a cash donation is the easiest and most efficient donation. However, to make things more tangible for our students, we like to participate in give backs that take little or no money. This inspires students to become activists on their own when they can see that it doesn't take much to help in their community.

A Leader Among Partners: How Municipalities Can Play a Key Role in Advancing Youth Volunteerism and Engagement

Laurie Shaw



Laurie Shaw, Youth Development and Prevention Coordinator, City of Salem, Oregon. Laurie develops and manages collaborative efforts focused on strengthening neighborhoods and building healthy, thriving adults.

I am a 'section of one' in our Neighborhood Enhancement Division. Internal and community budget cuts have limited our resources, personnel, and our overall capacity to implement quality, stand-alone youth programs. Despite reductions, our city government has continued its mission of building healthy, thriving adults by forging and joining successful collaborations.

Here are a few thoughts on how we've created and sustained our cross-sector partnerships.

Connect with like-minded people to advance your mission

By joining youth coalitions and networks, relationships are built. Having participated in a drug prevention network for some time, I was invited to partner with a county health department and local social services agency in providing a skill-building service-leadership summit for high school students. These two agencies were focused on capacity-building and program sustainability. Now co-leading, I've linked city supports, schools and other partners to this event as we watch student attendance exponentially grow each year.

Keep dreaming and sharing ideas despite the dismal budget environment

With possible division budget cuts looming, I still dreamed of creating a summer bridge program for incoming 9th graders to connect to their new schools while building life skills and gaining community role models. In less than three months a service-learning camp was formed thanks to a collaboration between the city, our local school district, an education foundation and a small youth organization. The key ideas and skills learned at camp directly link to the school district's AVID Program curriculum. In only its second year, nearby youth organizations and agencies are now replicating the camp model.

Leverage funds by empowering others to leverage for you

By creating a mini-grant program, the city is able to provide small funding awards, project endorsements, and support to teachers, after-school programs, and local nonprofits. Our grant awards provide awareness of service-learning best practices, enable service-project development and implementation, create new partnerships and increase the number of youth engaged and mobilized to make a difference in the community. Small amount of money, big impact!

Work closely with your local volunteer center

Our partner, Hands On Mid-Willamette Valley, is an invaluable resource. They are part of the HandsOn Network. Their expertise and resources further our impact and assist in creating streamlined, quality events and programs. Resources include materials and mini-grant opportunities, trainings and technical assistance, and brainstorming (dream) sessions.

Launching and Developing Partnerships

No matter which type of partnership you decide to pursue, there will be a number of important steps to take to ensure you and your potential partner are able to meet your goals and sustain a meaningful relationship.

1

Assess your needs:

- Be clear internally about your expectations.
- Define exactly what you want to accomplish.
- Develop a strategy for measuring your results.
- Think about what roles youth and family volunteers could play.
- Determine how many volunteers you need, and in what capacity.

2

Identify potential partners:

- Review the partnership charts to determine what will be most beneficial.
- Identify 2-3 partners.
- Research and become familiar with each prospective partner.
- Determine which is the best fit for your organization.

3

Approach your potential partners:

- Identify a key contact (volunteer coordinator, service-learning coordinator, etc.).
- Make an initial call—be friendly and direct.
- Write an introduction letter/make a follow up call.
- Be prepared to talk about how the partnership will benefit everyone.
- Attitude is everything: be open to suggestions and compromises.

4

Communicate:

- Good and frequent communication throughout the partnership is essential.
- Share results along the way.
- Allow time for reflection.

5

Sustain the relationship:

- Find ways that are meaningful to thank and recognize your partners.
- Share results.
- Identify strategies for improving the relationship. (Be proactive.)

6

End the relationship if it's not successful:

- There are ways to exit gracefully.
- Exercise care to avoid burning bridges.

Partnership Management Strategies

Even the best partnerships require careful management to ensure mutual success before, during, and after projects and events. ***In order to make sure your goals and your partner's goals are met, actively engage in the following steps:***



- Brief all youth and family volunteers on the mission and goals of your organization, of the partner organization, or both.
- Distribute literature or brochures about the issue area of the project or event. Well-informed volunteers are more passionate and effective, which will benefit all parties.
- You may ask a representative from the partner organization to speak directly to the volunteers before the project to create a connection and provide an opportunity for volunteers to ask questions.

- Actively work towards meeting your goals, the goals of your volunteers, and the goals of your partner organization. This requires extra effort, but it will allow all parties to get the most out of the project and the partnership.
- Initiate a strategy to manage behavior. Behavior management should fall on parents, teachers, or youth group facilitators, but this should be communicated and reiterated during the project. Set clear behavioral guidelines and expectations for youth and adults.
- Facilitate a reflection at the end of the project with your community partner and volunteers. This will help them to see the impact on the volunteers and the organization and will make the project more meaningful for everyone.
- Recognize and thank all parties. This should be done during the project and after as well.

- If there is not time for a reflection at the project site, encourage volunteers and partners to have a discussion or reflection after the project.
- Send handwritten thank-you letters to all involved.
- Ask your partner to fill out an evaluation form. This will allow you to build stronger connections in the future and help with any follow-up.
- Update your procedures and processes to reflect what you learned. Read through evaluations and make changes to allow for better projects and better partnerships in the future.

Working with Schools: Best Practices

Schools have their own challenges and need special considerations. ***Why partner with schools?***

- 1) Effective partnerships enhance service-learning projects by capitalizing on the resources and expertise of community organizations (Kielsmeier, 2009).
- 2) Student achievement and graduation rates increase when parents, neighbors, and community organizations are actively involved in the lives of students (Boethel, 2003).
- 3) Parent and community engagement in schools can lead to more welcoming, better resourced, and higher-functioning schools (The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2006).
- 4) Students are more likely to stay in school when they have the opportunity to practice leadership skills and engage in meaningful service (Bridgeland, 2008).

If you decide to make the leap into partnering with schools, the following will assist you in understanding your role and help you create partnerships that will help students and teachers meet their goals while addressing your needs as well.

GENERAL TIPS

- Allow sufficient time for planning, implementing and evaluating the partnership. Remember that schools typically function only during the August–May time frame. Expect communication and planning to drop off during the summer months.
- Communicate with your partner school at least twice annually even when you are not planning specific projects or events to encourage continuity.
- Be flexible! The best partnerships meet the goals of all parties involved.
- Encourage teachers and service-learning coordinators to involve youth in as many steps as possible so they feel personally connected to the organization, the issue, and the project.
- If a partnership doesn't work, keep trying. Each school is different, and even within schools there are many different communication styles, interests, and goals represented. Don't give up if one school or one contact doesn't work out.

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DEFINE SCOPE

Before contacting the school, gather all of the information to answer the following questions:

- What are the goals of all involved parties? Having students participate in one project? Having groups of students come each month? Engaging individual students? Providing issue education?
- What do you want students to take away from the partnership?
- What dates and times work for you to have students come?
- Do you have age limitations or chaperone ratio requirements for young volunteers?
- How flexible are you willing to be to accommodate the needs?
- Who will be the main contact for your organization?

CONTACT SCHOOL

- Familiarize yourself with the school before calling. This will help you understand the climate of the school, their commitment to service and volunteerism, and who would be best to communicate with.
- When calling, ask for the service-learning coordinator. If such a position does not exist, the secretary will be able to direct you to the correct person. They likely have many responsibilities, so be patient and persistent with your calls.
- If possible, meet face to face. If not, a conversation via telephone is often a great way to talk through your ideas and details.
- Always send a follow-up email. Include your contact information, activity goals, and logistical details.
- Call at least a month before the project or event, allow more time around holidays.
- Ask about service requirements for students and be prepared to provide written information about opportunities you offer for students to meet those requirements.
- Be sensitive—teachers and school administrators are some of the busiest people around.

Understanding Your Role

One challenging aspect of working with schools is understanding roles and responsibilities. Though you are an adult working with students, the teacher or group facilitator is ultimately responsible for the behavior, management, and actions of the students. Your job is to provide as much information to the teacher to facilitate that management. ***The following chart defines these distinct roles.***

Community Organization Roles

- Set adult to youth ratio
- Set policies regarding liability waivers
- Provide instructions, expectations and details
- Provide safety information at site
- Frame service project, highlight impact
- Offer further volunteer opportunities
- Orientation and pre/post project reflection
- Create enough activities to keep volunteers occupied
- Communicate your goals

Group Facilitator Roles

- Find chaperones
- Gather permission slips
- Prepare students ahead of time on expectations
- Manage student behavior
- Link to curriculum and other educational goals
- Support students in ongoing engagement
- Pre/post project reflection
- Include youth voice before, during and after
- Communicate your goals

Managing Tough Situations

Even if you follow all the steps to ensure a smooth and effective partnership, you are bound to encounter some sticky situations. The following are a few examples of challenges you may encounter, and strategies for coping. Even if you don't struggle with these exact situations, the suggestions will give you an idea of methods you may use to navigate rough waters.

Scenario 1:

Unmet Goals

You develop what you think will be a great partnership with a high school teacher. After the first project with his students, the teacher calls you and is very upset that his curriculum goals were not addressed while the students were volunteering.

Solution

Teachers are often very busy people charged with teaching their students a rigorous set of curriculum standards. Partnering with nonprofit organizations or volunteer centers can be a great way to get their students involved with curricular issues, but teachers may not be aware that it is still their responsibility to make the direct connections, set assignments, and facilitate reflection on what students learned. In this scenario, communication of goals and expectations between partners before and during the project is essential. Try to give educators information about your background in working with youth and your level of comfort in making curricular connections. To calm the teacher, you may give a couple of suggestions for how students could reflect after-the-fact on the project and how it contributed to their academic learning.

Scenario 2:

We're done! Now what?

Winter is approaching, and your organization needs to produce 100 fleece blankets for shelter beds. You decide to work with a group of high school students to make some of the blankets. Because you have heard youth are not as productive as adults, you only provide enough fabric to create 25 blankets. Half way through the project, however, the youth have already blown through all the fabric! Now there are two hours left in the project time slot and no more supplies.

Solution

Because there is often so much variation in the productivity of different groups, it is highly recommended that for any volunteer project, you have supplies for a number of back-up projects on hand. These supplies can be as simple as blank note cards and markers to have volunteers create cards for an elder care facility, or cleaning products so volunteers could clean your facility. If no supplies are available, use the extra time to facilitate a discussion about your issue area, volunteering, or their experience with service. Take the volunteers on a tour of the facilities or give them more detailed information about your organization. This will fill the time but will also provide a stronger sense of connection for the students.

Scenario 3:

Scenario 3: After Hours

You want to boost the number of youth you engage, and you know students in the local high school need to complete service hours to graduate, so you approach the service-learning coordinator about a partnership. After a long conversation, you determine that a partnership would be beneficial for both of you and you're both excited to have your goals met. However, when you begin discussing opportunities, you learn that the youth are only available during out-of-school time, and you typically engage volunteers during regular business hours. You're not sure if it would be worth it to rearrange your opportunities to fit the group's needs.

Solution

First, you need to assess your needs and goals and decide if engaging school-aged youth is a priority. If it is, a number of options are available. If you are unwilling or unable to engage youth after regular business hours, ask the service-learning coordinator about dates that students have off from school, such as MLK Day or other holiday breaks. Many students are willing to put in volunteer hours during these days provided they find the projects to be meaningful. Also, students may be willing to volunteer right after school in a sort of internship position as many high school students are out of school in late afternoon. Remember, too, that most schools have summer breaks, and parents and teachers often encourage young people to find volunteer opportunities during those months. If none of these options fit, propose that the students participate in hands-on projects at their school that would benefit your organization such as making dog toys or hygiene kits. Suggest several of these options, but if they don't work, don't be afraid to gracefully decline the partnership and look elsewhere.

Start Creating Partnerships

Now that you are equipped with the tools and strategies to create effective partnerships, go out and get started. Start with a few, and develop your own best practices as you move forward and build a strong network of partners.



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What Youth Can Do: Integrating Youth Volunteers Into Existing Roles and Developing New Programming

With minor modifications to their programs, most organizations can incorporate youth and family volunteers into their achievements. Engaging volunteers at a young age sparks a lifelong commitment to serving the organization's mission. Providing multiple entry points of engagement is well worth the additional planning time, increasing the community's awareness of your mission and dedication to your success!

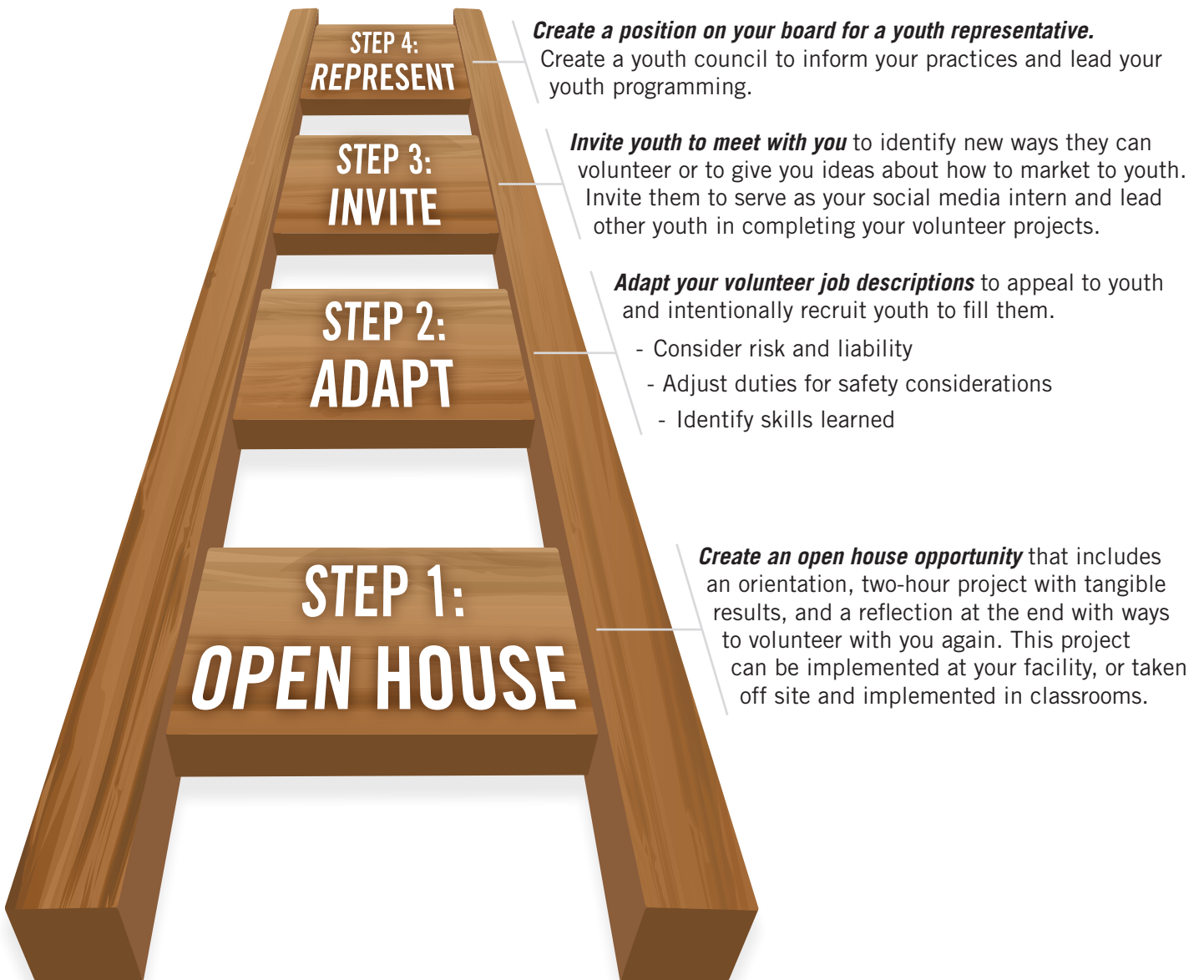


In this section, you'll find:

- ➔ Levels of youth engagement and what these mean for your organization
- ➔ Easy steps to modify your existing roles to make them youth- and family-friendly
- ➔ Age appropriate project types for various age groups

Youth Engagement

A recommended starting point is to think about youth engagement as a ladder, increasing responsibility for the youth volunteer as they build skills and experience with your organization. This will ultimately increase your effectiveness in volunteer recruitment and retention while maintaining the quality of the service work completed.



While all young people grow and develop at different rates, certain best practices apply to these three age groups. ***When planning for and communicating with them, consider these tips:***

KIDS: 5-9 years of age	TWEENS: 10-12 years of age	TEENS: 13-18 years of age
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be consistent in everything you do. - Be patient. - Exhibit a high level of energy and excitement. - Recognize a short attention span and plan accordingly. - Model behavior or task. Try the “I Do, We Do, You Do” model: an adult models, activity is done as a group, child is on his/her own. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listen first. - Be transparent and honest. - Offer guidance and set an example. - Talk to youth. Don’t tell them what you know, but work find what they know. - Give clear, concise praise and constructive feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listen first. - Be transparent and honest. - Set up the experience so the youth makes key decisions. - More “QUESTIONS” than “ANSWERS.” - Consistency in expectations. - Shared decision making between youth and adults.

Modifying Volunteer Roles to Make Them Youth and Family Friendly

Volunteer roles that already exist in your organization can be easily modified so they’re youth friendly. ***When modifying your existing volunteer roles to make them youth friendly, think about the following:***

- What are some benefits to the volunteer?
- What skills are they interested in learning?
- What ideas do they have to improve their volunteer experience?
- What motivates them and how can you incorporate that into their experience?
- What actual risk or liability exists, and how can you adjust to limit these?
- What is the community need being met?
- How will the project benefit the community?
- How might the project meet the youths’ academic goals?
- What are the tangible results they can achieve?

Continued ▼

When modifying your existing volunteer roles for a family, think about the following:

- How can the family interact with each other during the project?
- Are there different steps to the project that are appropriate for different skill and age levels?
- What actual risks or liabilities exist, and how can you adjust to limit these?
- How can the parent and/or adult be fully responsible for supervising younger volunteers?
- How will the project benefit the community?
- What are the tangible results they can achieve?

Take any broad or general volunteer roles and break them into multiple steps that can be completed independently from each other. This will help you identify a step or steps that might be a great fit for a youth or family to complete. With youth specifically, it is a good idea to have a general job description as a starting point and then to schedule regular check-in meetings where you can adapt the role and increase responsibilities.

One-Time Projects vs. Ongoing Efforts

There is a continuum to the engagement of any volunteer, and current trends show that providing different entry points into this continuum will increase your ability to engage and retain more volunteers. This is also a great method for identifying places that are a good fit for youth and families.

Many organizations start including youth and families in short-term projects that typically take 2–4 hours to complete. These projects can be completed at your facility, or become a project that the youth or family can complete off-site in their home, classroom or at another site that you set up. If the projects are completed off-site, there will be less liability for your organization and scheduling will be easier.

TIPS

- Plan a 2–4 hour project.
- Find out who else is planning projects that day. Partnering with your local volunteer center will greatly assist in marketing and recruiting for your project.
- Include an open house orientation and tour options if held at your facility.
- If partnering with other agencies or a volunteer center, consider creating a volunteer fair where multiple projects are available all in one location.

If providing ongoing opportunities, think about the different age segments, ***such as 5-12 with a parent or guardian; 12-16 with or without an adult chaperone or in small groups; and 16-18 with parental approval.***

- 1) Plan shifts that can happen after school, on evenings or weekends.
- 2) Identify public transportation options and include that information in your recruitment.
- 3) Identify a workspace that provides easy and ongoing access to the direct supervisor.
- 4) Identify new tasks with greater autonomy and responsibility as the youth become skilled and knowledgeable about your organization.
- 5) Think about specific skills each task will teach.
- 6) Engage volunteer leaders in managing projects and shifts that are outside of regular business hours.
- 7) Always build in time to reflect on the volunteer activity so young volunteers can further understand and connect to their impact.

Age Specific Activities and Projects

It's no secret that not all volunteer opportunities and projects are suitable for youth. There are legal and physical boundaries in some cases, but in other cases, the approach you take and how you plan the role will indicate success—even with the youngest volunteers. **Use the following as guidelines to understand what types of activities and projects are most suitable for specific ages.**

	AGES 6-7	AGES 8-11	AGES 12-14	AGES 15-18
<p>PROJECT: Homework Hounds (One afternoon/evening a week during the school year for about one hour)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Afterschool homework help for elementary and middle school students at local libraries</p>				X
<p>PROJECT: McGill Rose Garden (Spring through Fall; Saturday mornings for 3 hours)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Edge the gardens, turn soil, clean out garden debris, trim bushes, basically clean up</p>	X	X	X	X
<p>PROJECT: Trails, Tales, and Scales at the Charlotte Nature Museum (Spring through Fall; Saturday mornings for 3 hours)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Trail maintenance, planting, mulching, weeding, and native plant gardening</p>	X	X	X	X
<p>PROJECT: Helping Hands in the Garden (Spring through Fall; One hour during the week or two hours on Saturday mornings)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Planting and harvesting, gathering eggs from the chickens, composting and garden maintenance</p>	X	X	X	X
<p>PROJECT: 24/7 Crisis Hotline (Year round)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Trained staff takes calls</p>				X
<p>PROJECT: Race Against Hunger (Year round; Two hours on a weeknight or 3 hours on a Saturday morning)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Sorting canned good donations</p>			X	X

Continued ▼

	AGES 6-7	AGES 8-11	AGES 12-14	AGES 15-18
<p>PROJECT: <i>Clothe Your Neighbor, Saturday Mornings Live</i> (Two hours on a weeknight or three hours on Saturday mornings)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Sorting donated clothing for Crisis Assistance Ministry's Free Store</p>			X	X
<p>PROJECT: <i>Bingo or Game Nights at Senior and Assisted Living Facilities</i> (Year round; flexible schedule)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Interact and help residents participate in games and activities</p>	X	X	X	X
<p>PROJECT: <i>Arts & Crafts at Senior and Assisted Living Facilities</i> (Year round; flexible schedule)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Interact and help residents complete crafts</p>	X	X	X	X
<p>PROJECT: <i>Pet Visits</i> (Year round; afternoons and weekends)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Bring your family dog/pet to senior living facilities and visit residents</p>	X	X	X	X
<p>PROJECT: <i>Book Wrapping Party</i> (Year round; afternoons and weekends)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Clean and gift wrap donated books</p>		X	X	X
<p>PROJECT: <i>24/7 Invasive Species Removal</i> (Spring, Summer, Fall; weekends)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Weeding, cutting and other "heavy" outdoor activity</p>			X	X
<p>PROJECT: <i>Creating Cards for Soldiers/Troops</i> (Year round; flexible schedule)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Create and decorate uplifting cards to be sent to overseas troop</p>	X	X		
<p>PROJECT: <i>Clerical Work</i> (Year round; flexible schedule)</p> <p>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Entering paper records into database, answering phones</p>				X

For extensive resources on project ideas, materials lists, issue-specific resources and age-appropriate projects, please visit www.generationOn.org.

Increasing Staff Capacity: Preparing Staff and Engaging Volunteer Leaders

A frequently cited reason as to why organizations don't engage more youth and family volunteers is lack of staff capacity. We hear, “There’s no one here to manage it,” and, “Our board isn’t convinced engaging youth as volunteers is the right move.” Prior to your organization engaging youth and family volunteers, it’s vital to have the buy-in of your staff. After that, it’s essential that capacity exists within your organization to manage these volunteers.



In this section, you'll find:

- ➔ Ways to motivate young people to volunteer and what role a caring adult can play to increase motivation
- ➔ Skills to support and train your staff so they're prepared to manage and lead youth and family volunteers
- ➔ Tools and strategies for identifying and supporting volunteer leaders to build your organization's capacity

Did You Know?

- *26.1% of teens volunteered in 2010 (26.0% in 2009).*
- *Education and youth service institutions are the most popular organizations through which teens volunteer.*
- *The number of teens volunteering has doubled over the past 25 years.*

IN 2010
4.4 MILLION
TEENS
DEDICATED
377 MILLION
HRS OF SERVICE...



From *Volunteering in America, 2011*

Why Engage Youth and Family Volunteers?

The numbers speak for themselves. The number of youth searching for ways to connect to their communities through service is at an all-time high. The reasons are varied, to name a few: celebrity appeal, school requirements, and increased media coverage of natural disasters. Organizations and agencies that embrace this growth have the opportunity to expand their capacity which will ultimately increase their impact while simultaneously securing a new generation of advocates. ***Some other reasons for considering engaging youth and family volunteers:***

1) Increase community awareness

Younger generations are engaged through word-of-mouth as commonly as adults are. If you effectively engage one youth, they will tell their friends who can become additional volunteers for your organization.

2) Gain programmatic insight

Does your organization manage programs that serve youth? Youth volunteers can have a different perspective and give you some great ideas to refresh your program to better serve your clients.

3) Grow your donor pool

According to Volunteering in America, fundraising is the number one most popular service activity among teens. Engage younger volunteers in raising funds.

If there is hesitation among your senior staff or board, consider the following tactics to increase the likelihood that they will be on board with engaging youth and family volunteers:

- Engage existing youth volunteers to give a presentation to your staff that covers the youths' positive experiences and the prospective impact of engaging additional youth volunteers.
- Pursue funding that requires some element of youth engagement, especially if the funding allows for additional professional development for volunteer managers.
- Connect with partner organizations in your community that have seen success in engaging youth and family volunteers.
- Form a strategic partnership with a school or school district that will guarantee a stream of volunteers supporting a specific program or project.
- Survey staff to gain a consensus of the general attitude in your organization toward youth and family volunteers.
- Establish a mentor-mentee relationship between a senior staff or board member and a youth volunteer.

Preparing Your Staff

If your organization has never engaged youth or family volunteers, or you're considering greatly increasing the number of these volunteers you engage, ensure your paid staff is prepared for this change. Start by sharing knowledge around best practices for working with youth of certain ages. Next, take the opportunity to define or re-define customer-service best practices within your organization.

Customer Service Best Practices Within Your Organization

Clearly define what customer service means to your volunteer program and communicate this to all staff who work with volunteers. Together, you can create a "culture of service" for your organization. Additionally, consider engaging staff in a sample Volunteer Leader training, asking for their feedback and ideas.

For a worksheet that can help you and your staff brainstorm how you will create a culture of service, copy and paste the following URL in your internet browser.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ke7X1MrIJ6mUod4mE776O5wDa_CqVAAZ2maWORdPle8/edit?pli=1

In addition, there are many simple, free ways that staff can provide the best possible customer service:

SIMPLE & FREE

- Welcome all volunteers upon their arrival and smile.
- Ensure all volunteers have a clear understanding of their role and of your expectations.
- Answer all questions and be an available resource to the volunteers.
- Say "thank you" repeatedly to reinforce a volunteer's feeling of being valued.
- Refer to people by name by keeping an updated document with volunteers' names and photos.
- Encourage staff members who rarely interact with volunteers to take a few minutes out of their schedules to speak with youth volunteers.

The Efficacy of the Volunteer Leader

Volunteer Leaders are community members who are trained to lead other volunteers in service activities. They, themselves, are volunteers. Volunteer Leaders manage projects and events that build upon your agency's needs and provide volunteers with a positive experience. Additionally, they extend the capacity of your organization by providing management for needed volunteers without increasing staff time.

Volunteer Leaders can be adults who are specially trained to work with youth and family volunteers, or they can be youth who are specially trained to lead other youth, especially younger youth, in service. Volunteer Leaders are also referred to as Project Leader or Project Leads.

Strategically, Volunteer Leaders allow your organization to engage more volunteers in more projects without increasing the number of staff members needed.

Volunteer Leaders:

- Take charge of a project by coordinating and taking accountability for its successful completion.
- Communicate the details of the project and serve as a resource for youth and family volunteers, especially if it is their first time volunteering.
- Organize, lead and inspire a group of volunteers before, during, and after a project.
- Supervise and support volunteers, especially younger volunteers.
- Create new projects, many of which paid staff may have not considered previously.
- Represent your agency to other volunteers and to the community.



The best Volunteer Leaders are volunteers who are already involved with your organization who are eager to take on a leadership role in working with youth and family volunteers. **However, anyone in the community who you trust to represent your agency and to lead youth and family volunteers in service projects can become a great Volunteer Leader.**

Issues to consider when recruiting Volunteer Leaders:

- 1) Is the volunteer a good role model for youth and family volunteers?
- 2) Do they have experience working with youth?
- 3) Do they have an outgoing and friendly personality?
- 4) Do you trust him or her to represent your organization?
- 5) Do they have a successful history as a volunteer within your organization?

Developing Your Volunteer Leader Program

As you venture to expand your organization's capacity through Volunteer Leaders, consider these tips, tools and tactics.

Establishing Best Practices

Teens leading kids: Teens can make ideal Volunteer Leaders as they often connect more easily with children than adults can.

Third party support: Recruit a group of Volunteer Leaders through corporate partners or faith-based groups. Often, it's more effective to work with a group of volunteers.

Take existing volunteers to the next level: Recognize the contributions of long-term volunteers by asking them to take their leadership to the next level as well as asking for their expertise in creating a "Volunteer Leader Training."

Establish internships: Recruit through partnerships with high schools and colleges.

Peer-to-Peer: Ask existing leaders to identify friends or family to serve in a leadership capacity.

Position description: Develop an opportunity description that is attractive to youth seeking leadership development.

Interviews and references: Ensure that teens know you're serious about the opportunity. Consider hosting interviews and speaking with the youths' references. **To see a sample Volunteer Leader application with resume and sample interview questions, copy and past the following URLs in to your internet browser.**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1U-ERfxTiONKNFU9Sedujvtk9qGE6iCARb0Afv1GqqfA/edit?hl=en_US&pli=1

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1STjZUADX9fUPA8FWQIOmCbm5ijm_zmyBUxqlge920lc/edit?pli=1

Recruiting Volunteer Leaders

- Target specific groups like a generationOn Service Club, Key Club, Student Council or National Honor Society.
- Contact local colleges and universities to recruit students who may be searching for opportunities to fulfill a service requirement and to work with youth.
- Identify teen Volunteer Leaders through local nonprofits that have a Youth Advisory Council, or consider starting a Youth Advisory Council of your own.
- Collaborate with school counselors or school district-level staff to establish an official partnership that would provide Volunteer Leaders on a consistent basis.
- Post your opportunity through your local HandsOn Action Center or All For Good.
HandsOn Action Center <http://www.handsonnetwork.org/actioncenters/map>
All For Good <http://www.allforgood.org/>
- Create an online campaign via Facebook or Twitter that highlights photos and stories of your organization’s impact and asks community members to join your cause as a Volunteer Leader.

Training Volunteer Leaders

- Consider using HandsOn Central Ohio’s Volunteer Leader Training as a foundation for your own.
HandsOn Central Ohio’s Volunteer Leader Training <http://www.volunteercentralohio.org/resources>
- Ensure that your Volunteer Leader training contains:
 - Information about your organization.
 - Roles and responsibilities before, during and after a project.
 - Risk-management best practices and requirements.
 - Opportunities for leaders to ask ample questions and receive feedback from the organization’s staff.
 - Next steps that are clear and actionable.
- Take a Volunteer Leader Training to new leaders at their school, faith-based organization or office.
- Leverage the power of technology like Google Docs or Adobe Connect to create an online training that prospective Volunteer Leaders can participate in from any location and at any time.
- Offer trainings at a time that are consistent with times teens are out of school.

- Offer periodic, in-person check-ins where you provide the Volunteer Leader with feedback on their performance in addition to asking for their feedback on programming and inquiring what additional support they need to be successful.
- Remain responsive to communications from the Volunteer Leader, especially when they express a concern.
- Provide special T-shirts, name badges, or other identifiers that distinguish them as leaders.
- Seek opportunities for additional training and development through local and national organizations' conferences and seminars.
- Organize quarterly gatherings of all current Volunteer Leaders within your organization. Use the time for networking, planning new projects and for recruiting new volunteer leaders. (Ask current leaders to bring a friend.)
- Share praise for a teen leader's accomplishments by contacting parents, guardians and teachers.

Risk Management: Being Proactive to Protect Your Volunteers and Your Organization



When organizations are asked why they don't engage youth volunteers, they commonly respond, "We are concerned about liability or insurance." In fact, very few volunteer managers know the specifics of the coverage their organization holds. You'd probably be surprised to find out how expansive your coverage is. *(Hint: find out!)*

Prior to thinking about liability in the sense of insurance coverage, volunteer managers need to think of it in the sense of risk management. If you take all of the proper steps to protect yourself, your volunteers and your organization, you can take a vital step in leveraging the skills and passions of younger volunteers, with less worry.

In this section, you'll find:

- ➔ Understanding your organization's risk
- ➔ Building a pro-active risk management policy and practice
- ➔ Additional resources to help your organization thrive

Managing youth volunteers has substantial rewards, but there are unique risks associated with younger volunteers.

Managing this risk is easier than you think. With proactive procedures in place, your program will thrive.

While federal legislation exists through the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, each state has unique laws and protections for the volunteer and for the nonprofit organization. To learn more about your state's laws and to understand how they apply to you, visit the Nonprofit Risk Management Center.

Volunteer Protection Act of 1997

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volunteer_Protection_Act

Nonprofit Risk Management Center

<http://nonprofitrisk.org/>

When it comes to mitigating risk, everyone has a roll, including:

- Full and part-time staff
- The volunteer
- The parent/guardian of a youth volunteer
- Board of Directors
- Liability insurance provider



Here are five simple steps to mitigating risk. If you already have some or all of these in place, you're ahead of the curve.

- 1) Present opportunity in writing and ensure it's clear and accurate and the tasks described are within the scope of the mission of the organization.
- 2) Maintain accurate records of volunteer contact information, emergency contact, and of dates and times volunteer was on site, including keeping signed copies of liability waivers.
- 3) Provide training to ensure youth are prepared to be successful.
- 4) Supervise youth volunteers consistently with organization staff or trusted Volunteer Leaders.
- 5) Have a conversation with the company through which your organization's liability coverage is purchased.

The Role of the Volunteer Manager in Risk Management

Due to their knowledge and experience with community volunteers, Volunteer Managers play a significant role as a part of the agency “Risk Management Team” in developing policies that balance risks and needs of clients, volunteers, staff, and the nonprofit organization itself. Most often, a Volunteer Manager is a paid staff member. ***As a part of the team, the Volunteer Manager provides knowledge and insight into:***

Knowledge and Insights

- 1 Identifying potential risks to clients, volunteers, staff persons, property and the agency as an effective agent for change in the community.**
- 2 Developing and utilizing policies and procedures that protect clients, volunteers, and the agency through effective recruitment, quality job descriptions, screening, training and evaluation techniques.**
- 3 Helping to implement strategies to eliminate or reduce risks to acceptable levels.**
- 4 Maintaining safe and effective volunteer management through regular review of risks and options for limiting the impact of risks.**

As a Volunteer Manager, a risk management policy is critical to protecting your clients, your volunteers and your agency. A good risk management policy protects people and the agency from harm and conserves resources which can then be dedicated to other mission-related functions enabling your agency to make a difference to the clients you serve. Furthermore, a good risk management policy helps youth volunteers thrive while building the capacity of the organization through these volunteers.

Process for Managing Risk in Volunteer Management Programs

Identify the risk

Consider all risk possibilities:

- Operational: personnel, physical damage, intentional wrong doing, data loss, required record keeping
- Legal: statutory, contractual, adhering to applicable laws, injury, issues related to personnel, volunteers and clients
- Financial: investments, preserving financial resources and maintaining appropriate financial records
- Reputation: public perception of organization, support from donors, loss of future volunteers financial records

Review risks associated with current and future operations that may involve youth and family volunteers:

Review risks associated with current and future operations that may involve youth and family volunteers. Determine if there are differences in risk management practices when engaging youth volunteers:

- Programs
- Client interaction
- Personnel/volunteer compliance with applicable laws, policies and best practices
- Confidentially procedures
- Fundraising and special events
- External communication procedures
- Administrative financial accountability
- Board governance

Continued ▼

Begin your risk management assessment by reviewing all the functions of your organization taking into consideration your mission, ethical standards and capacity to address the risks. The assessment should review programs, legal requirements by law or contract, and risks to clients, volunteers and staff. Be sure to include your board members in this assessment process. The process should not be restricted but imagining any potential harm. Consider risks to personal safety of clients, volunteers and staff, illegal or restricted actions based on contract, agency property losses, loss of income, communication plan, confidentiality procedures, fairness of criteria in reviewing which clients will be served, appropriately reviewing staff, poor agency and program management, board and volunteer performance, financial mismanagement, illegal actions, loss of volunteers, bad publicity and loss of goodwill in the community. After some dedicated brain storming and identifying risks, form a formal committee to determine a work plan and timeline for implementation and work with the agency board.

Risk management requires the asking and answering of three questions:

- What can go wrong?
- How will we react to the wrong doing or incident?
- How will we prepare and provide for it prior to the incident to protect our agency, clients, staff and volunteers?

Managing the risk

- 1) **Designate a staff person responsible for risk management.**
- 2) **Estimate the likelihood and severity of each activity.**
- 3) **Ensure liability coverage extends to the age of youth you are engaging.**
- 4) **Engage board members.**

To help you develop or revise your risk management policies and procedures, ask a local nonprofit similar to your own if you can review their policies. Additionally, engage your partners such as schools and faith-based organizations in discussing risks, asking for their input, support and recommendations. **Determine how you can manage risks to protect the client, the volunteer and the agency.**

In developing a comprehensive youth engagement policy the agency needs to consider the following:

- **Ensure opportunity description is available.** Before you start recruiting volunteers, a job and age appropriate position description must be completed that addresses tasks to be performed, training, credentials or skills needed for the job as well as supervision needed. Attach detailed position description to liability release form that will be signed by a youth volunteer's parent or guardian.

Continued ▼

- **Apply appropriate screening processes.** For example, youth who are parking cars for an agency fundraiser will require proof of license and insurance, or may require training regarding safety of vehicles and driving practices and a larger numbers of adult supervisors. The agency may decide it is too great a risk for youth to drive vehicles and instead place youth volunteers as directors of traffic or selling tickets to the picnic. In selling tickets there is of course the issue of money management that must be addressed. In directing traffic specific safety training needs to be provided.
- **Consider the level of risk of the volunteer job.** Low-risk positions may be manning a table at a volunteer fair. One time volunteer projects such as stream cleanup may be a great family activity but consider all risks. For example, in a river cleanup project consider health risks and safety measures. Determine if the project should require volunteers to wear gloves, receive certain immunizations or provide a signed waiver form. Consider what preparation the supervisor may need, perhaps first aid training or a list of emergency numbers. Don't forget safety training for all volunteers. In high risk, financial volunteer positions, you need to consider, among other things, whether the volunteer has a good understanding of record keeping and money management. Volunteers working with money should be chosen carefully. They should receive appropriate training and understand the checks and balances for handling money.

* ***The basics of all screening processes are:***

- Written position description and soliciting necessary information specific to the position
- Interviews by phone or in person, individually or as a group (individual, personal interviews are preferred)
- Reference checks from teachers, administrators and other community members who can speak to youth's skills and attitude
- The liability release form for youth volunteers completed by a parent or legal guardian

* ***Be sure there is valid reason for the screening process and apply the process consistently.***

Group interviews may be appropriate in some settings with large numbers of volunteers such as an outdoor cleanup. If the interviewer identifies or senses a possible issue, the interviewer may want to ask for someone else to join the interview to determine appropriate action. If it is important enough to ask for a references or background checks, these should be checked. Follow up on all screening issues. If something does appear on a back ground check be sure to have a policy in place as to what are relevant offenses for that position. The high cost of criminal background checks may affect your determination to engage volunteers in a particular activity. Review all screening processes regularly to assure there has not been a change in job requirements, laws or agency policies that affect the screening process.

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Critical to successful risk management is teaching and following good volunteer/employment risk management practices. ***You must determine how the following strategies best fit your strategy to eliminate risks:***

STRATEGIES

- 1) Educate staff on policies.
- 2) Provide quality supervision, especially for youth volunteers.
- 3) Conduct regular evaluations of risk management performance.
- 4) Provide regular training with special attention to the requirements of new employees and volunteers or special volunteers such as youth.
- 5) Apply compliance rules consistently.

References

Nonprofit Risk Management Center (www.nonprofitrisk.org) - Provides many tools for developing your agency's risk management process

Alliance of Nonprofits for Insurance (www.insurancefor nonprofits.org)

The Volunteer Protection Act 42USC Subsection 14503 (a) (<http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/42C139.txt>) - All states have some form of statutory protection for volunteers. Check your state code.

www.boardsource.com - Training provided by state or local nonprofit organizations and associations

Getting the Word Out: Marketing and Recruiting to Youth and Family Volunteers

It is especially important when inspiring young volunteers to be a part of your organization, to do your part when it comes to helping them understand what your organization does and how they can be a part of that impact.

In this section, you'll find:

- ➔ Tips and strategies for developing a plan to recruit and retain youth and family volunteers
- ➔ How to write the perfect volunteer job description that speaks to youth
- ➔ Stories from the field featuring youth-led and youth-developed volunteer initiatives

A) *There are many reasons why young people are eager to be involved in their communities and also many reasons why they're not as involved as they should be.*

YOUTH WHO GET INVOLVED

- Have concern for the issue and want to learn more
- Want the social experience of volunteering
- Want to gain skills in leadership and organizing
- Spend free time more productively
- Have seen family and friends helping others
- Want to prove that they can make a difference
- Feel compelled by media reports of various issues
- Need to meet school and/or graduation requirement
- Are inspired by celebrities and famous leaders who promote service
- Have been asked to serve by a caring adult

YOUTH WHO DON'T GET INVOLVED

- Were not asked to volunteer
- Don't know how to become involved
- Feel they can't make a commitment
- Lack education about the issue
- Are uncomfortable with the issue
- Don't know what they will gain
- Don't feel needed
- Lack transportation or other support
- Don't think it's cool

Appealing to Youth Volunteers

While bringing on young volunteers has some differences in relation to bringing on adult volunteers, it has some similarities, too.

- Reach them through organizations and institutions that they frequent or are already part of, including schools, churches and other faith-based organizations, community/neighborhood centers, or the juvenile justice system.
- Recruit young people through the adults in their lives including, family members, teachers, coaches, tutors, their peers, and anyone who has positive influence over them.
- Be specific and concrete in your recruitment message—include information about gaining new skills, making new friends, going on trips, about helping to make the world a better place (even at a young age!).
- Know who will do the work. If you and your team are stretched thin, consider Volunteer Leaders, interns, and/or minimally shifting staff responsibilities to make room.
- Consider engaging teens as Volunteer Leaders to lead and supervise kids.

If this is your first experience engaging youth volunteers consider using these tips:

- 1) Provide young people with opportunities to lead and grow in the program; this may include: engaging young people in program leadership, research and planning, administrative and program support, training, supervision, development of new initiatives, program evaluation, and organization governance.
- 2) Engage them in the design and implementation process of any program or project.
- 3) Be partners with them—share decision making with them from the beginning.
- 4) Provide opportunities for open communication (which goes both ways).
- 5) Provide the training and support they need to be successful and seek available training to help you be successful as an adult leading youth.
- 6) Provide opportunities to discover how they've made a difference in their community through reflection.
- 7) Treat young people with respect and expect that they treat you with respect.

Recruiting Youth Volunteers

Designing the Appeal:

- 1) ***Be as concrete and specific as possible.*** Rather than saying “come volunteer,” make the appeal specific to the work your organization does and the cause the volunteer will address. Answer this question: How will volunteers make their communities and the world better places? Be up front about hours, period of time, and what other requirements there may be. The more informed the volunteers’ choices are, the less likely it is that there will be complaints, no-shows, and attrition. Also, if the opportunity is suitable for a group of friends or a family, specify this.
- 2) ***Stress the challenge of tackling a tough job and the satisfaction of completing it well.*** An activity that is intense and difficult work can be the most rewarding. Few young people will be scared off by a significant challenge, particularly if it is also made clear that they will have ample help and support in facing it. A point to keep in mind is that your task is similar to that of a Madison Avenue executive designing an advertising campaign for teenagers. Know the customers’ interests and motives, and what will appeal to them. Know the customers’ interests and motives, and what will appeal to them by convening a focus group, talking with other adults who work with youth, or doing online research.

Making the Appeal:

Successful recruitment is not a one-shot, short-term event. It is the product of ongoing efforts to make the program visible to those who ought to know about it. Anything that draws positive attention to the program will help attract new volunteers. Some ways to attain a longer shelf life for your recruitment efforts are:

- 1) Use the school newspaper or agency newsletter—in print or online. Run a regular blog on new volunteer opportunities, and suggest occasional articles about newsworthy projects or profiles of student volunteers.
- 2) Send succinct, visually pleasing emails.
- 3) Keep social media fresh and updated, using photos and links to blogs telling the stories of your organization and the success of volunteers.
- 4) Produce content that has the likelihood to go viral: a short video, a cute photo with text overlay and an inspiring quote from someone who is well known. (Remember, always make sure there is a clear “next step” like a web address.)

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* *This image was used to recruit volunteers for the Great American Bake Sale. It went viral a few hours after being posted on Facebook.*



- 5) Set up a bulletin board in a high traffic area of the school or community, people notice these.
- 6) Keep people who make referrals (such as counselors, social workers, administrators, and teachers) informed and up-to-date on the program so they feel some ownership—especially if your community has a requirement for student service. Have something tangible (or digital) for them to share/spread.
- 7) Use previous and current volunteers as much as possible in any activities, particularly in making presentations to classes or youth groups. They always will be the most credible recruiters.
- 8) SWAG (Stuff We All Get) has its place and time. Think about a specific type of SWAG that no other organization in your area is using.
- 9) Use social media (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Flickr) consistently with high quality and current content. Social media management is also the perfect task for a volunteer or an intern—especially one who, themselves, is an active social media user.

B) *Young people are online—learning and taking in new information. A tailored online opportunity description can make all the difference. Here are some tips:*

- Be clear and audience friendly, remember you are marketing to youth. Outline how opportunities are appropriate to an individual’s aspirations and abilities. (Bacon, 2010)
- Make sure to include a detailed description of your organization’s mission statement. People will be drawn to your volunteer opportunities if they relate to the organization’s work and feel compelled by the mission statement. (Tech Soup)
- Use statements that clearly speak to someone’s interests: “Perfect for an outdoors lover” or “Ideal for a group of friends.” compelled by the mission statement. (Tech Soup)

Continued ▼

Sections of the Job Description

Explanation and Example

Job Title	<p>What title has been assigned to this position?</p> <p>Example: <i>Zoo Crew Volunteer</i></p>
Position	<p>This section describes the specific purpose of the position in no more than two sentences. If possible, the purpose should be state in relation to the nonprofit's mission and goals.</p> <p>Example: <i>Help to educate visitors to the Zoo about the animals and conservation efforts at the Zoo. Support the agencies mission to inform the general population about the plight of endangered species.</i></p>
Location	<p>Where will the volunteer work?</p> <p>Example: <i>567 N. Oak St., Tulsa, OK</i></p>
Key Responsibilities	<p>List the position's major duties.</p> <p>Example: <i>A Zoo Crew member will be stationed at exhibits to answer questions. Greet guests and engage in lively discussion about Zoo events. Discuss conservation efforts to make visitors aware of how their visit supports conservations of endangered species. Translate your love of animals and nature to educating your local community.</i></p>
Reports To	<p>Indicate the title of the person to whom the volunteer reports.</p> <p>Example: <i>Zoo Crew Volunteer Coordinator</i></p>
Length of Commitment	<p>Note the overall time period in which the volunteer will serve, and include restrictions, if applicable.</p> <p>Example: <i>This volunteer position is available year-round for youth, ages 15-18.</i></p>

Continued ▼

Sections of the Job Description

Explanation and Example

Duration

Indicate the approximate number of days or hours required for this specific instance.

Example: *Volunteer must commit to attending a 12-week training course, which meets once a week for four hours. Training course is to ensure volunteers are set up for success! Upon completion of the training, an annual commitment of 50 hours will be required to remain active in the Zoo Crew. Generally this is done through a weekly four-hour shift.*

Qualifications

List education, experience, knowledge, and skills required. If a criminal-history record check or other background check will be conducted, it should be indicated here.

Example: *Love of animals and the natural world. Must be between the ages of 15 and 18. Able to commit to a four-hour weekly shift. Perfect for youth interested in a career in biology or veterinary science.*

Support Provided

List resources that will be available to the volunteer.

Example: *A 12-week training session is mandatory at the start of the program. This will provide you with skills needed to have informed discussions with Zoo patrons. Constant backup from Zoo Crew Volunteer Coordinator. Access to Zoo library. Unlimited free admission to the Zoo.*

Age Requirement

State age restrictions that apply to the volunteer opportunity, including increased flexibility if a youth and adult are serving together.

Example: *Must be between the ages of 15 and 18.*

Dress Code

List dress code requirements/recommendations. Give recommendations for the type of attire they should wear or if gloves/other tools will be provided.

Example: *You will be given a Zoo Crew volunteer t-shirt and sweatshirt. You should wear khaki or other light colored pants. Comfortable shoes as you will be on your feet for the entirety of your shift.*

A poorly written job description can be spotted from a mile away. Not only this, but an ineffective description has lasting ramifications—the volunteer position will likely not ever be filled. The following two volunteer job descriptions each have two versions: ***ineffective and effective.***



Ineffective Volunteer Description 1

Job Title: Volunteer

Position: Volunteers needed to stuff envelopes at RI Hunger Center, a nonprofit that looks to alleviate hunger in the state.

Location: 555 West Lane, Providence, RI

Key Responsibilities: Stuffing envelopes

Reports to: Volunteer Coordinator

Length of Commitment: One day

Duration: 6 hours

Qualifications: None

Support Provided: Instructions given by volunteer coordinator

Age Requirement: 10+

Dress Code: Casual

- ***The first line may be the most important—make it sparkle!***
- ***Simply writing “stuffing envelopes” for the description of work will not pull people in, especially not youth. Even if the volunteer opportunity is not the most thrilling, try to make it sound as exciting as possible, highlighting the benefits of the opportunity.***
- ***The more detailed and enthusiastic the opportunity description is, the more likely you will be to grab individuals’ attention. Put effort into making the opportunity sound appealing, do not simply write the bare minimum of necessary information.***
- ***The more detailed and enthusiastic the opportunity description is, the more likely you will be to grab individuals’ attention. Put effort into making the opportunity sound appealing, do not simply write the bare minimum of necessary information.***



Effective Volunteer Description 1

Job Title: Outreach Assistant at Acme Nonprofit

Position: Individuals of all ages needed to help support the activities of the RI Hunger Center, a nonprofit organization that works around-the-clock to ensure that no Rhode Islanders go to bed hungry! The RI Hunger Center provides nutritious meals to thousands of families each week. Your support will prevent even more families from going hungry.

Location: 555 West Lane, Providence, RI (Click here for directions!)

Key Responsibilities: We currently need to mail over 300 letters to community members to help stop the problem of hunger in Rhode Island. These letters are expected to raise thousands of dollars in funds that are vital to buy food for those who don't have enough. The job is fun and has a huge impact.

Reports to: James Jameson, Volunteer Coordinator, (401)-333-3333

Length of Commitment: One-time opportunity, but if you enjoy working with our agency we will be happy to find other volunteer opportunities for you!

Duration: 2 – 6 hours

Qualifications: A strong desire to see a change in poverty issues in RI.

Support Provided: Work alongside our great staff and volunteers! Volunteers are also encouraged to sign up with a friend.

Age Requirement: Ages 14 and up without an adult. Youth as young as 10 are welcome with an adult

Dress Code: Casual clothes such as jeans and T-shirts.

- ***Taking the same volunteer opportunity, which really is not that geared towards youth, but trying to make the volunteer description more upbeat and fun.***
- ***The entire feel of the description is enthusiastic. “Stuffing envelopes,” a task that can be quite boring, now sounds like an opportunity to promote real change for a great nonprofit.***
- ***The “Time Commitment” demonstrates flexibility.***
- ***The appeal to “sign up with a friend” is also a plus.***



Ineffective Volunteer Description 2

Job Title: Animal Care Volunteer

Position: Working with RI Animal Rescue Center to care for injured wildlife.

Location: 22 East Road, Warwick RI

Key Responsibilities: General office help, janitorial help, playing with and helping care for animals.

Reports to: Animal Care Specialist

Length of Commitment: Indefinite

Duration: 2 hours, twice a week

Qualifications: A love of animals.

Support Provided: Trained by staff and long-term volunteers.

Age Requirement: Ages 16

Dress Code: Clothes that can get dirty.

- ***This is an opportunity that many youth would jump to get involved with. This volunteer description does not play on individuals' love of animals or desire to do hands-on work.***
- ***Less appealing parts of the volunteer description, such as janitorial or office help, can be framed in a way that explains why these jobs are so important to the organization and are worthwhile. Do not simply state "general office help, janitorial help."***



Effective Volunteer Description 2

Job Title: Wildlife Rescue Assistant

Position: The RI Animal Rescue Center cares for thousands of injured and abandoned pets each month. Volunteers like you allow us to care for these animals. The Wildlife Rescue Assistant opportunity is ideal for youth who have a passion for animals and nature. We care for thousands of animals each month and your help will allow us to care for even more animals.

Location: 22 East Road, Warwick RI (Click here for directions!)

Key Responsibilities: Our animals all need to be exercised and played with on a daily basis, as well as have their basic needs, such as watering and feeding, met. Volunteers partake in this daily care of animals and help keep the facilities neat and tidy. Some basic office work to help support the organization is another portion of the volunteer experience. You will learn what the job of a Wildlife Rehabilitator is, along with learning how to run a rescue center.

Reports to: James Jameson, Animal Care Specialist, (401) 333-3333

Length of Commitment: We generally require a minimum of six weeks, which hardly gives you enough time to get to know our animals. Long-term volunteers are always welcome.

Duration: We require a minimum of two, 2-hour shifts a week. Hours are flexible and we try our hardest to work with volunteers to give them as many hours as they desire.

Qualifications: A love of animals and a commitment to helping all animals be happy and healthy.

Support Provided: You will be trained on-site by staff and long-term volunteers. You will have the opportunity to shadow other volunteers in the work that they are doing to figure out how best you fit into our organization.

Age Requirement: Individuals 10 and up are welcome to volunteer with us, but if you are under 16 you must have a parent present.

Dress Code: Please wear closed-toe shoes and an outfit you don't mind getting dirty.

- ***This job description is abundant with enthusiasm and how an individual's love of animals can transmit into a volunteer opportunity that will give the youth new skills.***
- ***The description highlights the fun parts of being able to play with animals, while also showing the necessity of the work being done. This will pull youth in because of their interest in wildlife and also make them feel like they are making a tangible impact through their hard work.***

Listing the Opportunity:

In addition to listing the opportunity on your organization's website, consider one of the many volunteer search engines that will allow more people to know about the opportunity:

- 1) List through one of 250 HandsOn Network Action Centers in your area (***HandsOn Network Action Centers*** <http://www.handsonnetwork.org/actioncenters/map>)
- 2) List through All for Good (***All For Good*** <http://www.allforgood.org/>)

Spotlight On Success

Teen Jonnycake started as a program at the Jonnycake Center in Peace Dale, Rhode Island. This model provides multiple examples of what an agency should do when seeking to recruit youth volunteers.



Since its formation six years ago, the Teen Jonnycake has served as a leading example of what youth in service can accomplish. Annually, an average of 45 teens from different middle and high schools have joined the cause. The program is organized and run by a youth coordinator who handles all scheduling, training and other vital logistical functions. Working together, these youth complete approximately 1,000 community service hours each year. Teen Jonnycake members primarily help after school and on weekends, staffing the emergency food pantry. This schedule works perfectly for the Center as it's the time when the Center is busiest!

In addition, members provide support for many of the Center's special programs including:

- ***Pantry Express:*** clients receive fresh produce every week over the summer.
- ***Back-to-School Program:*** teens dedicate days of their time to provide brand new school supplies and backpacks to an average of 200 children from pre-school to college every August.
- ***Holiday Programs:*** such as the Thanksgiving Food Baskets and Holiday Food Baskets, provide an average of 400 families with meals for the holidays. Santa's Workshop, Teen Gift Cards, and Elder Appreciation Gifts give an average of 400 children, 200 teens, and 100 senior citizens gifts for the holidays every December.
- ***School Vacation Meal Program:*** gives meals to an average of 100 children for the multiple school vacations and provides the teenagers with work ethics and team-building skills that are invaluable.

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Recently, the leaders of Teen Jonnycake created:

- 1) **Jonny's Locker** - a program that collects school supplies, snacks and personal care items for youth in need.
- 2) **'Lil Cakes** - a program that provides new baby shower items, including diapers, clothing and formula, for those in need.

Teen Jonnycake shows the diverse number of ways teens can become actively engaged in volunteering, problem solving to help their neighbors, and working to become part of the solution to the many needs faced by their community. The adult leadership of the Jonnycake Center took a risk in allowing teens to develop a program that could have a tremendous impact (positive or negative) on the success of the nonprofit. Due to an effective youth-adult partnership, the program is now a model for many others.

To learn more about Teen Jonnycake, copy and paste the following URL in to your internet browser:

<http://www.jonnycakecenter.org/volunteer/teenjonnycake.html>

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Celebrating Volunteers' Success: Recognition as a Strategy



What motivates people to volunteer? If they volunteer repeatedly, what brings them back? The answer is much clearer with adults. With young people, especially kids under the age of 13, the answer is less clear. Volunteering can be intimidating.

In this section, you'll find:

- ➔ Ways to motivate young people to volunteer and what role a caring adult can play to increase motivation
- ➔ Best practices for recognition and concrete ideas for implementation

Understanding Motivational Orientation

Essential to retaining volunteers is understanding what motivates them to volunteer with you, and recognizing their efforts in a genuine way that speaks to their motivation. There are three primary motivators of human behavior: achievement, affiliation, power and influence.

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	ACHIEVEMENT	AFFILIATION	POWER/INFLUENCE
THINK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Goals & how to achieve them – Problems & how to solve them – Strong performance & success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interpersonal relationships – Feelings (theirs and others) – How they can help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Impact, influence on behalf of others (social power) – What’s in it for me? Keeping the power I have (personal power) leadership, prestige, and job status (both kinds of power)
STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Well organized – Innovative – Good planner and problem solver – Strong initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Good barometers of “climate” – Team players – Sensitivity – Good listeners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Door openers – Strategic thinkers – Fundraising from individuals – Teachers, trainers – Work through hierarchy
STRUGGLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Delegation to others – Process (they can be impatient) – Valuing relationships and team – Perfectionism – Sensitivity – Risk taking (only calculated) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Over-sensitive – Unaware of time – Dealing with conflict – Needing much affirmation – Being alone or with strangers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Dominating – Argumentative – Outspoken – Intimidating (especially to Affiliators)
NEEDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Feedback (they don’t like to fail) – Challenge and opportunity to grow – High standards, unique accomplishments – Deadlines – Responsibility – Checklists (and crossing them off!) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To help and be needed – To be with friendly people – To feel included, liked – To be supervised by a “leader-friend” – Personal recognition – Opportunities to express feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Position of leadership and influence – Public recognition – Prestige and job status
BEST JOBS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fundraising – Training other volunteers – Data gathering – Leading a project – Administration – Professional tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Direct client services – Group or family activities – Planning/giving recognition – Public Relations – Leading support Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Advocacy – Policy making – Fundraising – Political action – Speaker – Media Representative – Leading a powerful task force or committee

Recognition Based on Motivational Orientation

Recognition should be provided based on motivational orientation to make sure that your efforts to show appreciation are effective.

When planning for an **achievement-oriented volunteer**:

- 1) The ideal result of recognition is additional training or more challenging tasks.
- 2) The recognition is linked to a very specific accomplishment.
- 3) Phrasing of recognition could include “best” or “most” awards.
- 4) Recognition decision could include checkpoints or records.
- 5) Awardee could be selected by fellow team members/volunteers.

When planning for an **affiliation-oriented volunteer**:

- 1) Recognition should be given at a group event.
- 2) Recognition should be given in presence of peers, family, or other bonded groups.
- 3) Recognition should have a personal touch.
- 4) Recognition should be organizational in nature, given by an organization.
- 5) Recognition should be voted on by peers.

When planning for a **power-oriented volunteer**:

- 1) A key aspect of recognition is “promotion,” conveying greater access to authority or information.
- 2) Recognition should come from someone the volunteer looks up to.
- 3) Recognition should be announced to the community at large, put in the newspaper, etc.
- 4) Recognition should illustrate the impact or influence the volunteer has had on systems, the community, or the issue.

Rules of Recognition

When giving recognition and showing appreciation to your volunteers, ***make sure you understand and follow the Rules of Recognition.***

FREQUENCY



Give it frequently - Recognition has a short shelf life. If a volunteer is engaging on a regular basis, keep recognition consistent.

VARIETY



Give it using a variety of methods - One of the implications of the previous rule is that you need a variety of methods to show ongoing appreciation to volunteers. Recognize with small measures on a regular basis, saving larger efforts for a special occasion.

HONESTY



Give it honestly - Don't give praise unless you mean it. If you praise substandard performance, the praise you give to others for good work will not be valued. If a volunteer is performing poorly, you might be able to give him honest recognition for his effort or for some personality trait.

PERSONALLY



Give it to the person and the work - This is a subtle but important distinction. If volunteers organize a fundraising event, for example, and you praise the event without mentioning who organized it, the volunteer may feel some resentment. Make sure you connect the volunteer's name to his work.

APPROPRIATELY



Give it appropriately to the achievement - For a one-time volunteer, consider a simple show of appreciation. For a long-term volunteer, invest more time and effort.

CONSISTENCY



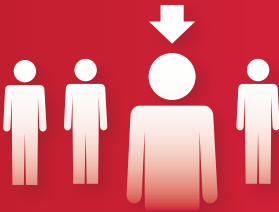
Give it consistently - If two volunteers are responsible for similar achievements, they ought to get similar recognition. If one gets her picture in the lobby and another gets an approving nod, the latter may feel resentment. This does not mean that the recognition has to be exactly the same, just that it should be the result of similar effort on your part. The same applies for giving recognition consistently if both youth and adults are volunteering.

TIMELY



Give it on a timely basis - Timely recognition after a success contributes to retention of the volunteers and the likelihood that they will speak positively to their experiences.

INDIVIDUALIZED



Give it on an individualized basis - Different people like different things. One might respond favorably to football tickets, while another might find them useless. Some like public recognition, others find it embarrassing. In order to provide effective recognition, you need to get to know your volunteers and what they will respond to positively.

REINFORCE



Give it for what you want more of - Too often your staff pays most attention to volunteers who are having difficulty. Unfortunately, this may result in ignoring good performers. We are not suggesting that you ignore sub-par volunteers, just that you make sure that you praise the efforts of those who are doing a good job.

Concrete Ideas for Recognition

Everyday Recognition

- Social media can be a great tool to recognize teens.
- Take a picture of the volunteer in action and mail, along with a thank-you note.
- Give a fun, handmade thank-you card.
- Make up sayings attached to candy (example: “You are a lifesaver!” attached to a pack of Lifesavers).
- Use a volunteer’s birthday as a way to say thank you.
- Send a note to the volunteer’s school, sharing their successes.
- Post a picture of the volunteer on a bulletin board at your organization.
- Offer an organizational goody, such as a hat, shirt, pin, magnet, or water bottle. Suggestion: Have a drawer or cabinet full of options and let the volunteer choose what they would like.
- Recognize families by hosting an annual family volunteer picnic.
- Send a custom thank-you email containing a picture of the volunteer in action.
- Get a big prize donated (such as a Wii or bike) and offer raffle tickets for every four hours volunteered. The more raffle tickets they get, the more likely they will win. Give the actual prize out at an annual recognition event or thank-you party.
- Thank a group of teen volunteers by surprising them with pizza at the end of their project.
- Celebrate younger volunteers by giving out “You’re Awesome!” stickers printed on simple labels.



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Intermediate Level Recognition

- Develop a “Wall of Fame” at your facility showcasing volunteers of all ages.
- Nominate a volunteer as Star of the Month; award a certificate, letter, or small gift.
- Recognize a group of youth volunteers at their school with a smoothie party. Have music and invite teachers and administrators.
- Recognize a volunteer on a local radio or television station. Submit to the online community sections of your local newspaper.
- Invite a stellar teen volunteer to speak to your staff or Board of Directors
- Give a gift certificate for a museum, the movies, a restaurant, etc. Solicit your community for donations! Again, a drawer full of options they can choose from is nice, and ensures they receive something they like. Visa gift cards are also a flexible choice and can be ordered with a personal message and image.
- Write an article or blog about the volunteer in a newsletter or the newspaper.
- Write a letter to the volunteer’s employer, parent, or principal highlighting the accomplishments. Be sure to find out if the volunteer would appreciate this before writing the letter!
- Give “special edition” T-shirts to an entire family.
- Award younger volunteers framed certificates with a note of thanks.
- Have teen volunteers attend trainings, workshops, or seminars, courtesy of your organization, to advance their leadership skills.
- Offer to write a letter of recommendation for a high school student applying to college or for scholarships.
- Provide a USB drive containing pictures looking back on the volunteer’s history with your organization.



Continued ▼

Advanced Recognition

- Hold an annual recognition event during National Volunteer Week. Devote a part of the event to youth and family recognition.
- Recognize long-term youth and family volunteers with a trophy or plaque. Consider personalizing it to reflect the contributions of the volunteer and your organization’s mission.
- Nominate a youth volunteer for a recognized national volunteer award, such as the Daily Points of Light Award. (<http://www.pointsoflight.org/recognition/dpol>)
- Establish a higher-education scholarship or grant to give to high school students at graduation.
- Seek an official “proclamation” from local or county government celebrating a family’s volunteer achievements.
- Secure airline vouchers and award them to an outstanding family.
- Partner with your school district to co-develop a community-wide award for volunteer achievement, specifically for elementary and middle school students.
- Host a celebration honoring an individual youth volunteer at their school. Consider inviting a local celebrity.
- Consider inviting your most outstanding youth volunteer to join your Board of Directors. Check your state’s laws to confirm the minimum age for Board membership.



Reference

Content is adapted from HandsOn Volunteer Management Guidebook (HandsOn, 2006), Successful Strategies for Recruiting, Training, and Utilizing Volunteers (SAMHSA, 2008) & Training Busy Staff to Succeed with Volunteers (Stallings, 2007).

Additional Resources

Project Ideas: Projects of all types, for all ages and for all settings.

generationOn: Hundreds of ideas, templates and guides for youth-led and adult-led service projects, including family service. Resources are age-appropriate to meet a young person where they are in their development. <http://www.generationon.org/>

Learning to Give: A program of generationOn, Learning to Give offers over 1,600 K-12 standards-aligned lessons and educational resources for teachers, parents, youth workers, faith groups and community leaders free of charge. <http://www.learningtogive.org/>

Kids Care Clubs: A program of generationOn, features easy-to-use resources that enable young people to implement meaningful service projects in a variety of settings. Registered clubs gain access to project ideas, mini-grant opportunities, story sharing and recognition. <http://www.kidscare.org/>

HandsOn Network Project Playbooks: Dozens of project plans and ideas to improve your community, including project templates for National Days of Service. <http://www.handsonnetwork.org/tools/startproject>

HandsOn Schools: A former program of HandsOn Network, this resource is designed to equip a community with the know-how and tools necessary to renew and reestablish their local school as the focal point of their community.

How to Guide: Best practices for engaging partners, project planning and evaluation guides, resources for fundraising, Volunteer Leader Training and sample templates. Copy and paste URL <https://na1.salesforce.com/sfc/p/300000006onJyJJXjl25Yb1.DqLBXTTCZGYGiRO=>

HandsOn Schools Toolkit: Seventy-nine ideas, instructions and tips for successful service projects that can be implemented in a variety of settings. Copy and paste URL https://na1.salesforce.com/sfc/p/300000006onJoq_2siv8HnIrgwlnqkcwOcUET

Organizations: Consider these organizations for additional resources, including grants, project ideas and recognition opportunities.

Youth Service America <http://www.ysa.org/>

Youth Volunteer Corps of America <http://www.yvca.org/>

DoSomething <http://www.dosomething.org/>

Research: New research is emerging that supports the need for increased youth engagement. Consider these resources to learn about national and local trends in youth volunteerism and service.

Volunteering in America <http://volunteeringinamerica.gov/>

CIRCLE <http://www.civicyouth.org/>

Search Institute <http://www.search-institute.org/>