

Volunteer Engagement

Getting Started

Often volunteer management is only one part of a staff member's position description and duties and often this individual has little training or experience in volunteer engagement. This page provides a variety of resources that can be used as a quick "primer" or overview of effective management strategies.

But—before you start reviewing these resources consider doing the following:

- Volunteers are a resource and require effective and strategic engagement strategies. Go to www.reimagining-service.org to access the research data that documents the importance of effective volunteer engagement to insure the sustainability and to build capacity for an organization. Reimagining Service is a national, multi-sector coalition dedicated to increasing social impact through effective volunteer engagement.
- Subscribe to newsletters and blogs from the following resources.
HandsOn Network www.handsonnetwork.org
Point of Light www.pointsoflight.org
The above organizations coordinate with the Corporate for National and Community Service to distribute the eVolve (eTA) newsletter.

energizeinc.com, Susan Ellis—publisher. The website provides links to articles, book reviews, links to a volunteer management bookstore. There is a subscription fee for the newsletter.

Volunteer Management Best Practices

Those nonprofit organizations that demonstrate that highest level of sustainability and ability to build capacity utilize effective volunteer management practices. Nonprofits that utilize an effective volunteer management model "significantly outperform their peers in at least one area as a result of using volunteers". (The "Nonprofit Service Enterprise Research Summary" Deloitte Consulting

http://www.reimagining-service.org/sites/default/files/u17/Researchsummary_Deloitte_2010.pdf)

Effective volunteer engagement requires effective policies and procedures. These require that an organization assess how volunteers can best serve the organization's mission. The organization must then develop a plan and process that addresses all stages of volunteer engagement from recruitment through recognition. This requires an initial investment of organizational time and staffing. The "New Volunteer Workforce" (Stanford Social Innovation review) identifies the importance of a strategic engagement practices that include:

- Market research and community needs assessment
- Strategic planning to maximize volunteer impact
- Recruiting and marketing to prospective volunteers
- Interviewing, screening, and selection of volunteers
- Orienting and training volunteers
- Ongoing supervision and management
- Recognition and volunteer development
- Measuring outcomes and evaluating the process

The following resources will provide more specifics including examples from a variety of nonprofit organizations as well as tools and templates.

Downloadable Resources:

“Starting A Volunteer Program”, HandsOn Network Whether starting a new program or evaluating and revitalizing a current one; this resource provides a clearly defined process and practical suggestions. [\(insert link to document\)](#)

Take Root: Volunteer Management Guidebook, Corporation for National & Community Service, HandsOn Network. The resource provides a variety of tips and tools related to effective volunteer management from recruitment through retention. [\(insert link to document\)](#)

“The New Volunteer Workford”, Eisner D., Grimm J., Maynard S., Washburn, S, Stanford Social Innovation Review (Winter 2009) The resources provides an summary of research regarding the most common reasons why volunteers leave an organization and best practices for effective engagement. [\(insert link to document\)](#)

Organizational Effectiveness Series—Volunteer Management, National Minority Aids Council. The guide provides information and specific strategies aimed at the following outcomes:

- ✓ Assess organizational needs for program development.
- ✓ Establish job descriptions for volunteers.
- ✓ Volunteer Recruitment
- ✓ Supervise and retain volunteers.
- ✓ Identify formal and informal methods of volunteer recognition.
- ✓ Develop evaluation mechanisms to improve a volunteer-management program.

[\(insert link to document\)](#)

“Nonprofit Volunteer Management Needs Assessment”, Volunteer Centers of Michigan. As a part of the Volunteer Generation Fund Grant, Volunteer Centers of Michigan in partnership with the Michigan Community Service Commission, developed the following needs assessment . This assessment identifies the best practices in volunteer engagement. It’s designed to be used as a step in the volunteer engagement planning process. [\(insert link to document\)](#)

Online Resources:

501 Commons is a nonprofit organization providing consultation services and resources to nonprofits. The site provides specific information and tools such as volunteer follow up surveys and volunteer applications from a variety of nonprofit organizations. Topics include:

- Planning & Policy
- Volunteer Program Staff
- Designing Positions
- Recruiting & Application
- Orientation & Training
- Supervision, Feedback & Recognition
- Demonstrating Impact
- Skill Based Volunteering

<http://www.501commons.org/resources/tools-and-best-practices/volunteer-managemen>