



VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

AmeriCorps Alums exists not only to provide resources to AmeriCorps alumni and their family and friends, but also to continue the mission of AmeriCorps programs to serve the community through our local chapters and in partnership with community organizations and nonprofits. One of the best ways to achieve optimal impact is through successful volunteer management.

Volunteer management consists of:

- Coordinating episodic or recurring service projects with local organizations
- Scheduling and promoting service events to potential volunteer pool
- Recruiting and matching volunteers to projects
- Coordinating tools and materials for project as needed
- Grouping tasks, determining flow of project, assigning task leaders
- Managing individual volunteers on-site or throughout recurring service projects
- Verifying and reporting attendance
- Storytelling, impact and reporting to media
- Being prepared for emergencies
- Recognizing volunteers
- Following up with organizations and volunteers on a regular basis

Scheduling and promoting service events

Schedule and promote events early enough to recruit volunteers, coordinate tools, apply for grants, etc. For larger events, plan ahead. For example, MLK Day grant applications often have to be submitted by mid-November. Be specific when promoting your service event and let people know what they will be doing, when, where, and how they can make an impact. Take advantage of social media and other methods of promotion to reach volunteers.

Recruiting and matching volunteers to projects

Keep in mind that some service projects are not a good match for children, and a project should specify enough details to let those with health conditions determine if the project is safe for them.

Coordinating tools and materials for projects

Volunteers rarely tell you that the reason they do not want to volunteer again is because the tools or materials are not available, but it is often a source of frustration. Provide your volunteers with the best tools and materials you have and adjust as necessary.

Grouping tasks, determining flow of project and assigning task leaders

If you have never been to a project site, schedule a site visit and determine if tasks need to be grouped and need task leaders. Recruit task leaders and keep them informed. Encourage task leaders to visit the site before the project or arrive early the day of the project to be prepared.

Managing individual volunteers

On occasion someone will show up to volunteer, but will fail to participate. Let the other volunteers that are working hard know they are appreciated by finding out if the volunteer is going to be able to

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participate or if they need to leave and try to volunteer another day. (Sometimes a volunteer may have been assigned to a task that is not right for them, and may do well at another task.) Conversely, good volunteers need guidance and direction and a project is only as successful as the project leader's guidance and support of its volunteers.

Verifying and reporting attendance

Be prepared to verify and report attendance; for individual volunteers (in a school program or with community service requirements), to the local chapter or national office of AmeriCorps Alums, or even to the media. It is not unusual for a volunteer to ask for verification of attendance some time after the service event has passed.

Storytelling, impact and reporting to media

One of the most important elements of a service project is being able to measure impact and relate that to outsiders, especially future and current volunteers. Use social media and traditional media to relate successes, because one of the best ways to recognize volunteers is to tell them how much impact they made.

Being prepared for emergencies

Hopefully you won't have to deal with emergencies, but if you are on enough service projects, you will at least need a basic first-aid kit. Often the organization where you perform service may have a first aid kit or you may bring your own. Also make sure that volunteers sign liability waivers and that you know where the closest hospital is located.

Recognizing volunteers

Remember to recognize your volunteers regularly, even if you only send a simple thank you email. Try to personally thank those that go above and beyond and those that are reliably present from time to time. Consider creative ways to recognize volunteers.

Below are a number of recommended methods and resources to use for successful volunteer management...

<http://www.serviceleader.org/new/managers/> Contains information on recruiting, recognizing and rewarding volunteers

<http://www.idealists.org/en/vmrc/> current research, best practices, tools, and ideas from Idealist.org

<http://www.energizeinc.com/art.html> Online Bookstore links, free articles or excerpts, free electronic books or guides, an annotated list of Web sites with more material on the subject and links to relevant Hot Topics from Susan Ellis's Energize Inc.

<http://managementhelp.org/staffing/outsrcng/volnteer/volnteer.htm> from the free management library

<http://www.merrillassociates.net/> - great volunteer resources, many of which relate to volunteer management

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<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ozvpm/> A lively online discussion forum and resource center for volunteer managers in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and "right throughout the broader Australasian region

http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPlsE/b.5466253/k.7C7C/Working_with_Volunteers.htm resources on recruiting, screening, training and retaining volunteers

<http://volunteer.united-e-way.org/uwgs/volunteer/news/resources> sample Documents for Volunteer Managers

<http://4h.uwex.edu/resources/mgt/volunteer.cfm> - various volunteer management resources from 4-H

http://www.volunteer211.com/volunteer_guide.htm - Volunteer 211's "guide", links to resources

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