

Internal Support

BEST PRACTICES

- Create buy-in for Senior Leadership and Board Support.
 - ❑ Remind everyone that many non-profit organizations could not exist without the involvement of volunteers.
 - ❑ Most boards of directors understand the significance of volunteer support to the organization's mission. Solicit support from your executive director and the board finance committee to allocate some amount of the annual budget to your volunteer program, even if it is only a small amount of money. That amount can grow over time as your agency expands and the value of volunteer contributions is reported to your board.
 - ❑ The value of a well-managed volunteer program is often overlooked because the contributions of volunteers are not well documented. To document a volunteer's value, simply ask current volunteers to report their hours and tasks. Assign the current national average of the hourly monetary contributions of a volunteer (see Appendix for Dollar Value of Volunteer Time).
 - ❑ Volunteers often can serve as some of the best PR for your organization as well. They are often passionate, informed and articulate about the work of the organization. Long-time volunteers can recruit friends and neighbors, assist with orientation, and serve as a team leader for group projects.

- Provide options for organizations that can't fund full-time position solely for volunteer management.
 - ❑ Most nonprofit organizations have a staff person who oversees hiring, payroll and similar human resources functions. This individual may be able to integrate some volunteer program functions, such as developing job descriptions, recruiting and orientation, into their routine duties. Day-to-day supervisors can then be assigned to volunteers based on the responsibilities they will undertake.
 - ❑ In small organizations, volunteer recruitment, supervision, and recognition will only be given the time it needs when it is a staff person's job responsibility. Therefore, it is important to formally identify these functions in a staff member's job description.
 - ❑ Many nonprofit organizations cannot afford a paid staff person dedicated solely to volunteer management, but efficient use of existing resources, collaboration with other area nonprofit organizations, and the creative use of volunteers can help sustain a viable volunteer program. Volunteers themselves may handle coordinating other volunteers, as long as one volunteer is not doing the work that would otherwise constitute a staff position. This role might be particularly appropriate and attractive to a newly retired volunteer who held management responsibilities in their career.

- Consider options for sharing resources amongst organizations.
 - ❑ An e-mail distribution list of like-missioned organizations is useful, with one organization being the clearinghouse for volunteers and interns. Another option might be to have several organizations apply for a volunteer coordinator that would serve all the partner agencies.

- ❑ Recruiting efforts can be bolstered using existing community resources such as RSVP, Business Volunteers Unlimited, and VolunteerMatch. These organizations provide volunteer recruiting services for area nonprofit organizations.
- ❑ Additionally, there are a variety of non-profit organizations that assist other organizations with large mailing projects and other office work. Mailing project volunteers can be requested in advance and projects can be done on or off-site. In Cleveland, some examples of these groups include RSVP, Vocational Guidance Services, PLAN, Cleveland Clinic Center for Autism and the Veterans Administration.

TIP:

- Citing her concern that most agencies don't have the appropriate volunteer management practices in place to absorb more "high impact" volunteers, Mary Foley of the Volunteer Center of Manassas, VA reports that "Engaging 50+ volunteers in meaningful service is not difficult, but it is time intensive." Designing new volunteer opportunities for older adults and working with the volunteers to set project goals, timelines, etc., will demand an initial investment of time from agencies. Foley states, "This will also require additional resources to promote these programs, train local agencies, and tend to the volunteers and projects."

See Appendix for More Resources:

Dollar Value of Volunteer Time.....A-5