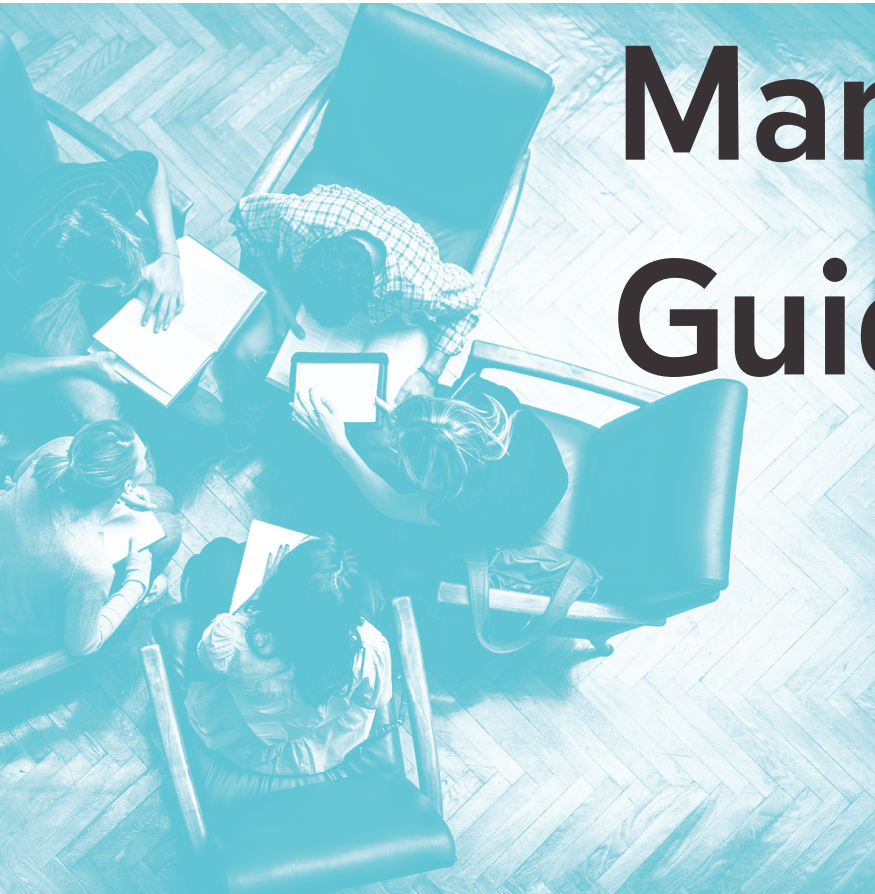


Volunteer Management Guide



INTRODUCTION

As economic and political climates continue to shift drastically, education spending is pushed further down the list of national priorities. Schools are burdened with the task of accommodating a growing population with a shrinking budget. As a result, schools are relying much more on the involvement of volunteers. Where once volunteers were helpful in accomplishing tasks above and beyond the call of duty for schools, now they are vital just to fill in the gaps left behind by resources stretched thin.

Today volunteers perform many functions once designated for district employees - difficult decisions regarding the allocation of resources have eliminated the funding for certain positions, which must now be filled by someone who is not being financially compensated. The willingness of individuals to donate their time has made it possible for many programs that would otherwise have been cut to continue functioning. Volunteers fill various roles including tutor, coach, chaperone, and many others. However, *just because a volunteer's labor is not compensated does not mean that there is no cost associated with the program.*

Getting people to volunteer is often viewed as the most difficult part of the equation, but managing those volunteers effectively can be just as daunting a task. If a volunteer program is not run efficiently, much of the potential benefit can be lost to unnecessary waste. This common pitfall can be avoided with a few deliberate measures.

The goal of this guide is to help you streamline your volunteer program so *you can make the most significant impact possible.*

“ Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth. ”

Muhammad Ali

WHY PEOPLE VOLUNTEER

Does a person's reason for donating their time really matter?

From the perspective of a volunteer program, the most important thing is that a person volunteers. Understanding *why* they do can be a very useful tool in effectively managing that person. If you understand a person's motivation, you will be able to better communicate, direct, and position them within your program to optimize their productivity.

A parent that is simply trying to fulfill their yearly obligation of service or a college student volunteering for credit hours will take direction very differently than an individual who is driven by a passion for service. All three can be valuable assets to the program, it's a matter of determining where they fit best.

Take the time to really get to know your volunteers. Treat them as individuals, and you will see the result in their service.

The golden rule says:

Treat others as you would like to be treated.

The platinum rule says:

Treat others as *they* would like to be treated.

THE THREE Rs

The Three Rs result from the combined knowledge gained by observing which methods work and which only serve to hinder the effectiveness of a volunteer program. They are not specific instructions, but rather guiding principles to be considered when engaging your volunteers.

Recruit

You will likely encounter one of two problems: either you will have so many volunteers that management becomes very arduous, or more likely, you will have difficulty attracting enough willing participants. After following this guide you will be thoroughly equipped to manage any large number of volunteers, and focus on the problem of attracting volunteers.

People are naturally averse to uncertainty - it makes them feel uneasy. Combine that with today's fast-paced lifestyle and even the most generous people are unwilling to step forward to answer the call of service, if any part of it is not clear. Don't expect anyone to ask for clarification either. It's up to you to accurately convey the scope of the work, the time requirements, the impact of their service, and any creative incentives you may have.

The more information you provide, the more confident you will make prospective volunteers about their ability to accurately determine whether they can accommodate such a commitment in their schedule.

Do:

- Recruit year-round
- Select events for recruitment deliberately
- Target talent to fill specific needs
- Always follow up on referrals
- Vet applicants thoroughly

Don't:

- Wait for volunteers to come to you
- Rely on the same people
- Recruit without purpose or direction
- Obscure expectations
- Recruit for indefinite positions

Retain

There is a real price to process, screen, and train volunteers. That's why it is vital to the success of your organization to retain volunteers once they have been brought on. Anytime you are managing people, there will always be the potential for conflict, misunderstanding, and dissent. While disruptive elements must not be tolerated, keep in mind that most friction can be avoided with clear and direct communication. Always be transparent about time commitments, expectations, duties, and any other relevant stipulations. This very important practice will diffuse most issues before they become disruptive.

Remember, each individual has different strengths, weaknesses, experience level and preferred methods of receiving information. Take the time to gather this information and use it to tailor your approach for each individual. They will feel more satisfied with the experience and you will have a more productive volunteer. Always keep in mind, any volunteer can contribute something to your organization if you set them up to succeed.

Do:

- Move stronger volunteers into key positions
- Have timeframes for each role
- Cultivate camaraderie and friendship
- Diversify responsibilities
- Address toxic elements swiftly

Don't:

- Allow one volunteer do all the work
- Close off communication
- Allow introverts to become isolated
- Discourage new ideas
- Allow toxic elements to go unchecked

Recognize

Never underestimate the impact that public recognition can have on the morale of your volunteers. This is easily one of the most commonly overlooked principles of managing volunteers, and also one of the easiest areas to improve. Most people will tell you that they do not donate their time for the recognition. Some may even try to downplay it when put on the spot, but there is no denying the very real impact that recognition has on a person's sense of fulfillment.

Give gifts • Celebrate together • Acknowledge retirement • Publicly thank

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Now we're ready to finally take a look at the actual methods and processes you'll be using to run your volunteer program. This part is split up into two distinct sections: preparation and management.

Preparation

Before you start delegating, there are a few items that must be addressed. Preparation is the foundation on which your program will be built, so take your time and work through this section diligently.

Define Vision

The very first step in your planning should be to lay out a clearly defined vision. The drive to do good is a great thing, but it needs to be channeled in order to actually be productive. Your vision is the compass that will guide your organization through every endeavor and allows you to create a concrete plan of action. Leaving this item to be developed later creates the possibility for things to fall through the cracks.

Evaluate Need

Why do you need volunteers? What are you looking to accomplish? Is there a specific skill set or experience level that you will require from some or all of your volunteers? Do you need temporary or long-term help? Do you have rigid time restrictions? What magnitude of workforce will it take to achieve your vision? Taking

time to thoroughly address these questions will allow you to confidently conduct your recruiting and project management later on, because you will have established specific metrics for easy reference.



Set Goals

Setting goals will break up the daunting task of accomplishing your program's overall vision, which can be intimidating in scope. Let the mission statement guide you, but be sure to split up the work into smaller more manageable objectives. This type of compartmentalizing allows you and your volunteers to effectively focus on daily and weekly tasks, because longer term goals have been clearly mapped out and can be easily referenced to measure adherence. This will also provide you the opportunity to recognize the completion of goals more often to keep volunteer morale high through acknowledgement.

Allocate Resources

After determining the volunteer force required, it is time to figure out exactly what other resources will be necessary for the program to function at an optimal level. Just as it is vital to establish the quantity and types of volunteers you will need to accurately plan and forecast, so too is it necessary to calculate what goods or services are necessary to facilitate the volunteers' work. This is the real cost associated with the use of volunteers that we mentioned earlier - this can be anything from administrative costs (depending on the size to the program) to materials and supplies. Every program is different, but the more time you take to conduct a thorough audit, the more accurately you'll be able to plan for the future and less likely to encounter bottlenecks that hinder your program's effectiveness.

Management

Now that the foundation is in place, it's time to take a look at the actual logistics of running your program. This section will explain how to optimize vital steps in the volunteer management process along with daily administrative activities.

Application Process

Here are a few steps that should be taken to ensure that the application process is not only smooth and simple (so as to not discourage prospective volunteers) but also, to ensure that any potentially disruptive elements are filtered out:

- **Compose a concise but thorough position description.**
- **Provide a link to the application, which is easily accessible from any device.**
- **Set up a confirmation email and notification protocol once the application is submitted.**
- **Using this information, run a national sex offender and criminal background check.**
- **Notify the applicant on their approval status.**
- **When volunteers arrive at your facility for the first time, be sure to take their picture and match the information they provided against a state-issued ID.**

Onboarding

After you've processed and approved a volunteer's application, you can start the onboarding process. This is where you will comprehensively convey the volunteer's role, responsibilities, code of conduct, and any school policies that will affect them. Giving your new volunteers a printed guide is recommended. The guide should include all relevant information, such as policies and procedures, contact information, and an overview of the program. Along with thorough training, this guide will act as concrete reference material, and foster an environment of accountability by establishing very clear expectations.

Evaluation

Feedback is critical to success, that can't be stressed enough. In addition to promoting feedback throughout their time with you, it is also important to conduct exit interviews. Properly performed exit interview will help you maintain an accurate understanding of volunteers' experience with your program. Ongoing reevaluation is absolutely necessary.

Take what you've learned and make adjustments - gather your leadership, discuss your findings and figure out the most effective way to eliminate problems and prevent potential problems you may foresee in the future. This proactive approach will ensure that your program adapts to meet expectations of the volunteers that power it.

CONCLUSION

You may have noticed some recurring themes throughout this document. The reason for the emphasis on these themes is that they are ubiquitous and form the core tenets of a successful program: transparency, communication, accuracy, preparation, and evaluation.

While some of these themes are independent and adherence can be accomplished through mere awareness, others are interdependent and can require some significant effort. For example, the effectiveness of your preparation and evaluation are directly affected by your accuracy. This means accuracy in your documentation and reporting, accuracy in the records you keep, the accuracy of your calculations at every level. Because of the interconnected nature of these elements, it is very important to address each of them diligently because, a failure to do so can have far reaching ramifications for the success of your program as a whole. If you follow this road map, you will have all the tools required to efficiently management a volunteer program of any scope and with any objective.

So there you have it - a comprehensive guide to volunteer management.

ABOUT KEEPTRACK

KeepnTrack is a flexible, cloud-based **visitor, volunteer, and student management suite** that allows administrators to efficiently **filter and monitor traffic** that moves through their campuses in **real-time**.

Increase operational efficiency by allowing guests to automatically register themselves with a simple scan of their driver's license. The system then prints color-coded badges, giving administrators the ability to **differentiate each visitor, volunteer or student**.

Reduce administrative cost by eliminating staff time that is wasted manually calculating volunteer hours and tracking volunteer activities, checking in guests, organizing paper documents, or attempting to locate historical records.

Mitigate liability by replacing unreliable paper sign-in forms with **dynamic reports** created from electronic documentation. Identify threats before they gain access to your campus by running **instant sex offender and criminal background checks**.

KeepnTrack is dedicated to empowering educators so they can focus on what matters most. Learn more at www.keepntrack.com

