



The Volunteer Recruitment Guide

For Nonprofits



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Introduction

The first step in creating or maintaining a volunteer program for your nonprofit is a clear volunteer recruitment plan. According to the 2020 Volunteer Management Progress report by [VolunteerPro](#), volunteer recruitment is the biggest challenge facing volunteer coordinators and directors. Volunteer recruitment is simply the process of matching your organization's needs with volunteers' interests and skills. Essentially, you should be recruiting the right volunteers for your roles. We have put together this comprehensive guide to help you recruit, screen, and place volunteers to have the greatest positive impact on your organization's goals.

Creating a plan

Before you begin recruiting volunteers to your organization, it is first necessary to [establish a clear plan](#) and define the roles you are looking to fill. What needs to get done and which skills are required to do it? In this section, we will be addressing those very questions. At this stage, you should already have a set of goals that your organization is trying to achieve and a basic framework of how you plan on meeting those goals.

Now it's time to start fleshing out that framework in the form of a staffing or recruitment plan. You should first establish the timeline you are working with. When do you need volunteers to work? From there, you should decide when to start your recruitment process. Then you need to start defining the roles and qualifications of the roles that need to be filled.





Defining roles and qualifications

In order to properly place volunteers, you need to create detailed role descriptions with defined qualifications. This can be a time consuming task; however, once you have created all these roles in a [volunteer management solution](#), you can reuse them over and over again, adjusting things as required. Here is a checklist to help you get started.

Volunteer role creation checklist

1

Role title

A descriptive title that is self-explanatory.

2

Description

A general description that explains what the role is on a high level.

3

Key responsibilities

A list of primary duties and responsibilities.

4

Skill qualifications

A list of skill requirements that includes detailed physical requirements and prior work experience.

5

Certifications

A list and description of any certifications or background checks required for the role.



Creating a detailed application process

Now that you have established what roles need to be filled and the skills that are required to do them, it's time to translate that information into your online volunteer application form. Your application forms should collect all the relevant information you need to do a preliminary screening of your candidates.

This information should cover:

- Basic personal and contact information
- Availability
- Skills
- Qualifications
- Interests
- Official Certifications
- Relevant work or volunteer experience

All of your application fields should sync up with the role requirements you have created in your volunteer management solution. By doing this, you will be able to quickly filter your applications by roles. [Bloomerang Volunteer's solution](#) offers best match technology, which assists in this process by recommending the best matches for each role based on your preset requirements. Volunteer coordinators can then interview those best matches in the next phase of the screening process, saving time.





Creating volunteer interview questions

Depending on your organization's policies and requirements, interviewing volunteers might not be an essential step in the recruitment process. However, for highly skilled volunteer positions, organizations will need to create a well-defined interview process as the second phase of screening.

Each volunteer role will require a unique set of interview questions to use for evaluation. An interview is best when it's in a dialog format; this allows the volunteer an opportunity to ask questions about the role to help them self-asses as well. Now that you have all your ducks in a row and you are ready to start receiving applications, it's time to turn your attention to the next task: creating a recruitment marketing plan.



Creating a marketing plan

As you recruit volunteers, sheer numbers aren't enough. Quality is much more important. So then how do you attract the right people to your organization? That's when creating a [recruitment strategy](#) comes in. As a nonprofit, you will want to attract people who are invested in your cause and are going to stay around for the long haul. Much like hiring paid employees, you should be looking for volunteers who fit within your existing organization's culture. To accomplish this, you first need to create a recruitment message that will be used to market your volunteer opportunities.

Creating a recruitment message

Before you start worrying about the marketing channels, you need to create a cohesive recruitment message that will persuade and attract your ideal volunteer candidates. Your recruitment marketing message should not only communicate your nonprofit's mission, but it should also persuade people to take action.

The below diagram outlines the key elements in creating an engaging and pervasive message. You should try to incorporate all four elements in your recruitment message.

Key elements in a recruitment message

Attention



Interest



Desire



Action



Spreading the word



Once you have your message ready, it's time to start your distribution plan. Consider which channels your ideal volunteers use the most and prioritize those channels. Here are a few methods to spread the word and recruit an exceptional team.

Invite your current volunteer list first.

If you already have a list of volunteers who have worked on previous initiatives you've organized, make them feel appreciated by giving them first access to the positions you have available. Plus, you'll already know their strengths and where they fit in best, making the whole process easier.

Share your recruitment link.

Use social media, your website, and email. Encourage your previous volunteers to share the link with their friends as well. Make sure to place a link to your online application page on your website. That will be the first place people go when they are looking for volunteer opportunities.

Launch a prominent social media campaign.

Besides making your recruitment link available through social media, you'll want to launch a formal campaign using these channels. This is where you should be using your recruitment message. It may be a good idea to bring one or more of your previous volunteers on board early to help coordinate the social media efforts.





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