



## 3 ideas for recruiting nonprofit volunteers

Most charitable not-for-profits have a never-ending need for volunteers. But finding new ones can be time-consuming — and volunteer searches aren't always successful. Here are three recruitment ideas that can help.

### 1. Look nearby

Is your nonprofit familiar to businesses, residents and schools in the surrounding community? People often are drawn to volunteer because they learn of a worthwhile organization that's located close to where they live or work.

Start to get to know your neighbors by performing an inventory of the surrounding area. Perhaps there's a large apartment building you've never paid much attention to. Consider the people who live there to be potential volunteers. Likewise, if there's an office building nearby, learn about the businesses that occupy it. Their employees might have skills, such as website design or bookkeeping experience, that perfectly match your volunteer opportunities.

Once you've identified some good outreach targets, mail or hand-deliver literature introducing your nonprofit as a neighbor and describing your needs. Consider inviting your neighbors to a celebration or informational open house at your offices.

### 2. Fine-tune your pitch

By making your pitches as informative and compelling as possible, you're more likely to inspire potential volunteers to action. Specifically, explain the:

- Types of volunteer jobs currently available,
- Skills most in demand,
- Times when volunteers are needed, and
- Rewards and challenges your volunteers might experience.

When possible, incorporate photographs of volunteers at work — along with their testimonials. And make it easy for people to take the next step by including your contact information or directing them to your website for an application.

### **3. Reach out to your network**

Develop a system for keeping those closest to your organization — major donors, board members and active volunteers — informed of your volunteer needs. These individuals often are influential in their communities, so a request from them is more likely to get people's attention. They may even frame a request for assistance in the form of a challenge, with the solicitor being the first to volunteer their time or funds, of course.

### **Remain in pursuit**

No matter how precise or thorough your initial recruiting efforts, remember that one-time or sporadic efforts are insufficient to attract a steady supply of volunteers. To get the resources you need, make volunteer recruitment a continuous process that draws on several strategies.

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