



VolunteerMatch

VolunteerMatch Learning Center  
Introductory Approaches

# Re-Energize Volunteer Engagement with Mission-Driven Opportunities

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# Agenda

- Moving volunteers from a nice to have to key component in your organization's success
- Creating an emotional connection to the work
- Transitioning to Mission-Driven volunteer opportunities
- Share your mission-driven story of volunteer engagement
- Getting started in your own program

# Shift how you think about volunteers

Think about volunteers as being a key component to your organization's success

- Shift away from a traditional, nice to have, resource
- Instead of focusing on the “I just want to help” statements ask volunteers about their motivations
- What are they getting out of volunteering? Can and should be personal. Ask them to answer Why?
- Include impact and outcomes in your recognition
- Don't just say thank you, share “because you volunteered...”

# Create a personal connection

When developing mission-driven work it is important to create a connection to the work

- Some have the most personal connection
- Support others in the same way they were supported
- Can be powerful, but this motivation (like any other) needs to be managed and those volunteers need to practice good self-care
- This emotion, gratitude, can be a good example of why this work matters
- Volunteers, clients, families – this is where our stories about mission-driven work comes from

# Mission-driven opportunities

Making the transition to mission-driven opportunity design may take a shift in thinking

- Some roles, activities, responsibilities, may not change, but the way we talk about them has to
- Friendly Visitor becomes Patient Caregiver
- Office/Clerical Assistant becomes Record Manager, Organizational Wizard
- Create a clear description of the responsibilities and the role on the team.

# Mission-driven opportunities

Put the focus on why the work matters, not the specific work.

- Work with physicians, social workers, etc. Support the patient and family emotionally.
- Emphasize the skills, characteristics of a good patient caregiver, rather than it being just stopping by and saying “Hi”
- Rather than 'Must be able to type 50 wpm' instead put your organizational skills to use to help people during a difficult time.
- Not everyone wants to, or can, provide direct client services. Organizational skills, strong attention to details allows for accurate reporting, easier process for clients and community.

# Roles still need to be accurate

Don't misrepresent the work, but focus on the outcomes and impacts rather than the tasks.

- Remember what your volunteers, clients, and community members told you about the work and their experiences
- What mattered about the work?
- How did the work make an impact?
- Why are they volunteering with you in this way?
- Match this information to the roles, activities, and responsibilities

# Mission-driven opportunities

## What work do volunteers do?

- Think about the outcomes or deliverables not just the tasks. Stuff envelopes becomes prepare fundraising mailing

## Who benefits from the work?

- Think about both internal and external outcomes

## What's different or better after the work is done?

- Deliverables or outcomes plus client interactions and impacts

## Is the impact short-term, long-term, or both?

- How can you count, measure or evaluate the impact?



# Understand the story you need to tell

Not everyone may have the same idea about the value of the work volunteers do

- Talk to your stakeholders
  - Volunteers, clients, community members, program managers, executive staff, leadership staff, etc.
- Ask what they think about volunteers/work and listen.
- Ask for examples but don't try to defend or change minds
- Use this information to start sharing the story of your
- volunteers

# Understand the story you need to tell

Remember the goal is to help others understand that:

- Volunteers have valuable (and invaluable) impacts on your organization. They are more important than just a head count or number of hours.
- The work they do is mission-critical, not something that is just nice to have
- Volunteers are doing real work – your job is not just to keep them busy and happy
- You have complete control over how you talk about volunteers and the work they do!

# Share this story with your organization and the community

Change the way you talk about volunteer accomplishments in day-to-day conversations and emails.

- Include the impact and outcomes in recognition events – to the volunteers and to others.
- Share these outcomes with stakeholders – especially leaders/decision makers.
- Tell the story of why volunteers matter to your community.
- Videos, interviews, narratives – include as many stakeholders as you can

# Getting Started!

## Learn what matters to your volunteers

- Consider recruiting a team of volunteers to help
- Surveys, interviews, what they tell their friends & family, why they volunteer

## Look at your current opportunities/position descriptions

- Incorporate outcomes/impacts
- Design new roles with your mission and impact in mind
- Another great role for volunteers!

# Getting Started!

## Change how you talk about volunteers

- You can't control what others think, but you can control how you talk about the work they do and why it matters
- Tell your story every day and make sure to include the impacts and the Why!

## Start small

- Think about a pilot program or focus on one role/department at a time
- You don't have to change everything all at once
- Don't leave your volunteers out of the process. They are the most invested in how things are/will be.

# Thank you!

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