

# Intersectionality of Human Resources and Volunteer Management

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Presented by: Heidi Elliott  
Volunteer Engagement Manager

# Presentation Objectives

- To promote awareness of the benefits of creating a welcoming culture
- To explore the varied ways in which volunteers like to be recognized and the importance of tracking demographics
- To describe the benefits of volunteering for both the organization and for the volunteer
- To describe the path of the volunteer from application to action and will be able to pinpoint the differences between hiring a staff vs. volunteer
- To discuss the differences between unionized and non-unionized environments
- To describe some of the risks of managing volunteers and ideas on how to minimize them
- To outline the importance in retaining volunteers for your organization

# Presentation Topics

- Make your organization welcoming
- Creating culture
- Recognition and retention
- Benefits of volunteering
- Volunteer demographics and motivations
- Volunteer roadmap
- Unionized environments
- Risk Management
- Final thoughts

# Making your Organization Welcoming

## *Starts with your own staff*

- Ambassador Training
- Everyone is a Volunteer Coordinator

## *Volunteers are part of the team*

- Ongoing communication
- Frequent engagement opportunities
- Example: feedback surveys, monthly e-mails

## *Multifaceted approach to recruitment*

### *Volunteer training opportunities*

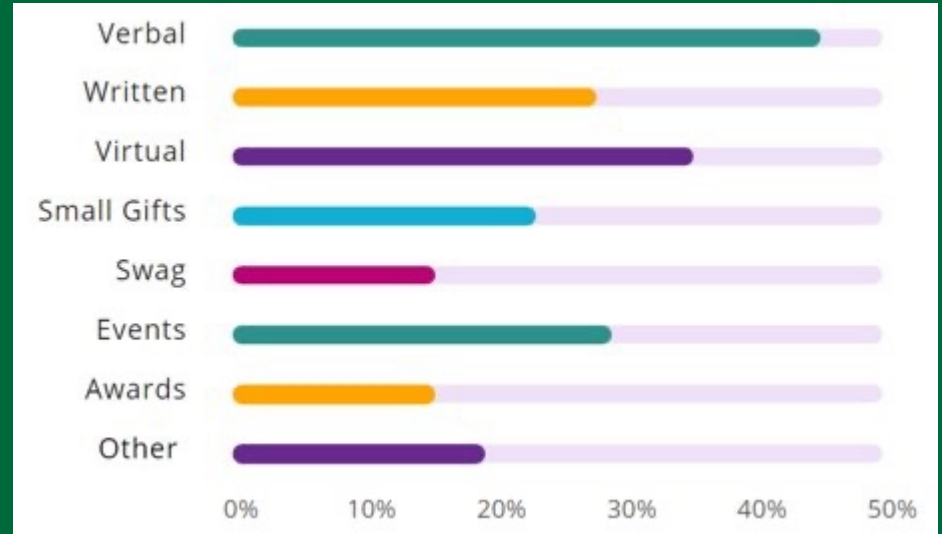
- Offer options that are flexible and suited to their individual learning style
- Example: required and optional sessions

### *Recognizing your volunteers*

- Regular recognition in meaningful ways

# Types of Recognition

- **Verbal:** no cost, in person in the moment
- **Written:** handwritten thank you cards
- **Virtual:** e-mails, thank you videos, virtual events,
- **Small Gifts:** low-cost item (i.e. Tim's card)
- **Swag:** small gift that also promotes your agency
- **Events:** annual dinner, socials, holiday parties
- **Awards:** milestone awards or special recognition



Community Support Connections. (2021). Anonymous volunteer experience survey results.

Feedback from 144 respondents indicated that volunteers prefer no cost/low cost, genuine tokens of appreciation. Preference varied across the respondents; it is important to offer different forms of recognition in ways that are meaningful to your volunteers.

# Creating the Ideal Culture

Ensure all volunteers feel safe, valued, and helpful.

## Safe

- Protocols in place
- Training for all situations
- Open communication

## Valued

- Meaningful recognition
- Regular check-ins (formal and informal)

## Helpful

- Does the position match their skills?
- Are we asking too much?



# Who Are Your Volunteers?

## Importance of Volunteer Tracking

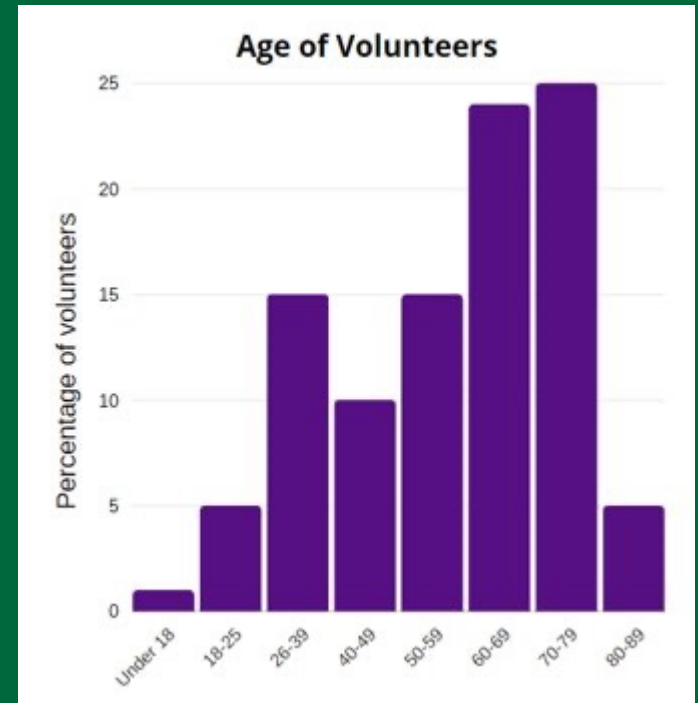
### Demographics

- Will have a variety, not one size fits all
- Target audience for organization
- Demographics will change over time
- Example: age, languages spoken, employment status, religious background etc.

### Analyzing trends

- Onboarding stats (i.e., referral source, interview preference, average screening time)
- Example: average age of new recruits was 7 years younger than volunteers during the pandemic

Great **resource** and link to the broader community



Community Support Connections. (2021).  
Annual volunteer information update.

54% of total volunteers are over the age  
of 60.

# Benefits for the Volunteer

- New skill acquisition and work-related experience
- Builds friendships and decreases loneliness
- Sense of belonging and fulfillment by giving back to the community
- Opportunity to improve conversational English
- Community service required for graduation

**96% of volunteers indicated that the top two reasons why they volunteer is to give back to the community and to help and support others**

Community Support Connections. (2021). Anonymous Volunteer Experience Survey.



# Benefits for the Organization

- Free help!
- Keeps costs down for clients, reduces staff time
- Expands network throughout the community
- Engages a diverse range of skills, experience, and expertise
- Identifies opportunities for the organization to improve service delivery
- Volunteers may become donors, ambassadors, allies, etc.

# Volunteer Roadmap

**Referral Source:** agency website, local volunteer hub, school portal, word of mouth

**Application:** apply online or in-person

**Interview:** offered via phone, video, or in-person scheduled through free online platform

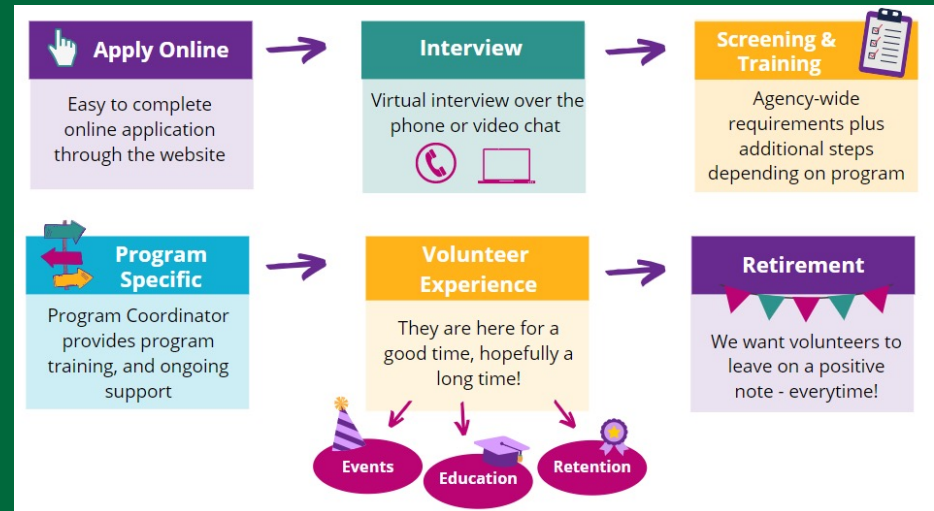
**Screening:** Police Check, references, program specific requirements (i.e. First Aid, G Class License)

**Training:** agency orientation and training offered in-person or video

**Program Specific:** specific to position

**Volunteer Experience:** ongoing communication (i.e. one month check-in), surveys, retention, etc.

**Retirement:** standardized process



**The volunteer roadmap is similar to the employee roadmap.**

# What about Unionized Environments?

- Unions add another layer to the volunteer intake
- Never want to have a volunteer doing a role that is a staff role – it can enhance but not replace

However, this may mean staff are backing up a volunteer position when needed

## **How to avoid conflict:**

*“One of the key things voluntary organizations which assist employers in the recruitment and training of volunteers should do is to consult with the union(s) at the workplace before placing volunteers in that workplace”*

Calvert, J. (1985, July 1). Volunteers and the unionized workplace: Problems and prospects. *The Philanthropist Journal*, 5(3), 23-29.

Respecting the leadership of the union and developing a partnership is key

# Risk Management

## Minimize the Risk

- Importance of clear, up-to-date job descriptions
- Boundary breakers

## Training

- Similar content as staff training
- Proactive vs. reactive (i.e., reviewing possible scenarios during initial training)
- Consistency is key (i.e., video trainings)
- Re-training when concerning trends appear
- Review incident reports (includes near misses)

# Risk Management

## Accept the Risk

- When you stay true to your mission, there just might be risks you are willing to take (i.e. Meals on Wheels)
- Follow up (timely and caring)
- Unsupervised roles
- Volunteer Code of Conduct

# Final Thoughts

Make it so your volunteers don't want to leave!

- Treat them just as well as staff, if not better
- Praise them for a job well done (and make it genuine!)
- Offer alternatives when their position isn't a good fit
- Make sure volunteers leave on a positive note, every time
- If you don't know, ask! Survey says!
- Communication is key

# References

Calvert, J. (1985, July 1). Volunteers and the unionized workplace: Problems and prospects. *The Philanthropist Journal*, 5(3), 23-29.  
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