

# CREATING A VOLUNTEER MOSAIC

## WHY?

Diverse people bring diverse skills, experiences, and connections to your organization. Your network of supporters will grow in all directions.

### RECRUITMENT

#### MAKE IT EASY TO FIND & JOIN YOU

- ▶ Frequent, easy to access orientations
- ▶ Flexible volunteer shift options
- ▶ Consider accepting volunteers completing court-ordered community service
- ▶ Invite food pantry clients to volunteer
- ▶ **Review your website**-- can potential volunteers easily learn how to volunteer or even sign up online?
- ▶ Google "volunteer (your town)." What lists come up? If you're not on them, reach out to be added. If you are, make sure the info is accurate
- ▶ Share your contact info & opportunities with agencies encouraging volunteerism
  - Schools and colleges
  - Local businesses
  - Job readiness & internship programs
  - SNAP eligibility Workfare program
  - Clubs, senior living groups, scout troops, religious organizations
  - United Way, VolunteerMatch, SeattleWorks

### ORIENTATION

#### TELL YOUR VOLUNTEER AND SERVICE STORY

- ▶ Who you are
- ▶ What you do
- ▶ What makes your organization UNIQUE
- ▶ Opportunity to grow volunteer perspectives:
  - Share the story of a food pantry client
  - Help new volunteers empathize with food pantry clients (ex/ if people have seen cost of living increase, share that many clients experience)
  - Dispel myths about food pantry clients
  - Discussing ways we can make a community that does not need food banks
- ▶ Shout out how volunteers have improved your org
- ▶ Safety, conduct and logistical information that will help them be successful volunteers

Ask questions. Get your volunteers involved. Show them that every task they do, no matter how simple, is an important contribution to your mission.

## VOLUNTEERING IS FOR EVERYONE

ANYONE CAN BE A GREAT VOLUNTEER, REGARDLESS OF THEIR AGE, GENDER IDENTITY, RELIGION, RACE, LANGUAGE SPOKEN, SEXUALITY, CLASS, OR PHYSICAL OR MENTAL ABILITY

### WAYS TO BE WELCOMING TO ALL

- ▶ Learn people's names and "hello" in commonly spoken languages
- ▶ Post a statement declaring that all are welcome in your space
- ▶ Encourage or require equity training for staff and key volunteers. Include equity language in orientations and applications
- ▶ Encourage volunteers to try new tasks regularly
- ▶ Offer stools, carts, lifting help to all
- ▶ Encourage volunteers to take breaks. Offer a quiet space away: helpful for nursing moms, folks with sensory issues, etc.
- ▶ Start new helpers on simple tasks so they gain confidence in their ability to do the work
- ▶ Pair new volunteers with experienced volunteers ready to welcome and train them
- ▶ Ask if they prefer working with clients or behind-the-scenes
- ▶ Have snacks available for volunteers experiencing hunger
- ▶ Check in with new volunteers frequently and with genuine, enthusiastic praise

# RETENTION: DIFFERENT VOLUNTEERS LIKE DIFFERENT THINGS

McClelland Theory of Motivation: people are driven by 3 main motivators.

Different motivations necessitate different retention tools

- ▶ Achievement-motivated volunteers often appreciate:
  - being invited to trainings
  - receiving compliments about specific skills
  - opportunities to cross-train in different areas of the organization
  - hearing how their efforts made a concrete difference (how many lbs of food they sorted, people served, operations improved, etc)
- ▶ Affiliation-motivated volunteers often appreciate
  - being placed in client-facing roles
  - working with small groups
  - being introduced by name to new people
  - participating in organization get-togethers, appreciation lunches, etc

- ▶ Influence-motivated volunteers often appreciate:
  - being placed in a leadership role
  - being included in decision-making
  - being given extra autonomy
  - receiving compliments in public

In general,

- ▶ Learn volunteers' names and get to know them
- ▶ Thank genuinely, thank enthusiastically, thank often
- ▶ Let students or job-searching volunteers know you are happy to write them a recommendation letter
- ▶ Ask for feedback frequently
- ▶ Provide branded pins, personalized nametags, shirts, etc. if possible so they can proudly represent their connection to your organization

## REVIEW: ARE YOU GETTING WHAT YOU NEED?

Creating a volunteer mosaic takes critical thinking, creativity and hard work. However, if your volunteer program gives you more stress than support, it's time to review.

### IT'S ME

- ▶ Set boundaries - a volunteer's high priority is not always yours. You may tell volunteers to wait or schedule a meeting
  - ▶ Automate - Consider using online volunteer shift signups, volunteer sign-ins on a computer, using email "canned responses" for common questions, etc.
  - ▶ Make and post how-to lists for tasks you often explain, cleaning/closing to-do lists, etc. Go-getters will put themselves to work without you even asking!
  - ▶ Train experienced volunteers on all tasks. Encourage them to train new volunteers.
  - ▶ Recruit skilled volunteers for admin, PR, fundraising, etc.
  - ▶ Do you have the right amount of help? Publicize your most-needed shifts on social media, VolunteerMatch.com, email to your network, tell current volunteers.
- When you have too many volunteers, suggest other times they would be more useful, encourage them to take a break between tasks, have them work on "dream projects," close early!

### IT'S YOU

- ▶ Give the volunteer a different role or responsibilities
- ▶ Give them behind-the-scenes roles away from clients
- ▶ Ask them to volunteer only during less busy times
- ▶ Try giving them independent tasks
- ▶ Try pairing them with another friendly volunteer
- ▶ Ask them what stresses them out and how you can accommodate them
- ▶ Clearly communicate expectations and boundaries
- ▶ Are there conduct rules in your volunteer application? Point to them when addressing behavior issues
- ▶ Schedule a meeting with the volunteer. State what behavior you've seen and why it is troubling you. Work together to find a clear solution you both agree to uphold.
- ▶ Ask the volunteer to take a break from volunteering
- ▶ Ask the person not to volunteer with you anymore

### QUESTIONS?

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