

# Life Cycle of a Volunteer



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Sponsored by Mesa County Public Library District  
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## Volunteerism

**Volunteering** is generally considered an altruistic activity and is intended to promote goodness or improve human quality of life. In return, this activity can produce a feeling of self-worth and respect. There is no financial gain involved for the individual. Volunteering is also renowned for skill development, socialization, and fun. Volunteering may have positive benefits for the volunteer as well as for the person or community served. It is also intended to make contacts for possible employment. It is helping, assisting, or serving another person or persons without pay. Many volunteers are specifically trained in the areas they work, such as medicine, education, or emergency rescue. Others serve on an as-needed basis, such as in response to a natural disaster. -- Wikipedia

Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart. Elizabeth Andrew

## By the numbers

In 2013, 62.6 million Americans volunteering in organizations donated nearly 7.7 billion hours

138 million Americans (62.5 percent) also engaged in "informal volunteering" – helping neighbors, shopping, house or pet sitting, providing transportation, etc.

5,355 volunteers in Mesa County provide over 424,850 hours of meaningful community service – that's 204 full-time employees

Over 250,720 Mesa County residents are served each year by local non-profits

# Sourcing



## Recruiting sources

- Current volunteers, Board members
- Staff, former staff
- Partners, clients, and suppliers
- Fraternal organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Educational centers
- Social contacts, other networking
- Professional associations



## Communication

- Where will your *organization's* potential volunteers see, hear, or experience your message?
- Traditional and social media, special events
- What is the message? Consistent with other branding.
  - “I’m so glad you answered. I’ve called everybody!”
  - How do volunteers with your organization make a difference?
  - Accuracy is crucial – be sure they know what they’re saying
  - “yes” (or no) to
  - Let volunteers tell their stories
- Ride along

I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody.  
- Joyce Flaugher

## Succession

- Plan for it!
- Exit interview for voluntary departures
  - Avoid things you *can't* change
- After Action Review – what happened here?
- Stay interview with current volunteers

# Engaging

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## Everything counts

- TIMELY REIMBURSEMENT!

## Intake

- Administration
- Manage risk
- Policies and processes
- The first conversation

Those who can, do. Those who  
can do more, volunteer.

Unknown

## Onboarding

- Welcome
- Organizational “must knows” – key events, community involvement
- Problem-solving process
- Facility/service location tour
- Describe how to access support provided for volunteers in highly-charged, emotionally-draining roles

## Training

- Job description
- Confirm understanding of expectations
- Life safety, systems security, etc.
- Resources – whom do I go to about X? Where do I find Y?
- Buddy/peer mentor

# Managing



## Connect

- Getting to know you
- Adjusting to different styles
- Periodic “stay” interview
  - What would make this work for efficient, effective, enjoyable?
  - What do you find most meaningful? Biggest challenge?
  - What drew you to us, to this role?
  - Have we been consistent and accurate in describing the organization and the work?
  - What does appreciation look like to you – what would be a meaningful “thank you” from me or other organization leaders?
  - As needed, explore some aspect of safety/security/community relations, etc.
  - What skills are under-utilized?
  - What’s the one thing you’d recommend we do in the spirit of continually improving our volunteer’s experience?
  - How’s the workload?
  - What else would you like to try around here?
  - (for the serial volunteers) What is it like to volunteer in other organizations?

## Correct

- Address immediately
- Data-based, documentable
- Explore options
  - Tools
  - Training, coaching, shadowing
  - Different role?
- Two-way communication
- Ideally, it’s *their* choice
- Open the door for a graceful exit
- A satisfied former volunteer is an asset in the community

There are two ways of spreading light - to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.

Edith Wharton

# Recognizing



## Developmental

**Management Practices & Professional Development:** (team – individual) Deal with non-performing or disruptive employees & volunteers – supervisory competence – 1:1 direct report meetings (stay interview) – skip-level exposure – on-going training – personal career coach – back burner day (set aside periodically to work on the things on the bottom of the pile) – effective meetings – special assignments – road trip – work on your own project day – mentoring – trade/professional journal subscription

**Whole Person & Personal Development:** extend to family when practical – movie night – season/event passes – brown bags with company or outside experts (managing change and stress, fly fishing, elder care/end-of-life issues, quilting, investing/financial management, local environmental or economic issues, health, nutrition, where to bike in the Grand Valley) – interpersonal skills training – newspaper, personal interest magazine subscription – company/team pet

The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers. Everett Mámor

## Environmental-Hygiene

**Working Conditions:** food (meals, seasonal treats, dinner if someone's working late) – clean/stocked kitchen with working appliances – clean bathrooms – privacy zones (for open-concept offices) – flextime – telecommute/ work at home – free parking, bus pass, mileage to/from work – TV/video games in breakroom – onsite yoga, massage, fitness classes – picnic, holiday parties

**Communication:** all-way, on-going – Town Hall – lunch with CEO/C-Suite – maintained intranet – volunteer presence on public internet

**Relationships:** company milestone – personal milestone: marriage, new child, first home, empty nest, achieve personal goal (5K, quitting smoking)

**Unique and Fun:** barefoot Fridays – nap room – recess – dog/pet friendly – movie tickets – happy hour (planned or spontaneous) – individual or team cooking contests – Netflix membership – board games in breakrooms, conference rooms – dry cleaning or other services drop off – grocery shopping – company Concierge – DVD rentals – fancy coffee day – onsite oil/tire change – on site community garden – company community project or event sponsorship/support

*Of course, the easiest and most underused way to show recognition and appreciation...is to simply say, "Thank you." Make these two little words part of your daily vocabulary and you'll notice a positive upswing in your work environment. [smallbiztrends.com](http://smallbiztrends.com) "4 Fun and Free Employee Benefits"*

# ...but not least



## Managing risk

**Protect volunteer status:** 1) Document the relationship at the outset. 2) Avoid any indicia of employment. 3) Keep roles of employees and volunteers separate. 4) Be consistent. 5) Make sure the work is truly voluntary. – Borden Ladner Gervais *Voluntary risk avoidance – when is a volunteer not a volunteer?*

<http://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=79f168a8-1e39-45f5-bed3-af7a3bc58120>  
Canada December 12 2011

**Minimize other risk:** 1) Consider purchasing liability insurance. 2) Provide support materials – orientation, safety training, handbook, etc. 3) Develop policies and procedures. 4) Consider an indemnification agreement or waiver. -- Heather E. Baird *Managing legal liability associated with volunteers*

<http://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=752394c1-7b53-4255-8a46-6a0ad0312c76>  
USA January 30 2014

## Resources

- Your organization's national/international organization
- Local: Community Impact Council
- Leader support & Certification
  - Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration <http://cvacert.org/> Core Competencies: Accountability, Ethics, Human Resource Management, Leadership and Advocacy, Organizational Management
  - International Volunteer Managers Day celebrated globally on **November 5**
  - [Idealist.org](http://www.idealists.org) features the Volunteer Management Resource Center online tools
  - Allve [www.volunteeralive.org](http://www.volunteeralive.org)
  - Energize [www.energize.com](http://www.energize.com)
- National Volunteer Week April 10- 16, 2016
  - LOTS of resources at <http://www.pointsoflight.org/>

**Celebrate**   
**Service**

It is only in the giving of oneself to others that we truly live.  
Ethel Percy Andrus