MissionSpark
Strategies for Social Impact

Building a Successful Volunteer Program:

A Toolkit for Mission Success

Recruitment, Training, Management & Appreciation of Your Volunteer Team

Table of Contents

Mission Spark and the Authors 3

Using this Toolkit 4

Introduction 5

Part 1: Structuring the Volunteer Program 6

- Program Goals: 7
  - Values 7
  - My Volunteer Program Goals: 7
- Creating Volunteer Opportunities: 8
  - Position descriptions: 8
- Pre-recruitment checklist: 9
- Recruiting Volunteers: 9
  - Making the Pitch: 11
- Eligibility and Requirements: 13
  - Application 13
  - Screening 14
  - Interview 14
  - Agreement 14
  - Orientation 15
  - Training 15

Part 2: Overseeing the Volunteer Program 17

- Managing Volunteers 17
  - Communication 17

Table of Contents

Communicating with Volunteers: 19

Appreciation: 19

Individualizing Appreciation 19

Tracking Volunteer Hours: 20

Note on Unsafe or Unreliable Volunteers: 21

Volunteer Retention 21

Budgeting for the Volunteer Program 22

Connecting with Partner Organizations 22

Evaluating the Volunteer Program 23

Steps to a successful evaluation: 23

Role of the Volunteer Manager: 25

Closing Thoughts 26

Links and Resources 27

Volunteer Management: 27

Diversification: 27

Retention and Appreciation: 27

Legal Considerations: 27

Program Evaluation 27

Appendix: Family Tree Volunteer Application 28

Mission Spark

Mission Spark and the Authors

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Using this Toolkit

Using this Toolkit

Background

Volunteers can be the key factor to the success and impact of a nonprofit organization. They have immense value and potential, so it is critical that volunteers are sought out with direction and purpose to fit the needs of the organization. Equally important, volunteers must be supported in their roles, accounted for, and shown appreciation for their service in order to maintain an impactful volunteer program. This toolkit is designed to lay out the process of building and maintaining a volunteer program. Explanatory text and reflection activities are used throughout for the purpose of making the toolkit a functional and applicable resource. Existing Colorado nonprofit domestic violence organizations were also interviewed as part of the information collected for this toolkit. Insights and strengths of those organizations are highlighted in the "Local Insight" and "Local Shout-Out" call-out boxes.

Parts of the Toolkit:

- Part I – Structuring the Volunteer Program
    - Includes setting program goals, creating volunteer opportunities, and recruiting volunteers as well as volunteer applications, screening, interviewing, orientation, and training.
- Part 2 – Overseeing the Volunteer Program
    - Includes considerations for managing volunteers, tracking volunteer impact, appreciation and retention of volunteers, funding the volunteer program, partner organizations, the roles of the volunteer director, and further resources to explore.

Uses for this Toolkit:

- Understand components of volunteer programs that make them successful, efficient, safe, and manageable.
- Develop volunteer management plans including recruiting, training, screening, and retaining.
- Deepen learning through reflection and brainstorming activities as well as additional resources and guides.

Introduction

Introduction

Volunteers can be incredible agents of change in your organization and community. Every individual comes with their own skill set and passions, and, like staff, can fill needs within your community. Volunteers are motivated to serve and need to be supported so that both the goals of the organization and their goals are met.

This toolkit provides information, tools and resources to help facilitate the development of a volunteer program within your organization. Use of this toolkit to develop and reflect on how the volunteer program will serve as a guide to support individuals that volunteer their time to create the best impact in your community.

Hallmarks of Successful Volunteer Programs:

- Program goals that meet the needs of the community
- Clearly defined roles and expectations of the volunteer positions
- Diverse and flexible volunteer opportunities that allow for unique skill sets of volunteers
- Appropriate volunteer screening for the safety of clients, volunteers and staff
- Volunteer acknowledgement, support and recognition
- Organization-wide shared values and open, active lines of communication between clients, volunteers, and staff

Structuring the Volunteer Program

Part 1: Structuring the Volunteer Program

– Recruiting, Screening, Training, and Orientation –

Local Insight:

"Volunteerism is a mutually beneficial thing; we shouldn't dismiss the positive impact the experience has for the volunteer."

-Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence

The illustration to the right captures how the values, mission, program goals, and volunteer positions addressed in the following sections all interact. The shared values of the organization are the context from which the organization can build, starting with the mission of the organization, or what it aims to do within the community. Based on the mission, goals are developed for the volunteer program to work towards the mission. To achieve the goals, volunteer positions are created and then filled that still align with the shared values of the organization for a successful program.

Structuring the Volunteer Program

Program Goals:

- The basis of the volunteer program should be to meet specific community needs. Defining these needs and creating service-oriented goals is the foundational step and a continual process for a successful volunteer program. Needs can be identified through communications with staffs, surveys, interviews, or community data.
- Goals should be aligned with the organization's mission and values. These components will create the culture of the organization so that the staff, the volunteers, and the clients, collaborate and move forward cohesively.

Values

Organizations with volunteer programs often focus on the following values to support the community they serve. What other values are unique to your organization that will guide your volunteer program goals?

- Social justice
- Advocacy
- Diversity
- _____
- _____
- _____

Based on the needs and values of your organization, how could you incorporate the community by creating volunteer roles to fill those needs for a greater community impact? For example, could your program run more efficiently if volunteers were able to respond to crisis calls so that your organization could expand? At the same time, consider the needs of potential volunteers. Could expanding volunteer positions also fill an internship requirement or training need for local university students? Considering the benefits for your organization and for the volunteer simultaneously will be beneficial to the growth and management of your volunteer program. ***Focus**: What do you want to accomplish in your community?*

My Volunteer Program Goals:

1.	
2.	
3.	

Structuring the Volunteer Program

Creating Volunteer Opportunities:

Once defined goals are in place, volunteer positions can be created to meet them. There are two types of volunteers when you are a direct service provider (meaning there are clients you serve): direct and indirect. Direct-client positions, those who will be working directly with the community, generally require greater training and time availability than indirect volunteers. Indirect-client volunteer positions may allow for more flexibility and be suitable roles for volunteers who cannot commit or do not meet the qualifications of direct-client roles. Both of these roles serve the organization and can contribute to the personal fulfillment of the volunteer. By having a variety of volunteer positions available, people will be more likely to find a position that is suitable for their time availability, area of interest, and skill level.

Position descriptions:

- Clearly defined volunteer position descriptions will serve the volunteer in knowing their role and purpose. In addition, they will serve the organization by communicating expectations to the volunteers and defining the specific contributions of volunteers to meet program goals.
- **Position Descriptions should include:**

This order (benefits before requirements and details) keeps the reader engaged without being scared off

  - Position title
  - Overview of position (including purpose and impact)
  - Time commitment necessary (weekly/monthly/for how long)
  - Specific tasks
  - Qualifications (such as age, training, or license)
  - Benefits to the volunteers (ex. networking or experience)
  - Requirements (must attend a specific training, dress code, screening process)
  - Location
  - Contact information of the volunteer coordinator
- **Other components to include:**
  - Mission statement and values of organization, and how the listed position aligns with those
  - Notice of agreement to confidentiality
  - Specific goals the volunteer will be working toward for the organization. Making the volunteer feel like part of the operations and processes of the organization from the start creates volunteer investment and retention.

Take away: Diverse roles that allow for multiple time commitments, identities, and abilities are key to growing your volunteer base. *What limits people from volunteering with your organization and how can you adapt roles to make them more accessible?*

Structuring the Volunteer Program

Pre-recruitment checklist:

- The entire organization is on board with volunteer program goals and action plan
- Meaningful volunteer positions have been identified and clarified
- Position descriptions have been created and are ready to be distributed to potential volunteers.

Recruiting Volunteers:

To grow and retain your volunteer program, recruiting volunteers must be a year-round job, continually seeking out potential volunteers to meet your goals. Successful recruitment is built on solid communication. Potential volunteers need to know about the need in their community, and why they, in particular, are needed as a volunteer (i.e. what specific skills or passions they possess that they could offer). Demonstrating *your* passion for the programs within the organization can ignite passion within potential volunteers. Make it clear what the volunteer will be able to gain by joining the organization, such as a new marketable skill or a positive contribution to their community. The two general approaches of reaching out to potential volunteers are broad based recruitment and target group recruitment.

#1 reason people do not volunteer?
No one asked them.

Local Insight:

Crossroads Safehouse in Fort Collins, as well as the Clear Creek County Advocates, attribute much of their volunteer recruitment to an awareness of their organization within their community, their positive reputation, and referrals from current or past volunteers.

- Strategies:
  - Broad Based Recruitment
    - Ex: Adding your organization to a volunteer matching online database
    - Reaches out to many people, less personally or specifically
    - Media-friendly (ex: social media, newspaper, online ads) but be sure to take into consideration the privacy needs of your organization.
  - Target Based Recruitment
    - Ex: Seeking local university students to volunteer for your middle-school education program, possibly contacted through a university advisor
    - Other target population examples: parents, specific occupations (such as attorneys), or existing volunteer groups
  - Partner Organizations
    - Sharing volunteer networks with other organizations may be an option
      - Also, the for-profit sector may be willing to partner and supply

volunteers or donations to support your volunteer program
        - Organizations that may be looking for volunteer opportunities include, colleges, businesses, churches, or existing community volunteer or social organizations
- Diversifying:
    - To avoid having to turn down a potential volunteer, have an arsenal of diverse volunteer opportunities. Potential volunteers I can ask:

Schools (High schools, colleges, online)	
Community Clubs: (Rotary, Knights of Columbus)	
Companies: (Corporations dedicated to corporate social responsibility or businesses with a product or service to contribute)	
Religious Groups: (local churches or volunteer centered groups)	
Volunteer Organizations: (Big Brother, Big Sister Programs, local organizations)	

Structuring the Volunteer Program

Inviting Right Tips:

- *Who invites the potential volunteer is important.* A professor or advisor might be a suitable person for a college student, or a colleague might be best to invite an attorney. Personal connections and invitations are much more successful than random or generic invitations.

- *How the invitation is delivered should vary based on the audience.* Language used, possible benefits to be gained, and amount of detail will all change to make the message appropriate for the audience and personal for the potential volunteer.

- *Existing or past*

Making the Pitch:

Just as you might sell the opportunity of a position to a potential staff member, you must **sell the volunteer opportunity** to all potential volunteers.

Be polite, enthusiastic, and grateful for their interest.

Listen to and address their concerns about training, time commitment, or ability to do the job.

Employ the idea of an "**elevator speech**" in which you explain the position, its impact, and benefits in a short, succinct speech.

Avoid over-recruiting the same groups.

This article from *Volunteer Power* outlines seven common mistakes of recruitment and how to avoid them.

Closure and Follow-Up

Perhaps most importantly, the communication must be continued. Be sure to follow up with the potential volunteer. Leave them with information about the organization and your contact information. Make sure they are aware of next steps of becoming involved. If possible, get their email or phone and reach out after the initial meeting to show interest.

Characteristics of a Good Recruitment Message:

- Starts with need in community
- Solution (that the volunteer position aids the need)
- Fears/Questions (address "Can *I* help?")
- Benefits
- Contact Point

Steve McCurley of VM Systems suggests this order as the psychologically strategic order to present information to potential volunteers because they are encouraged by what they can contribute without feeling nervous that they don't have the right skill set, or being overloaded with over-detailed information.

Structuring the Volunteer Program

Notes:

Structuring the Volunteer Program

Eligibility and Requirements:

Application

- The application may be the first substantial connection and commitment to the organization on behalf of the volunteer. The application should not only collect their information, it should provide information about the organization and specific positions available.
- Most importantly, it should establish the lines of communication between the volunteer and the organization.
    - It is recommended to include open-ended questions, areas for feedback, and direct contact information to make the volunteer feel like an integral part of the organization from the start.
    - Information *to collect* includes, but is not limited to: Name of applicant, date, birthdate, contact information, interest gauge of available positions, time availability, skills or experience, languages spoken, open-ended questions (e.g. What else would you like us to know?), emergency contacts, references, etc.
    - Information *given* includes but is not limited to: the organization mission statement, position descriptions and purposes, benefits of each role, staff contact information, and a sincere thank you for starting the volunteering process.
    - Clearly define the requirements from the beginning with the volunteer position description. No one likes to be caught off guard to an unexpected two-year commitment or 50 hour training.
    - Agreements you may want to include are an agreement to confidentiality (as well as an explanation of your confidentiality policy), a release of liability, a release on the part of the volunteer allowing the organization to conduct a background

The volunteer application at the Family Tree, based in Wheat Ridge, is a great application example included at the end of this toolkit as a resource.

Local Insight:

Considerations when accepting volunteers after screening:

"On-going screening and assessment is critical. If a potential volunteer isn't self-aware they may not recognize how their attitudes or behaviors come across as threatening to a survivor. Continue to be vigilant and make training an ongoing process. "

–Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence

check, and an ethical agreement and explanation.

Screening

- Ensuring a safe environment is crucial for protecting vulnerable populations and upholding the reputation of the organization. While no background check process can show a complete picture, the process can inform your decision of whether or not to take on a volunteer. Something found on a report is not an automatic disqualification; in the end it is up to the organization to decide what is best for the volunteer and the volunteer program. Ultimately, the goal is to create a secure environment without alienating potential volunteers.
- Commonly used checks: Criminal history report (can be run at county, state, or federal level), motor vehicle reports, child abuse or neglect reports, and questioning to personal and/or professional references of the potential volunteer.
- Fees and budgeting: The screening process can be a costly part of the volunteer program. Many organizations spend $25 to $50 per volunteer each time the checks are run or renewed. It is possible to ask the potential volunteer to absorb the cost, or donate towards it, which could possibly make them more invested and committed to the process. Or, the volunteer program can budget for and absorb these fees.

Interview

- Investing the time to conduct personal interviews leads to higher volunteer retention, volunteer loyalty, and satisfaction ratings.[1] It can also be a good opportunity to start conversations about confidentiality, as well as gauge potential benefits and motivations of volunteering for the particular individual, which will be important to know for appreciation and retention purposes.

Agreement

- After the recruitment, application, screening, and interview, if both the volunteer and organization agree that it would be a positive, mutually beneficial arrangement for the volunteer to contribute their time, there should be written documentation of the agreement.
- The agreement should include the mission statement, position description and time commitment, confidentiality and mandatory reporting agreement, a release of liability (unless the organization plans to cover the volunteer with liability insurance), as well as the support the organization agrees to provide and the expectations agreed upon by the volunteer. Finally, a

[1] Serve Montana *Volunteer Management Toolkit*, Page 29.

thank you showing the appreciation of the organization to the volunteer for their commitment.

- Sample Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting Agreement

How can I make the application, screening, and interview process simple and accessible to potential volunteers?

Orientation

- Should include a welcome facility tour (including areas the volunteer can use for their belongings and their role) so that they feel comfortable, an introduction to the staff and other volunteers, the mission and history of the organization, the goals of their particular project and the impact they will be making, and time for questions as well.
    - The orientation, or any initial meeting, is an opportune time to explain confidentiality, client privilege, and mandatory reporting to the volunteer.
    - Also, orientation is a great time to teach volunteers how to track their hours served.

Training

The higher a volunteer's level of education, the more likely the volunteer is to continue volunteering.[2]

Local Shout-out:

Clear Creek County Advocates has remarkable retention rates, due in part to their in-depth, ongoing training. In addition to two months of Tuesday and Thursday night classes and a shadowing period, volunteers attend monthly meetings with guest speakers for additional training and reflection, which builds their community and keeps them

Local Insight:

"Clients know that everyone, all the interns, staff, and volunteers go through the same training. That makes them feel more connected to the program knowing that everyone has a shared base of knowledge."

–Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence

Structuring the Volunteer Program

- Perhaps the most critical part of the volunteer program, training is the foundation for what the volunteers can contribute, how comfortable they feel, how long they stay with your organization, and the social change impact within your community. *Programs that require more time and depth in training have higher retention rates*.
- Training should include a basic understanding of the target issues of your organization for both direct and indirect volunteers so that everyone involved in the organization understands principle tenants of the mission and values of the organization. If desired, interconnected social issues may be addressed as well.

- Training through webinars, in groups, or one-on-one can all be used depending on the size and needs of the program.
- It should include reflection and guidance on personal awareness and cultural competency for the intense and vulnerable situations they may come across. Training can serve the volunteers to personally reflect on their experiences, their triggers, and their privileges and power. All of which can be used when working with clients to be aware of themselves and of the survivors.
- A component of the training should also be specific to the role they will be filling and allow them to get familiar with the setting and people with whom they will volunteer.
- Adult learners want to know the reason they are learning something and the direct situation or problem it solves.
- Gaining feedback from the training participants is a great way to develop your training process and involve your volunteers in the organization by showing them that their input matters to you from their first interaction with the organization.
- Creating a certificate of completion for the training, or other benefit, may help reward the volunteer for their dedication to the training process.

Local Shout-out:

Archuleta County Victim Assistance involves mobile agencies such as the police as a part of their training so that everyone working with the volunteers is on the same page and has developed a relationship with

2

http://nnedv.org/downloads/SafetyNet/OVW/CI_USAdvocateConfidentialityStateLawChart_Oct2010.pdf

Overseeing the Volunteer Program

Part 2: Overseeing the Volunteer Program

The overall success of the volunteer program relies on the continued management of the foundation of the program laid out in Part 1. Part 2 of this toolkit will cover managing volunteers through fostering successful communication, appreciating volunteers for greater retention, tracking volunteer impact, budgeting for the volunteer program, the role of the volunteer manager, and further resources to guide your program.

Managing Volunteers

The Volunteer Management Toolkit created by Serve Montana outlines the following guidelines for managing your volunteers:

- Give volunteers the instructions, directions, feedback, corrections, information, and freedom they need to perform their functions well
- Take care of the person, not the task
- Provide guidance in the way that works for the volunteer
- Support, rather than control, the volunteer's effort

Local Insight:

Language Matters:

"They are '*our volunteers,*' not '*your*' or '*my*' volunteers. We are all working together."

- Shannon at Crossroads Safehouse in

***Tip:* Get the new volunteers in a position right away, even if it is an indirect-client position, while they wait to complete their direct-client training. This maintains their motivation and interest in the organization.**

Communication

- Find the communication style that works best for you to reach your volunteers, and for them to reach you. Beyond phone and email, systems such as Volunteer Impact, Mail Chimp, or Volgistics may be more effective in reaching and organizing many people.
- Being prompt with emails and

Local Insight:

Through monthly reflection and training meetings, as well as volunteer dinners to celebrate, and other fundraising and community events, the Clear Creek County Advocates have built long lasting positive relationships in their volunteer program. Face-to-face time contributes greatly to their communication including reflection, processing, and feedback. "We work really hard at keeping them together."

Overseeing the Volunteer Program

phone calls is important to show your dedication to the needs of the volunteers.

- Check-ins with volunteers build relationships and enhance volunteer experiences. They can also serve for reflection, which is valuable especially when there is a chance of secondary trauma with the volunteer work. But, the volunteer manager does not have to be the only one to check in. Board members may be interested to check in to understand the work being done, or staff members on related projects may be great reference points for volunteers.

Local Insight:

"We have committed, loyal volunteers that want to learn and be prepared. We have the rapport we have because they feel like they could come in and talk."

- Archuleta County Victim Assistance

Communication needs in my organization (e.g. isolation of volunteers or email hassles)	**Methods I can use to fill these needs (e.g. monthly volunteer reflection meetings or online email distributor)**

Overseeing the Volunteer Program

Communicating with Volunteers:

Appreciation:

- While sometimes underappreciated, meaningful volunteer appreciation is critical for retaining your volunteers and attracting future volunteers. Making sure volunteers are cared for, fulfilled, and thanked will create a positive volunteer culture.

> ***Local Insight:***
> **"Every single staff member is responsible for appreciating volunteers, it's part of the culture."**
> **–The Family Tree in Wheat Ridge**

- The best way to appreciate a volunteer is to let them know that they are valuable to the mission of the organization. This can be done with a verbal or written "Thank you," a spotlight for them such as a Volunteer of the Month article, or coffee or lunch to sit down and talk with them.
- Volunteers want to feel connected to the organization. Incorporating them in decision making processes and asking for feedback can be very gratifying for them. Including them in fundraising and budgeting processes also is a purposeful way for volunteers to feel more connected.
- Be in touch with why the volunteers contribute their time, and reward them for that reason. For example, if the reason is to make a contribution to the community, thank them with the specific details of what has been accomplished due to their support. If they volunteer to network, thank them with a social event or a recommendation on LinkedIn. Appreciation should always be combined with recognition.
- Recognize volunteers often and sincerely.
- Appreciation ideas: smile, create a suggestion box or feedback opportunity, send a birthday card, give a written thank you letter, ask for a report of how volunteering is going, give a small gift or treat, greet the volunteers by name and get to know them, use public or social media recognition, give a sincere verbal thanks.

Individualizing Appreciation

Not all volunteers appreciate being in the spotlight or receiving gifts when they are recognized. It is important to understand the personality of the volunteer you would like to thank and appreciate

them in a personal way. The following article from VISTACampus provides recognition planning that accommodates different volunteer motivations.

When planning for *an achievement-oriented volunteer*:

- The ideal result of recognition is additional training or more challenging tasks.
- The recognition is linked to a very specific accomplishment.
- Phrasing of recognition could include "Best" or "Most" awards.
- Recognition decision could include checkpoints or records.
- Awardee could be selected by fellow team members/volunteers.

When planning for *an affiliation-oriented volunteer*:

- Recognition should be given at a group event.
- Recognition should be given in presence of peers, family, or other bonded groups.
- Recognition should have a personal touch.
- Recognition should be organizational in nature, given by an organization.
- Recognition should be voted on by peers.

When planning for *a power-oriented volunteer*:

- A key aspect of recognition is "promotion," conveying greater access to authority or information.
- Recognition should be a commendation from "Names" – people the volunteer sees as important or influential.
- Recognition should be announced to the community at large, put in the newspaper, etc.
- Recognition should illustrate the impact or influence the volunteer has had on systems, the community, or the issue.

Tracking Volunteer Hours:

Tracking hours contributed by your volunteers is critical to the sustainability of your program. Not only can it function as record keeping and accountability, hours donated have economic value and are one measure of the community support of your cause. Both of those contribute to the fundraising ability and community impact capacity of your organization.

- $25.96 is the accepted worth of each hour contributed while volunteering in the state of Colorado.[3] Multiplying the accepted volunteer "wage" by how many volunteer hours were

[3] https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time

contributed represents what would have been spent if your organization would have paid for all the labor done for your mission. The total amount of money can be used in writing grants and is valuable to report to your stakeholders.

- If an occupational skill is being donated that is valued at a higher wage (such as a lawyer), the monetary value can be calculated here.

Note on Unsafe or Unreliable Volunteers:

Just as with staff, if the situation with the volunteer is not working for any reason, it is your prerogative to "fire" the volunteer. The volunteer wants to make the best contribution they have, so if their skill set or personality does not match the work they are assigned, try to find a different opportunity for them for the safety and satisfaction of everyone involved.

Volunteer Retention

Keeping volunteers invested in your program will save you time and money otherwise spent on recruiting and training new volunteers. Also, their experience volunteering will allow them to create a greater impact. High volunteer retention rates usually reflect good organizational culture, a community among the volunteers, and ongoing training opportunities for the volunteers.

Retention Tips:

Make the volunteer feel like they belong. Make them comfortable. Have a place for them to set their things, make sure they know where things are, and the people around them so they do not feel isolated.

- Be accessible by phone or email if a volunteer needs something.
- It is everyone's job to recognize and get to know new volunteers, just as you would new staff.
- Place volunteers on a project as quickly as possible so they do not lose interest.
- Add variety to the role and training of the volunteer so they can keep progressing and learning to make the best impact they can.

Overseeing the Volunteer Program

Budgeting for the Volunteer Program

- Determine support, funding, and revenue against the expenses of the volunteer program (including staff salary, office equipment, volunteer appreciation needs, program supplies, and cost of background checks and training
    - Grant applications may be an option for funding your program. The measured community support for your organization through hours donated of volunteering can be a resource to use in constructing your grant applications. Other information to include could be the money saved by recruiting volunteers rather than paid staff to implement the project goals.
    - Incorporate Volunteers into the fundraising aspect
        - Volunteers may have connections through their career, friends, family, or other volunteer commitments that would be beneficial to raise money and recruit more volunteers.
        - Helping the organization fundraise gives the volunteer more of a stake in the organization.
    - Possible funding sources:
        - Colorado Department of Human Services
        - United Way
        - Volunteers and their networks
        - Partner Organizations

Connecting with Partner Organizations

- Creating and fostering connections with partner organizations can help your volunteer program, and organization, as a whole, to succeed. For-profit organizations can be helpful for products, services, volunteers, and community awareness (e.g. a local t-shirt printing company). It is also important to create connections with other nonprofits and organizations for social change. Beyond collaborating with similar organizations to discuss best practices and share volunteer networks and ideas, reaching out to related causes can strengthen the impact of your program. Are there local programs that work against related injustices as your program? How can you create meaningful partnerships to further the cause of both organizations? Can volunteers play a role in this (for example: would your volunteers be interested in donating their time to a partner's fundraiser for more awareness about interconnected social causes?)

Existing Partnerships (How are volunteers involved?)	How can I support our partnerships? What else can I do to the benefit of our volunteers and partners?

Overseeing the Volunteer Program

Possible Partnerships	Benefits available for organizations and volunteers	Action step to pursue partnership

Evaluating the Volunteer Program

Evaluation may be the most important step to ensuring a successful, ongoing volunteer program. For this type of program, it is best to look at program goals, ongoing processes, and measurable outcomes. In addition, every part of the program must be considered including the projects volunteers contributed to, the volunteer training process, and volunteer retention and satisfaction.

Steps to a successful evaluation:

1. Get feedback from stakeholders about the volunteer program.
    a. This includes volunteers, partner organizations, and clients.
    b. Feedback can be obtained in the form of surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.
    c. Make sure staff and volunteers both feel supported in their roles and are not overly strained by the program. Using open-ended questions is best for discovering components you may not have been considering about the experience.

d. Asking for feedback will also help stakeholders become more engaged with the organization, and will reveal strengths and weaknesses of the program on a personal level.

Who is involved with or impacted by the volunteer program?	How can I listen to their feedback?

Project Goal	Progress on Goal (Successes and Areas of Deficit)

2. Revisit your volunteer program goals
    a. Did you meet your goals? Why?
    b. Did you fall short of your goals? What specific actions can be taken to reach them?

3. Consider inputs and outputs

Overseeing the Volunteer Program

   a. What did you put into your volunteer program? Did the organization pay a staff member? What were your total expenses and resources used? How many volunteer hours were contributed or what specific skills were donated?
   b. What was done with your inputs? How many clients were assisted? What projects were completed? How has having volunteers made an impact in the community?
   c. Generating a report where you collect data on volunteers may be the most efficient option for gathering input and output data.
4. Create a report or synthesis of the above information
   a. Summarizing the data collected will be useful to you for reflection and improvement, but will also be valuable for stakeholders and possibly for fundraising.
   b. Consider your audience and synthesize the outcomes to share with your stakeholders.
5. Update program goals with action steps
   a. Use the *feedback* and your organization's *mission* and *values* to enhance or rewrite your volunteer program goals. Outline specific action steps (such as recruiting more volunteers from a specific community partner or writing personalized thank you notes) that will help you improve and have a more impactful and fulfilling volunteer program.

Informed project goal	Action step to fulfill the updated goal

Role of the Volunteer Manager:

- Set goals for the program. Ultimately the direction and impact of the program is executed under your direction.
- Develop an awareness of volunteers, as well as who and what is a good fit by creating personal relationships with volunteers and receiving their feedback throughout their

Local Insight:

"The person in this position should be empowered enough to make decisions, to work with the staff, and tell them 'no' if they need to."

- Shannon at Crossroads Safehouse

volunteer experience.

- Continually invite volunteers to be a part the making process of the organization, and solicit feedback from their experience for program improvement.
- Frequently ask for feedback from partner organizations and clients about their interactions with volunteers so that everyone is able to communicate their needs.
- Involve volunteers in the outreach and fundraising of the organization. Encourage them to connect their networks to your organization.
- Provide feedback to the volunteers so they have clear expectations, are recognized for their efforts, and can be thoughtful of the benefits of volunteering for themselves, the organization, and their community.
- Schedule and approve hours of the volunteers, as well as thanking them for the hours they do contribute.
- Evaluate the volunteer program success through reflection. Use that information to improve the program.

Closing Thoughts

We hope that this toolkit has helped to create or enhance your volunteer program so that it is sustainable, impactful, and fulfilling. Best of luck to your program and please reach out to the creators of this toolkit so that we can best support your implementation efforts! We thank you for the work you do for the people of Colorado, as well as your commitment to educating our communities.

kara@missionspark.org

Links & Resources

Links and Resources

Volunteer Management:

The Serve Montana Volunteer Management Toolkit
An easy to read, comprehensive toolkit that addresses the basics of volunteer management and includes practical tips.

Diversification:

The Denver Foundation Inclusiveness Project
A resource for making your volunteer program more inclusive and diverse to it can effectively meet a variety of different population's needs.

Retention and Appreciation:

Volunteer Retention Issue Brief
Includes charted and graphed data showing which strategies are effective to retain volunteers.

Volunteer Appreciation Guide
The guide addresses why people choose to volunteer and how those factors can be supported through volunteer appreciation.

Legal Considerations:

Principles & Practices for Nonprofit Excellence in Colorado, 3rd Edition.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Resource Hub
A collection of many evaluation resources and articles sponsored by United Way.

Basic Guide to Program Evaluation (Including Outcomes Evaluations)
Includes extensive links and articles for every step of a detailed evaluation process.

Appendix

Appendix: Family Tree Volunteer Application

The following is the application to volunteer at The Family Tree and is a great example, including many components of starting the process with volunteers.

The mission of Family Tree is to help people overcome child abuse, domestic violence and homelessness to become safe, strong and

Please email or mail application to:
Email: enelson@thefamilytree.org
Address: Family Tree, Inc.
Attn: Director of Volunteer Services
3805 Marshall St. #100

Volunteer Application

Date of Application: _____

Contact Information

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Date of Birth: ___/___/____

Address: _____ City: _____ ST: ___ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Email:

Employment/School Information

Employer: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ ST: ___ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Supervisor: _____ Title: _____

Areas of expertise/specialized training:

Background Check Information

Due to the nature of our mission, Family Tree policy requires a background check and child abuse report on all staff and volunteers.

Have you ever been convicted of any law violation? Include any pleas of 'guilty' or 'no contest.'

☐Yes ☐No

If yes, please explain: _____

Have you ever been listed on the Central Registry for child abuse or neglect? ☐Yes ☐No

Appendix

Family Tree Program Areas

Please check the program areas in which you are most interested.

Family Tree Program		Family Tree Program	
Office/Fundraising		House of Hope	
Gemini		Karlis Family Center	
Housing and Family Services		Treasure Trunk Thrift Store	
Women in Crisis		Board of Directors and/or Committees	

Please check all volunteer opportunities in which you are interested:

Volunteer Opportunities/Interests		Volunteer Opportunities/Interests	
Receptionist/Clerical		Special Events/Outreach	
Legal Advocate		Family Tree Ambassador	
Child Care		Maintenance/Handyperson	
Speakers Bureau		Tutor	
Landscaping		Cook	
Crisis Line		Thrift Store Attendant	
Other:			

Please mark all of your skills:

Fundraising		Public Speaking/Training		Plumbing	
Computer Technician		Tutoring		Painting	
Customer Service		Cooking		Finance	
Receptionist		Driving		Desktop Publishing	
Leadership		Landscaping		Data Entry/Computers	
Crisis Intervention		Storytelling/Child Care		Event Planning/Committees	
Counseling		Marketing Research		Group Facilitation	

Appendix

Are you bilingual? ☐Yes ☐No

If yes, what language(s): _____

Can you read and write in the above listed languages: _____

Other skills or experience you would like us to know about? _____

_____

Your Availability:

When are you available to start volunteering with Family tree? _____

Comments on your availability: _____

_____