



Assessment of Organizational Volunteer Engagement

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SCORE	Score 1 if you . . .	Score 2 if you . . .	Score 3 if you . . .
Organizational Support for Volunteers			
Involve volunteers in all aspects of organizational life.	Have staff and/or a few dedicated volunteers do most of the work.	Have a volunteer presence in all aspects of organizational activities and programming.	Mandate that staff and leadership volunteers utilize volunteers in their work.
Allocate resources, including budget, space, and tools, for volunteer engagement.	Assume that volunteers are "free" and do not require resources.	Have a budget for volunteer resources.	Reflect in your annual budget detailed expenses for volunteers including supplies, space, software, training, recruitment, staff time, and recognition.
Train staff and board leadership to work effectively with volunteers.	Assume staff and key leaders know how to work with volunteers.	Reflect responsibility for volunteer engagement in staff and lay leadership position descriptions.	Provide formal training to staff and lay leadership on how to work with volunteers.
Needs Assessment and Program Planning			
Define why volunteers are an important priority for the organization.	Use volunteers for activities and programs as they are needed.	Have identified volunteers as leaders and helpers in moving the organization forward.	Have a written philosophy statement about volunteer engagement that identifies volunteers as an indispensable channel for ideas on organizational direction and operations, programs, and activities.
Include volunteer engagement in risk management planning.	Do not consider volunteer assignments in your risk assessment.	Evaluate all volunteer assignments for risk.	Have appropriate insurance for volunteer engagement and evaluate/update as necessary.

SCORE	Score 1 if you . . .	Score 2 if you . . .	Score 3 if you . . .
Effective Recruitment and Cultivation			
Write position descriptions for all volunteer assignments.	Verbally explain to volunteers what they are going to do.	Have a position description for each volunteer assignment.	Conduct an annual (at minimum) review and update of all position descriptions.
Have a process for volunteer cultivation.	Do recruitment exclusively through announcements in the newsletter, website postings, etc.	Figure out who knows prospective volunteers and have them do the recruiting.	Have a written strategic recruitment plan for all volunteer assignments and needs.
Maintain current and accurate records on volunteers.	Do not track volunteer involvement.	Have a record of all volunteers and what they do for the organization.	Integrate volunteer records with membership and donor information.
Interviewing and Placement			
Design volunteer assignments for a wide range of skills, ages, and interests.	Rely on a specific group of volunteers (e.g., stay-at-home mothers, retired, etc.) to get the work done.	Include all age groups and demographics among your volunteers.	Design assignments specifically to reflect a wide range of skills and not limit work to clerical and administrative positions.
Screen and place volunteers in assignments that are right for them and the organization.	Let anyone volunteer for anything.	Match volunteers to the assignment that aligns with their interests.	Recruit volunteers based on their preferences, the skills they willingly share, and the relevant qualifications for the job.
Orientation and Planning			
Write policies and procedures for volunteer engagement.	Assume that volunteers know what is acceptable for them to do.	Have some policies that relate to volunteer involvement.	Have detailed written policies and procedures and orient all volunteers to these guidelines.

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Supervision and Support			
Hold volunteers accountable for what they do.	Cannot terminate a volunteer.	Clarify for volunteers the limits and boundaries of their assignments.	Have staff and leadership follow up with volunteers to make sure they accomplish what they set out to do, releasing them as needed.
Actively solicit volunteer input in decisions that affect them.	Have volunteers do whatever they are assigned.	Encourage current volunteers to give feedback.	Have a system in place for collecting and reflecting on volunteer feedback on decisions that affect them.
Strategies for Sustainability (Retention)			
Have volunteer assignments that are meaningful and that impact the ability of the organization to achieve its mission.	Design volunteer assignments that require volunteers to perform the work of the staff and/or board of directors.	Design volunteer assignments to have an impact on the mission of the organization.	Reflect a diversity of work in volunteer assignments, from direct service to program delivery, and incorporate high-level assignments, such as the provision of professional services.
Ensure that staff and leadership recognize volunteers informally and formally.	Host an annual recognition for volunteers.	Give frequent recognition to volunteers from the board, staff, and other volunteer leaders.	Acknowledge the successes of volunteer endeavors in personalized ways through sharing celebratory information in collateral materials (e.g., the website, newsletters, announcements, emails, and written materials), through letters, and through customized networking opportunities with organizational leaders and others.

KEY

Do you score mostly 3s? If so, you are well on your way to having an outstanding process for volunteer engagement. Your organization understands the benefits of a culture that embraces and celebrates volunteerism.

Do you score mostly 2s? Then your volunteer engagement process has room for improvement. Look at the number 3 answers to see where you have opportunities to improve your volunteer engagement practices.

Do you score mostly 1s? It's not unusual to start developing a volunteer engagement strategy from the ground up. Identify specific ways to develop greater competency in volunteer engagement and nurture volunteer talent.

The results of the volunteer engagement assessment provide a snapshot of where your nonprofit stands right now in terms of volunteer engagement. They are your initial benchmarks. The lower-scoring areas point out strong candidates for change. If you scored mostly 3s, congratulations! You already have a strong baseline of volunteer engagement practice. As you debrief this exercise, consider these questions:

- What are your strengths?
- What surprised you most about the results?
- What will you have to do differently to raise your scores to all 3s?
- Do you have volunteers aging in place?
- How is your volunteer landscape changing?
- Can you project how your organization will score on this assessment if you change nothing as Boomers and the generations that follow begin to dominate the volunteer workplace?
- Are you positioned to meet volunteers' evolving needs for flexible schedules, high-impact volunteer roles, and collaborative relationships?
- What were your "aha" moments and why?
- What are the biggest challenges for you in making changes for quality improvement?
- What are you willing to invest (time, money, people, etc.) in this process?