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# Where Do I Go From Here? Engage Volunteers in New Ways



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# Agenda

- Where can volunteers go in your program?
- Keys to evolving your program
- Creating involvement, flexibility and a connection with volunteers
- Tools for evolving your program
- Things to think about
- Questions

# Where Do Your Volunteers Go?

What does your volunteer program look like to a volunteer?

- Cul-de-sac
  - Nowhere to go when you get there
- Country Road
  - If you hang in there it goes somewhere, eventually
- Highway
  - It's a direct route to impact and engagement

# Keys to Evolving your Program

- Develop work that is meaningful to the volunteer and important to the organization.
- Create a connection between volunteers, clients and your mission.
- Establish the foundation necessary to support a diverse program of volunteer engagement.
- Know and share the impact of the work volunteers do.



# Create More Involvement

## Training and experience pathways

- Do volunteers know what they need to do to be able to fill each role in your program?
- Is it clear how that happens, or is it mysterious or based on longevity?
- Do you offer those classes or have on the job experience checklists?

# Create More Involvement

## Leadership positions

- Do you have opportunities for volunteers to move into leadership roles? In your program? In the organization?
- Shift leaders, committee leaders, subject matter experts, pro bono consultants

# Create More Flexibility

Are there different types of opportunities or different levels of involvement available?

- One size doesn't fit all
- Doesn't allow for growth or retraction as a volunteer's life changes
- Do you offer project-based opportunities, virtual opportunities



# Create More Flexibility

Bring more positions into your volunteer engagement program

- Let volunteers help you!
- Volunteers know the work that volunteers do - empower them to document or create the foundation and flexibility you need.

# Create More Understanding

Keep volunteers informed

- New ideas or theories in your impact area
- New policies, practices or projects in your program
- Milestones in your organization

# Create More Understanding

Incorporate impact into recognition

- Don't just say thank you - share the work the volunteer has done
- Include clients in the thank you message
- Spread the thank you outside of your volunteer program - Social media, internal and external communications

# Create the Connection

Turn your volunteers into Advocates!

- Do volunteers know your mission?
  - Major accomplishments, funders
- Do they know about other programs?
  - Areas and impacts besides their own
- Empower them to spread the word
  - Keep them up to date
  - Use social media

**Do you know which  
of your volunteers  
are also donors?**

# Tools for Evolving Your Program

## **Think strategically!**

- Do you have a 3 or 5 year plan for your program?
- Get off the hamster wheel

## **What type of program do you have now?**

- What type of program do you want to have?

## **Where and why do volunteers drop out?**

- Ask them!
- Survey past and current volunteers about what they like, are proud of, don't understand about your program

**Don't do this alone!**



# Tools for Evolving Your Program

## **Start with the easy (easier?) stuff**

- Create or document the structure that exists now
- Identify volunteer position descriptions, how they fit together, what volunteers need to know to do them.

## **Create more flexibility**

- What did your volunteers tell you they wanted to do, but couldn't - so they left?
- Where does the rigidity come from? You, organization leadership, the past, or perceived ideas about volunteers?

## **Create a communication plan to turn volunteers in to advocates**

# Things to Think About

## **You don't have to change everything right now**

- Putting pathways in is an easier first step
- Identify the priorities or critical positions

## **Invite volunteers to take on leadership roles**

- Volunteers want to tell you what they like (and don't like) about your program
- Invite your superstar volunteers to take the lead

## **Share your milestones and successes with the organization**

- Manager, leadership, co-workers and, of course, the volunteers!

# Thanks for attending!

**For any questions contact:**

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