

Pointers on Inviting People to Volunteer



- Be motivated yourself. Sincerity wins out over technique every time.
- Be clear on what you want people to do. Use written volunteer job descriptions whenever possible.
- Use titles. The word “volunteer” is a pay category, not a function!
- Be honest. Tell prospective volunteers what the work entails, even if you think it may sound like a lot. Avoid minimizing the work.
- Share deadlines up front. When does the work have to be finished?
- (Remember that it is better to live with a vacancy a little while longer than to convince the wrong person to become a volunteer.)
- Define the training and supervision or support the volunteer will have. This isn't sink or swim.
- Identify and express the benefits to the volunteer from accomplishing the task. The best volunteering is when the giver benefits as well as the recipient.
- Explain why you decided to ask this particular person to help—what skills or personality traits make him or her a good candidate for the position.
- It may be just as important to discover what a prospective volunteer wants to *learn* or *try* as a volunteer as it is to know his or her official credentials.
- Keep in mind that you can never insult people by asking them to volunteer. In fact, you are usually flattering them by implying that they have the talent to do the job.
- Paint an upbeat picture of the work. Volunteering should be fun.
- Hold the perspective that you are giving people the marvelous *opportunity* to participate in an important project. You don't want them to be left out!
- The best way to recruit volunteers is to *ask* people to help.