

Idea Board: Using Volunteers to Enhance Your Adult Citizenship Program



Introduction:

Volunteers can be a great resource to support the administrative and instructional needs of your adult citizenship program. However, just having a group of volunteers available without knowing exactly how they can help your program, or what skills and knowledge they bring to your program may have negative results. First, ask yourself the following questions before recruiting volunteers:

1. What type of support does our program and/or students need to be more successful?
2. What types of volunteers should we recruit?
3. What types of training will they likely require?

.....

Defining Your Needs:

Together, as a staff, take some time to define your program's needs. Use the attached "Volunteer Needs Assessment Chart" to help guide and give structure to the discussion.

.....

Identify the Supervision Chain:

It is important to decide up front who is going to supervise your volunteers and how. Make sure your volunteers have a job description and an expectations contract in place.

.....

Target Types of Volunteers:

Once you know your program's needs and who is going to supervise your volunteers, decide what types of volunteers to recruit in order to meet the needs. Make a list of the most important requirements for volunteers. This should lead you to a good idea of the types of volunteers you need. For example, if you need someone to enter data, then you should focus on individuals with those skills (rather than, say, teaching skills).

Recruitment:

Successful recruitment takes some planning. Develop a simple recruitment plan that includes at a minimum the following:

- a. Some possible reasons someone might want to volunteer in general.
- b. Some possible reasons someone might want to volunteer with your program.
- c. Some ways to motivate people to volunteer.

- d. A recruitment message that will sell your program to the potential volunteers.
 - e. Recruitment materials based on your target population.
 - f. Presentations that put a “face” on your program.
 - g. A range of recruitment strategies. (see checklist attached)
 - h. A list of relationships you have already made to get you started.
-

A Few Recruitment Do’s and Don’ts:

- a. Recruit more volunteers than you need. (25% typically do not follow through)
 - b. Make sure everything is in place to support your volunteers before you recruit them.
 - c. Don’t just take the first person who shows an interest in volunteering. Create a thorough volunteer application, hold interviews, check references, require training, sign an expectations contract, and evaluate your volunteers at least annually.
-

Volunteer Needs Assessment

Does our program need the following?	Strong Need	Would Enhance	No Need at This Time
1. Help with entering student data into a computer system			
2. Help with administering assessments			
3. Help with scoring assessments			
4. Help with cataloguing and organizing books and materials			
5. Help with distributing books			
6. Help with student orientation			
7. Help with student intake			
8. Help with clerical work, such as copying, filing, etc.			
9. Help with contacting students			
10. Help with marketing the program			
11. Help with counseling students (personal counseling)			
12. Help with working one-on-one with students with low English skills			
13. Help with working with groups of students in a multi-level classroom			
14. Help with creating learning activities			
15. Help with childcare			

Volunteer Recruitment Strategies Checklist

Strategy	We Will Include This Strategy	We Will Not Include This Strategy	Comments/ Notes
1. Word of mouth			
2. Direct mail			
3. Information tables at community events			
4. Presentations to community groups			
5. Recruitment dinners with presentation on volunteering			
6. Fliers			
7. Posters			
8. Brochures			
9. Articles or press releases			
10. Other organizations' newsletters			
11. Presentations on local TV			
12. Public Service Announcements (PSAs)			
13. Web pages			
14. Signs on buses or other public transportation signs (inside or outside)			
15. Billboards			
16. Small fliers in grocery bags			
17. Work with internship programs at colleges and universities or with volunteer recruitment agencies			