

Retaining Volunteers

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Objectives:

- 1. Understand what is meant by the term “retention.”**
- 2. Recognize factors that affect volunteer retention.**
- 3. Learn new ways to retain your volunteers.**

Volunteer Retention

✦ What is Retention?

- ✦ The rate at which volunteers return to the same agency or project on a continual basis over time.

✦ Retention is not a task in and of itself. It is an outcome.

Volunteer Retention

❖ Why do volunteers return?

- ❖ They feel appreciated.
- ❖ They can see that their work makes a difference.
- ❖ There is a chance for advancement.
- ❖ There is opportunity for personal growth.
- ❖ They receive public and/or private recognition.
- ❖ They feel capable of handling the tasks offered.
- ❖ There is a sense of belonging and teamwork.
- ❖ They are involved in the process.

If your organization has volunteers that return on a regular basis, what do you think their motivations are?

Volunteer Retention

- ❖ Retention begins before a volunteer does any volunteering.
 - ❖ First impressions matter.
- ❖ Connect them to your organization's mission and vision.

Volunteer Retention

- ⊕ Keep accurate records and share impacts.
- ⊕ Provide well managed volunteer projects
- ⊕ Recognize and thank them regularly.
- ⊕ Have multiple tasks available for volunteers to accomplish with multiple responsibility levels.
- ⊕ Let people know that their feedback is being used.
- ⊕ Check in with volunteers. Is the org meeting the volunteer's needs. Is the project fulfilling what you promised

Volunteer Retention

- ⊕ Volunteers have a lifecycle.
- ⊕ How can you support a volunteer after:
 - ▣ 1 day
 - ▣ 1 month
 - ▣ 6 months
 - ▣ 1 year
 - ▣ Beyond

In small groups, list 2 – 5 ways to support a volunteer after each timeframe.

Volunteer Retention

✚ After 1 day:

- ✚ Solicit immediate feedback
- ✚ Briefly review the tasks that they completed and what it means for your organization
- ✚ Thank them by name.

✚ After 1 month:

- ✚ Send a reminder about upcoming events and activities
- ✚ Share impact results and news of the organization
- ✚ Let them know they are still needed

Volunteer Retention

✚ After 6 months:

- ✚ Hold recognition event and invite them!
- ✚ Provide 2nd training in issue area
- ✚ Thank them for their continuing support

✚ After 1 year:

- ✚ Promote them to be a volunteer leader (can be done sooner)
- ✚ Share the state of your organization thanking them for their contribution

New York Cares' Retention Strategy

- ❑ Communications after 5 projects, 10 projects, 25 projects, 50 projects, 100+ projects & 5 and 10 year anniversaries
- ❑ Hold annual awards ceremonies
- ❑ Publish names of milestone markers
- ❑ Publicize leadership positions to current volunteers
- ❑ Hold issue-specific workshops and trainings
- ❑ Referral program
- ❑ Promoting other activities

Up Next:

Evaluating Your Program