

Recruiting Volunteers in Your Congregation

For members of congregations, serving others represents a way putting faith and personal beliefs into action. They are powerful motivators.

Some ideas for recruiting members as volunteers include:

- Announcements during worship services by the religious/spiritual leader
- Speaking at Sunday School classes, ladies group meetings, youth groups or congregational social functions
- Articles in the congregation's newsletter and announcements in the bulletin
- Direct mailings to the congregation's members

Ten Basic Tips:

1. Emphasize a "call to action" motivated by personal beliefs. Appeal to your traditions, scriptures.
2. Focus on the specific needs of the people served when recruiting. Show how volunteers can really make a difference.
3. Recruit several times during the year. Be sure congregation members know where to call to volunteer or to request help.
4. Give frequent reports to the membership on the types of services provided, the number of hours given, the number of people helped - and any requests that went unfilled. This helps the congregation to feel ownership of the program.
5. When appeals are made from the pulpit, make sure there are sign-up sheets ready and easy to access. Take immediate advantage of interest.
6. After people express interest in volunteering, contact them as soon as possible to arrange for an interview, an orientation and any other training that may be necessary. Once a volunteer is ready to work, assure them that they are needed and that you will be calling them soon to arrange a match with a caregiver / care recipient.
7. Don't make assumptions about who in the congregation would respond to recruitment and who would not. Often busy people want and need this type of experience. So get the word out to everyone and help all who respond get involved.
8. As the program grows within the congregation, it is good to assess what kinds of requests you are getting; what the greatest service needs seem to be. And share that information - both with the membership and with the IVC program office.
9. Encourage your volunteers to help recruit new volunteers through their circle of friends and associates. Often, they know others who would make good volunteers.
10. Keep people happy and motivated! Thank them often. Support and recognize them. Take time to listen to their accomplishments and their struggles. Be available for advice and direction