

The Basics of Recruiting Volunteers

Your recruitment strategy will flow naturally from your volunteer descriptions. If you have carefully thought through the kind of person you are looking for and what is required of them you will be able to develop a targeted strategy to recruit them. There are several factors that underscore targeted recruitment:

1. **Satisfying human wants** — Giving volunteers the opportunity to make something happen in their community that is not happening now. They may see supporting family caregivers as helping more people stay independent in their own homes. They may see it as promoting dignity and respect for individuals at risk of losing both. They may see it as a concrete way to be connected with others in their community. Volunteers are more willing to exchange their time and talent if they see a human want or need of their own being addressed in the process.
2. **Managing the message** — Targeted recruitment means focusing your recruitment message around a specific kind of volunteer service and then sharing that message with the kinds of groups most likely to have people who match the kind of volunteer you are looking for.

Develop messages that interest people in volunteering and address their fears and misgivings about making the commitment. Some people may not have much experience with issues of family caregiving or aging. Others are afraid of making a mistake or of becoming “overly involved.” A well-designed and supportive message can help defuse that fear and give people the confidence that comes with adequate and ongoing support.

3. **Managing the level and scope** — You may not need a “cast of thousands,” but several good volunteers to get started. As you expand your volunteer program, you can recruit for a variety of roles. Targeted recruitment focuses on what is needed - when it is needed.

Recruiting Tips

- **Link volunteers to your purpose and goals.**
What would you tell people about the purpose and importance of your program? Why is their role important? How does it fit?
- **Know what you need.**
Based on the types of service you want to provide, what are the skills, experience and qualities needed?
- **Think of people who could provide it.**
Are you or your colleagues members of community clubs, service groups or congregations? How well do you know other groups in your community that may be interested in service? (retirees, businesses, schools and colleges) How could you get to know them better?
- **Find ways to communicate with them.**
Personal approach is the best! (“targeted recruitment”) Announcements on websites or at meetings, in newsletters or bulletins, or using flyers and brochures are all good ways to let people know about your service. Offer to be a guest speaker for local groups can also be very effective.
- **Be able to clearly describe any of the volunteer opportunities.**
Use the volunteer service descriptions to present clear information about each role.