

Ways to Encourage Volunteering

ASK

Simply asking is one of the most effective ways to get people involved. Invite current “formal” volunteers to bring a friend or colleague to a volunteering activity.

EXPLAIN

Volunteering can take many forms. Explaining to potential volunteers the specific tasks involved and identifying those who will benefit can help reduce volunteers’ apprehension about participating in a project.

RECOGNIZE TIME CONCERNS

Design volunteer opportunities that offer short-term commitments.

CONNECT

Work with social organizations, entertainment venues, schools, and other groups in your area to find people willing to help. Tap into web-based volunteer clearinghouses to reach those who are interested in helping in new ways.

SHARE RESULTS

Highlight the many ways people can be helpful. Discuss the contributions made by volunteers and how such progress would not have been possible without their help. Giving thanks in this way helps keep volunteers committed and motivated in their activities.



Additional Resources on Volunteering

America’s Promise

909 N. Washington Street
Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-684-4500
800-365-0153

www.americaspromise.org

Association for Volunteer Administration

P.O. Box 32092
Richmond, VA 23294
804-346-2266

www.avaintl.org

Corporation for National & Community Service

1201 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20525
202-606-5000
www.cns.gov

Points of Light Foundation and the Volunteer Center National Network

1400 I Street, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
202-729-8000
800-VOLUNTEER (865-8683)
www.pointsoflight.org

Online Volunteering Resources

Action Without Borders

www.idealists.org

Helping.org

www.helping.org

Volunteer Center National Network

www.volunteerconnections.org

Volunteer Match

www.volunteermatch.org

Youth Service America

www.servenet.org

Source: Independent Sector publication “America’s Informal Volunteers” based on results from 1999 “Giving and Volunteering in the United States” survey. Available at www.IndependentSector.org.

Why Informal Volunteers Give Their Time

The three most important reasons cited for volunteering by informal volunteers were: “I feel compassion toward people in need” (81%); “It makes me feel needed” (66%); and “I have an interest in the activity” (63%). These answers reflect a sense of social responsibility as well as a need for self-fulfillment and social involvement. Informal volunteering strengthens social relationships and offers emotional and physical support between individuals, family, and neighbors.

Asking Makes a Difference fifty-six percent (56%) of strictly informal volunteers said they were asked to volunteer in the last year (Figure 1). This is significantly lower than the percentage of those who were asked who volunteered formally (77%), and those who were asked who engaged in both formal and informal activities (87%). The low percentage of informal-only volunteers who were asked to volunteer presents an opportunity. If more of these individuals were asked, they might get involved in formal volunteering.