

# Volunteer Program Planning

## Step by Step

Follow these steps to develop or expand a volunteer program at your organization.

1. Clarify the Why.
2. Map Out the How.
3. Define the What.
4. Identify the Who.
5. Determine the When.

### 1. Clarify the Why.

#### TO CONSIDER:

- Does your organization need a volunteer program?
- What do you want to achieve by engaging volunteers in this way? Answers might include:
  - Expanding reach
  - Engaging community
  - Bringing in new ideas to the organization
  - Building leadership capacity
  - Increasing clients served

#### TO DO:

- Create a vision statement for your program.
- Build buy-in.
  - Speak with your supervisor, board, or leadership.
  - Design an organizational chart to demonstrate where the volunteer program integrates with the organization

### 2. Define the What.

#### TO CONSIDER:

- Which needs can be addressed by volunteers?
- What programs or roles (for both volunteers and relevant staff) should be developed?
- Which should be developed first?

#### TO DO:

- Assess both externally and internally.
  - Confer with peers at other organizations.
  - Conduct an internal SWOT analysis.
  - Connect with communities of practice.

- Define the volunteer roles.
  - Develop position descriptions.
  - Engage colleagues in developing volunteer position descriptions.

### 3. Map Out the How.

#### TO CONSIDER:

- What will the lifecycle of the volunteer be?
  - How does a volunteer go from someone interested in the position to an engaged volunteer at our organization?
- What is the desired volunteer experience?
- What resources do we need to make this happen (technology, funding, policies, etc.)?

#### TO DO:

- Define the volunteer roles.
  - Develop position descriptions.
  - Engage colleagues in developing volunteer position descriptions.
- Plan the volunteer lifecycle.
  - Develop a flow chart of the volunteer lifecycle, including entrance and exit points as well as check-ins
- Build the infrastructure.
  - Develop engagement plans (e.g., recruitment plan, screening policies, onboarding plan, training plan, evaluation)
  - Develop the resources needed to implement that flow chart and create the desired engagement experience (e.g., application, database/constituent management system, handbook, training, recognition policy, budget, space, etc.)
  - Define metrics for success and establish ways to track those metrics.
  - Involve other staff to assess feasibility of plans and their capacity.

### 4. Identify the Who.

#### TO CONSIDER:

- Who needs to collaborate on the work?
- Whose support is vital?
- Who needs to be kept informed?
- Do all involved know their roles and responsibilities?
- Do all involved know their roles and responsibilities?

#### TO DO:

- Involve others in the process.
  - Confirm roles and responsibilities with all involved staff.
  - Develop a reporting system to leadership on progress and impacts.

## 5. Determine the When.

### TO CONSIDER:

- What is most pressing?
- What will create momentum for future success?
- When can we get started?
- How will we check in along the way?
- How will we measure success?

### TO DO:

- Complete a work plan.
  - Define the timeframe.
  - Define priorities to pilot.
  - Plan for ongoing evaluation.
  - Confirm metrics for success/evaluation with staff involved in program.
- Determine the triggers for scaling up (e.g., accomplishing initial metrics for success, readiness of another program, department, or site to begin engaging volunteers).