

Volunteers are your partners, and your relationship with them is reciprocal. Just as they provide a service to you, you provide them an opportunity to belong to and contribute to their community.

Engage as many members of the community as possible.

- Recruit volunteers at schools and businesses. Individuals and groups in these settings often volunteer to fulfill civic or education obligations.
- Go **beyond** the congregants in your church, synagogue, or other place of worship.
- Use local media (newspapers, television *and* radio), information fairs and other tools like church, agency or neighborhood newsletters, as well as fliers.

Incorporate volunteers in different aspects of agency (i.e. IT, public relations, strategic planning, etc.)

- Keep in mind the specific activity you need to fill, but be **open to other talents and skills that your volunteers may be willing to offer.**
- Special skills ranging from computer expertise to construction experience could be great assets to your agency in particular situations.
- Determine the best use of each volunteer by balancing their interests with the agency's needs, and include them in the process. **Matching individuals to something they are interested in will ensure greater connection and longer satisfaction.**
- Create projects that can be done outside your agency if possible. Some volunteers are looking for ways to help on their own time (i.e. stuffing information packets at home rather than coming to your agency).

Designate a volunteer coordinator to build capacity.

- A mistake many agencies make is over-using volunteers.
- **One in three volunteers does not return after their first year**, so managing their work is crucial.
- Retention goes up with age, level of education, amount of time spent volunteering, religious affiliation and challenging activity level.
- **Avoid pushing volunteers too hard or asking too much of them.**

Retain volunteers longer.

- Be flexible with activities and times. Allow volunteers to pick their time of service when possible.
- Encourage them to spread their time out over longer periods so they do not feel overwhelmed.
- Be clear, concise and thorough when training volunteers.
- Let volunteers know your expectations upfront so the work is both efficient and meaningful on both ends.

Celebrate your volunteers year-round.

- Verbal thank you's
- Appreciation certificates (i.e. every 20 hours, 50 hours, etc.).
- Thank you bags from CAFB items may not be given to volunteers and, in fact, violate federal labor laws, but try to think of other ways to show your appreciation.