

# Where to Recruit Volunteers

*There are many strategies and resources for volunteer recruitment. Start with these basics and go from there!*

**Your Website** Keep a regularly updated list of opportunities. If that is not possible, list types of volunteering you frequently have available and a current contact e-mail/phone. Make sure it is easy to find on your website!

**Your Newsletter/Volunteer E-mail** If your organization has a newsletter, either print or electronic, include volunteer opportunities! It will also probably be helpful to have a separate email list just for volunteer opportunities. Include anyone who has expressed an interest in volunteering on this list.

**Facebook** Post opportunities on your organization's Facebook page (if you don't have one, create one!)

## **Serve Rhode Island**

[www.serverhodeisland.org](http://www.serverhodeisland.org)

Serve Rhode Island is the "go-to" site for Rhode Island volunteering. Membership fee is \$175 and is required for listing your opportunities on their website. If your organization is very small and the membership fee is an obstacle, contact Janice Pothier Pac at [jpothierpac@serverhodeisland.org](mailto:jpothierpac@serverhodeisland.org) to discuss options such as partnering with other small organizations to share the fee.

*Hint on listings:* Opportunities are listed in order of when they were last updated. Update yours frequently (just change a word) so they rise to the top!

## **Volunteer Match**

[www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)

Great place for listing your volunteer opportunities. People can search by zip code, and it is free to list your opportunity under one zip code. Add more zip codes for a fee. Volunteer Match also has a lot of great free webinars and resources on volunteer management—take advantage of these!

## **High Schools**

Many high schools require community service hours from their students, and all National Honors Society students need service hours. Contact local high schools and ask if they have a contact person for volunteering and community service. Provide your contact info and a list of some possible opportunities.

## **Colleges**

Colleges are a great source of motivated, knowledgeable volunteers who are seeking to build their resumes with internships. Contact nearby colleges and universities for the best place to post opportunities. It can also be helpful to establish contacts with specific departments or professors directly since they can forward the volunteer opportunities to the appropriate students. Some colleges also have work study, where students can actually get paid to volunteer if the position fits certain educational requirements.

# Motivations for Volunteering

*Understand the different reasons people volunteer and tailor your opportunities to meet their needs!*

**Doing good:** For volunteers whose main motivation is simply to do something good, the best jobs are fun, hands-on and connect directly to the mission. Examples: restoring habitat, educating kids, monitoring wildlife. These positions are often easiest to fill, so why not create them?

**Resume Building:** College students, job seekers, and those planning a career change want to expand or maintain their skills. For these volunteers, develop internships and other volunteer projects that build knowledge, require responsibility and sound great on a resume. Identify which college majors the position would be suited for, contact those departments at local universities, and ask if they can forward your volunteer position to students. Make your volunteer timeline compatible with college semesters. Consider short-term projects for job seekers, who may be unable to volunteer once they find employment. *Require applicants to submit a resume for these positions.* You can often get highly skilled applicants.

**Meaningful retirement:** There are lots of retirees who want to contribute their time to a good cause. Some want to utilize their professional skills (which can be substantial!), others are happy to kick back and do routine office work, and still others want to pursue a passion that they never had a chance to pursue when they were employed. These can be among your most dedicated and reliable volunteers, so take the time to find a really good match for each one!

**Looking to connect:** People often volunteer to increase their social connections. They may be single, new to the area or just want some new friends. They are drawn to team activities and interaction with staff. One-time events are good but ongoing teams are even better. Try having 'meet up' volunteer events! Creating a community feeling in your organization has many positive effects, from volunteer recruitment and retention to fundraising.

**Complete service hours:** Many people with a minor traffic or drug conviction need to do court-ordered community service—and it can be hard to find agencies that will accept them. They are usually very motivated to get their hours done and will do whatever is required. Outdoor work is often a good fit, but don't hesitate to utilize any special skills they may have. Call the local police station, ask who handles the community service program, and let them know you are looking for volunteers. On your Serve Rhode Island listing, check off that you accept court-ordered community service volunteers.

**Family volunteering:** This is a VERY underserved segment! There are LOTS of parents looking to volunteer with their kids, and few opportunities. Litter cleanups or simple assembly activities (such as packing supply boxes) can work well. Be sure to mention in your volunteer description that your opportunity is good for families, and include any age limits.

**Group projects:** Many corporations plan days of service as a team building exercise, and to give back to the community. Scout troops and college classes may also want a project the whole group can take part in. Suitable projects can be difficult to find, and if your group can provide them, you can accomplish a lot with these volunteers. Bonus: many corporate groups will purchase and donate supplies for the project!