



Special Olympics

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SERIES

RECRUITMENT

Facilitator's Guide



Special Olympics Volunteer Management Series

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Introduction:

Often when staff or key volunteers of a Special Olympics Program are involved in recruitment they are so anxious to “fill slots” that not enough care is given to finding the right person. We can all relate to the impact on the volunteer and the Program when the wrong person is recruited. The volunteer feels incompetent and/or unfulfilled, leading to performance and retention problems, or the Program does not get the job done well and builds resentment and resistance to further utilization of volunteers.

Successful recruitment involves marketing your Program's volunteer needs to the segment of people who can fill those needs while simultaneously filling their own (for example, finding a graduate student who needs an internship in Public Relations, who can help your Program develop a PR plan). Recruitment is not merely following prescribed techniques to attract potential volunteers, for example, displaying posters and writing Public Service Announcements. Rather, a good recruitment program focuses on designing a strategy to find the right individual, utilizing an appropriate outreach technique, and inviting him/her to become a volunteer.

It is difficult to isolate the topic of recruitment because its ultimate success is intertwined with the development of good jobs (the product you are selling in recruitment) and with having the Program prepared to utilize volunteers' time and talents effectively. It is important, however, to examine how potential volunteers are invited to consider becoming a part of our organization, particularly if this function is not centralized. Even if most volunteers go through a central recruitment process, the staff and volunteers within your Program are a significant part of its informal volunteer recruitment team. Thus, the principles of recruitment should be useful for all staff, whether they carry out this function themselves or act as ambassadors for Special Olympics.



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The **Primary Goal** of this training is:

⇒ to explore targeted volunteer recruitment: a strategy of invitation to reach the best people to fill your volunteer positions.

Learning Objectives :

Upon completion of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Understand what recruitment is and the impact of doing it well.
2. List some objections and barriers that people might have to volunteering with Special Olympics and some strategies to overcome them.
3. Design an effective recruitment message.
4. Describe the characteristics of effective recruiters.



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General Notes to Trainer:

1. This workshop is in a suggested format. Feel free, however, to personalize it with your own stories about your experience working with Special Olympics. Also, phrase questions and activities in a manner most attuned to your Special Olympics Program.
2. Even though recruitment may not be a primary responsibility of all paid and volunteer staff, it is helpful for them to understand the key concepts in recruitment. Volunteers must continually have their needs met and may need assistance in working through their barriers to volunteering after they are involved.
3. This workshop would be most helpful if presented after discussing information in the *Motivation* module.
4. Since this module stresses that initial recruitment is the invitation to consider volunteering, it would be helpful to have a follow-up workshop on interviewing since it is at this time that the actual selection and placement occur.
5. Many resource materials on volunteer management cover the topic of volunteer recruitment. See the resource page for additional information.



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WORKSHOP OUTLINE

CORRESPONDING SLIDES	CORRESPONDING FACILITATOR GUIDE PAGES	SECTION	Total Estimated TIME: 60 minutes
B- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	8, 9	INTRODUCTION Activity Introduction Purpose Learning Objectives Key Concepts	8 minutes
B-6, 7	9, 10	Concept 1 Identifying resistance	10 minutes
B- 8, 9, 10	10, 11	Concept 2 Matching needs of volunteer/agency	12 minutes
B- 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	12, 13	Concept 3 Recruitment message	20 minutes
B- 16, 17	14	Concept 4 Recruiter qualities	5 minutes
	15	Summary/Wrap-Up/ Evaluation	5 minutes



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INTRODUCTION

- **Show Slide #1**

Opening Exercise

Have participants consider a definition of Volunteer Recruitment. Ask a few people to share their ideas.

If any of their definitions imply that all respondents were automatically invited to become volunteers, share with them the working definition of recruitment: **a process to attract and invite people to consider involvement.**

- **Show Slide #2: Definition of Recruitment**

A well planned recruitment strategy should include a personal interview and screening process – a time at which both the individual and the Program mutually decide *if* a match has been made. The exceptions to this are when the Special Olympics Program needs a large number of people for short term, low skill activities (for example, one-day volunteers); then, in-depth interviewing/screening are not essential. Remember that short term volunteers often make great long term volunteers after becoming familiar with Special Olympics.

Continue by offering a few introductory comments regarding the significance of thoughtful recruitment. You might also start by demystifying the process by sharing a revealing statistic about recruitment strategies discovered in a recent study: *People are more than four times as likely to volunteer when they are personally asked.*

- **SHOW SLIDE #3: Learning Objectives**

Summarize objectives of this module. Share a personal recruitment experience or anecdote.



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- **SHOW SLIDE #4 & 5: Key Concepts of Recruitment**

This workshop is built on 4 Key Concepts. Indicate that during the workshop each concept will be examined more closely.

- **SHOW SLIDE #6: Key Concept 1**

KEY CONCEPT 1:

UNTIL YOU IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS PEOPLE'S POSSIBLE RESISTANCE(S) TO VOLUNTEERING WITHIN YOUR PROGRAM, YOU WILL NOT REACH YOUR POTENTIAL IN VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT.

Facilitator Presentation:

As you design your outreach to prospective volunteers or analyze response from previous efforts at recruitment, you must begin to identify any barriers that may be keeping people from volunteering within your Program. These barriers may be personal –time, child care needs, etc.— or organizational – location of facility, costs involved in volunteering, type of client served, etc.

- **SHOW SLIDE #7: Group Exercise**

Activity

Have the group brainstorm organizational barriers followed by personal barriers as to why people might not respond positively to opportunities to volunteer with Special Olympics. Identify several which your Program might be able to address so as to counter these current barriers.



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Barriers:

- People's limited time
- Costs related to volunteering
- Distant location of office
- Resistance to working with people with mental retardation

Program's Response:

- Develop more short term, episodic jobs
- Offer to cover expenses
- Develop jobs for people to do at home/office ("virtual volunteering")
- Design jobs that have no athlete contact

Follow-up Activity:

Ask the group to assist you in more deeply addressing these and other barriers and designing solutions. This exercise should broaden participants' understanding of the many factors influencing successful recruitment.

• **SHOW SLIDE #8: Key Concept 2**

KEY CONCEPT 2:

**FOR VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT TO BE SUCCESSFUL, THE NEEDS OF THE PROGRAM
AND THE NEEDS OF THE VOLUNTEER MUST BE MET SIMULTANEOUSLY.**

Facilitator Presentation:

Too often we are tempted to fill positions without thinking of whether the needs of the Program and the needs of the volunteer will both be met. In our urgency to fill slots, we take the first person who is willing to do the job.



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- **SHOW SLIDE # 9: Why Do People Volunteer?**

Activity:

Have participants brainstorm about various reasons why people volunteer. Remind them that there are important benefits to volunteering that need to be met if the volunteer is going to remain active in the Program.

Record answers and discuss.

Very often we recruit people, not taking into account whether the volunteer's needs will be met. Choose a few examples from the slide to highlight recruitment techniques to avoid.

- **SHOW SLIDE #10: Recruitment Techniques to Avoid**

- "We're desperate, anyone will do..." (How special does that feel?)
- Cast your nets and see who swims in... (Whoops! wrong fish!)
- "You're an accountant. We could use one of you!" (making assumptions)
- "We have lots of needs...HELP!" (people respond to specifics)
- "I'm tired of doing it. Anyone else want to do it?" (wrong recruiter)
- There's nothing to it." (message: Any dummy can do it!)

Activity (optional):

If time permits, ask participants if they have ever had these techniques used on them... and how they felt.



The best strategy for finding the right volunteer is to use marketing principles which involve an exchange in values – the Program's volunteer opportunity fits the applicant's interests and skills.

- **SHOW SLIDE # 11: Key Concept 3**

KEY CONCEPT # 3:
THE RECRUITMENT INVITATION MUST, MINIMALLY, INCLUDE 3 ELEMENTS.
1. THE STATEMENT OF NEED (THE ATHLETES' NEED!)
2. HOW THE VOLUNTEER CAN HELP
3. BENEFITS OF THE JOB

- **SHOW SLIDE # 12: Essential Elements to Include in a Recruitment Message**

1. The statement of need

Important to note that the need is not the Program's need but rather the needs of the athletes. The following serves as an excellent example of this principle:

- **SHOW SLIDE # 13: Sample Recruitment Message**

- The statement of need in terms of the Program:
Special Olympics needs softball coaches for spring league.
- The statement of need in terms of the athlete:
They have gloves, bats and softballs...but no coach. Seventy-five boys and girls with mental retardation are waiting for a coach. Don't let them strike out. Join our Special Olympics Team! Call 1-800-GOLD today.

- **SHOW SLIDE # 14: Essential Elements to Include in a Recruitment Message**



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2. How the volunteer can help

It is important to note that you have more impact by saying "You can help by...," not "Volunteers are needed..." (third person is not as appealing).

- **SHOW SLIDE # 15: Essential Elements to Include in a Recruitment Message**

3. Benefits of the job

Answer how volunteers will be helping themselves by doing the job. (Either general benefits of working at the Program or specific benefits of doing a particular job).

Activity:

Break into small groups and design a recruitment message for your Special Olympics Program.

Reconvene and have the groups share their recruitment message with the group. Assess each message for the three key elements. Note what works well and what could be changed or added to improve the message.



SHOW SLIDE # 16:

KEY CONCEPT 4:

IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE EFFECTIVE, TRAINED PEOPLE RECRUITING NEW VOLUNTEERS.

Activity:

Ask participants to brainstorm some of the qualities present in of a good recruiter. Record the group answers. Examples may include:

- Enthusiasm
- Knowledge about Special Olympics
- Positive Attitude
- Articulate
- Comfortable in front of groups
- Good presentation skills
- Good listening skills
- Sincere
- Flexibility

Presentation:

Did anyone mention a Special Olympics volunteer in the brainstorming exercise? Generally, the best recruiters are Special Olympics volunteers themselves, including: coaches, family members and, most importantly, **athletes**.

SHOW SLIDE # 17: Best Volunteer Recruiters



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Suggest that the keys to finding successful volunteer recruiters include all of the group's suggestions, but four characteristics are especially beneficial. Recruiters who are:

- **Satisfied** with their volunteer work with Special Olympics (not burned out, tired ones looking for replacements)
- **Enthusiastic** – You may wish to note that the word enthusiasm ends with IASM - **I am sold myself!**
- **Articulate** – Effective speaking skills enhance the Program's message and convince people to volunteer. Audiences want to be informed and motivated. **Don't forget to utilize Global Messengers and other athlete leaders!**
- **Connected** with the person or group being recruited. People say yes to people they know and respect.

Summary/Wrap-up/Evaluation:

In closing, offer the group some reminders of principles for successful volunteer recruitment. Close with a review of the 4 Key Concepts. Hand out the evaluation form and ask participants to fill out the form before leaving.

END VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT MODULE

Suggestions for expanded activities



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1. If participants in this training are responsible for their own recruitment, additional in-depth training can be provided, utilizing this module as a framework for its development.
2. Looking at barriers people might have to volunteering for your Program can be done in small groups. Each group identifies the 5 key barriers people might face. After each group generates its list, they pass it to another group and the new assignment is to discuss how and if the organization can do anything to help alleviate these barriers. Full group sharing would follow. This exercise sensitizes groups to the reasons why they might not be attracting volunteers and gives them an opportunity to discuss: new volunteer job development, P.R. efforts regarding the agency and its clients, more flexibility in jobs, concentration on issues of staff resistance and climate, etc. This focus will lead to the design of new ways to make the organization more attractive to volunteers. Strategies for outreach could follow.
3. Have participants design some targeted recruitment messages utilizing information described in Concept 3 (the design of a recruitment message). If the organization has recruitment materials developed, share with the participants and critique them with reference to the 3 key elements.
4. Qualities of good recruiters may be best discussed by having participants think of a time when they said yes to a volunteer position. Remember what qualities the recruiter had or the techniques utilized that influenced them to say, "Yes!" Some participants may share experiences when they said yes because they were misled or had their arms twisted. Most often they will not ultimately express positive feelings about the experience. Others said yes to a recruiter who was not only enthusiastic and persuasive but who also reflected an accurate picture of the position and was interested in the benefits to the organization as well as to the volunteer. Using participants' own experiences is fertile material for many lessons in recruitment. It does take time to process these, but the insights gained are beneficial.



Suggested Resources on Volunteer Recruitment

On-Line Resources:

<http://energizeinc.com> Energize, Inc. is an international training, consulting and publishing firm specializing in volunteerism. Their goal is "to connect leaders of volunteers with resources, information and ideas generated from around the world."

<http://www.iave.org>. IAVE is "the only international organization with the mission to promote, celebrate, and strengthen volunteerism worldwide." The International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) worked in close cooperation with the United Nations Volunteers and was a major contributor in establishing the International Year of the Volunteer.

<http://e-volunteerism.com/> The "Electronic Journal of the Volunteer Community," e-Volunteerism is a quarterly online publication that caters to volunteer leaders and managers.

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