

# SACRAMENTO SUMMER LUNCHBOX



## How to Recruit, Train and Manage Volunteers

### GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT 101

This resource is intended to provide a basic overview of the volunteer management process to help you develop a plan to recruit, train, manage, and engage volunteers. While this list provides a basic overview and is a quick resource, we suggest you continue to research volunteer management as it relates to your program in order for your volunteer program to thrive.

Volunteers play a critical role for many Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sites across the region. Engaging volunteers to help support your program can help enhance meal service and support enrichment activities to keep youth engaged and coming back all summer long. The number of volunteers you need will depend on many factors, including the role the volunteer will play in the summer meal program, including serving meals, leading activities, how many meals you anticipate serving each day, and existing staff to support your summer efforts.

#### VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION PLAN – GETTING STARTED

Before you recruit volunteers, you must first establish a plan. Successful planning will ensure helpful volunteers have a positive experience. When volunteers feel they are making a difference and their time is valued, they will keep coming back.

- Identify who is the most appropriate person to supervise the volunteer(s). It may not be someone with a title of volunteer coordinator and is often times program staff.
- Positions for volunteers should be identified in partnership with your staff so they feel their voice is heard and all members of the team are on the same page.
- Identify if volunteer roles will be long-term/ongoing (regularly scheduled), short-term (regularly scheduled for a minimum time period) or episodic (one time)

**Formulate and write volunteer project descriptions.** Consider including the following information:

- Job title
- Organization's mission
- Supervision/support
- Outcome/goals



- Responsibilities
- Expected hours/commitment
- Start and end dates
- Desired abilities, skills and experience
- Benefits to volunteers (tap into various motivations)

## VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

### FINDING THE RIGHT VOLUNTEERS

Where do I find the right person for this job? Use the following resources to help recruit the right volunteers:

- United Way California Capital Region's Online Volunteer Center
- Other volunteer websites (VolunteerMatch, HandsOn Sacramento, Idealist, CSUS Community Engagement Center)
- Word of mouth
- Neighbors from the immediate surrounding community
- Live presentations/speaking engagements
- Recruitment events and volunteer fairs
- Newspaper article or paid advertising
- Relationships with local corporations
- Bulletin boards in grocery stores and other community gathering places
- Direct mail
- Program specific associations
- Free publicity (Public Service Announcements)

Consider a wide range of individuals and groups that are potential volunteers for your program or project, as well as locations to post flyers and brochures:

- Parents and siblings of the youth being served at your site
- Faith-based groups or houses of worship
- Youth/high school and college students service opportunities
- Military bases or retired military groups
- Unions and trade workers associations
- Sororities and fraternities
- Teacher's associations
- Retired firefighter, police, and executive associations
- Moms groups



- Realtors
- Independent living homes
- Disability services groups
- Scouts, 4-H, Boys & Girls Clubs, or other youth organizations
- Bingo halls

## SCREENING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are often the face of an organization. Without volunteers, nonprofits couldn't function in the same capacity. To mitigate any potential liability, it is recommended that nonprofits perform proper background checks on volunteers.

## FAQS AND HELPFUL ARTICLES ABOUT SCREENING VOLUNTEERS

**Trust, but verify: Why volunteer screening is so important.** This [article](#) takes a deeper look at this subject and gives three compelling reasons why you should screen volunteers.

**Are we required to conduct criminal history record checks?** The answer to this question depends upon a variety of factors. This [article](#) discusses the topic in greater detail and also provides some best practices for conducting criminal history record checks.

**Guidelines for screening volunteers:** Before placing volunteers, agencies should conduct thorough background screenings to ensure the safety of the individuals being served. Likewise, background checks also protect nonprofits from repercussions associated with placing unsuitable candidates in volunteer roles. This [guide](#) offers eight helpful guidelines to follow when screening volunteers.

**Interviewing and screening volunteers:** Use this helpful [list](#) of articles, tools, and websites to learn more about interviewing and screening volunteers. Learn about the essential elements of a volunteer application form, tips for interviewing potential volunteers, and more.

**What is a volunteer application form?** This [resource](#) highlights the essential elements of a volunteer application form.

**Sample volunteer application forms:** Whether you're starting from scratch or just revamping your current forms, these [sample volunteer applications](#) provide a helpful visual for nonprofits.

**Volunteer screening just got easier (and more affordable):** [Learn](#) how to quickly and affordably run background checks on your volunteers.



## TRAINING AND MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

### TRAINING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer orientation and training should be the first thing that happens before volunteers begin to ensure volunteers and staff are properly prepared for their roles and responsibilities and understand what to do in normal and special circumstances. Orientation makes volunteers feel connected to the agency, clients, other volunteers, and their community, makes their work more meaningful, and in turn makes them more likely to engage in future service.

Orientation should be fairly general and should include an agency tour; overview of history, mission, programs, organizational structure, policies and procedures Volunteer orientation and training has many positive impacts. It allows volunteers to:

- See the impact they are having on the agency and clients
- Feel a greater part of a whole, when they see all the services the agency provides
- Better understand the critical needs of the community
- Better understand how to affect change within the issue(s) being addressed
- Better understand the volunteer's commitment to the summer meal program

After the orientation, give a brief outline of the project and what volunteers will be specifically doing during the project so that everyone knows what to expect and what is expected of them. Also be sure to allow time for training volunteers for any specialized tasks or skills they will need to successfully complete the project.

### MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

Create a system and encourage volunteers to track their volunteer hours. As an agency, you should track the number of volunteers and hours they contribute on a regular basis for future reporting in grants or to the general community. Telling the story of the number of volunteers and hours they contribute can help secure future opportunities in funding and partnerships.

The most important part of managing volunteers and keeping them engaged is making sure everyone has something to do. Underutilization is one of the biggest threats to retention. If people do not feel needed, they will not come back.

Remember that working with groups can be challenging. Understanding volunteer personalities can help you position them in different teams of your project so they have the best chance of personal success and compatibility with clients, staff and other volunteers.



Some volunteers want to lead, some want to socialize, some pay attention to details, and others are compassionate and dependable. You may also encounter volunteers who are headstrong, who aren't actively involved, or who complain excessively. When you are dealing with groups, you are almost guaranteed to encounter clashing personalities. Prepare in advance how you will handle situations.

- Treat every individual with dignity and respect
- Talk openly and professionally with your volunteer to try to eliminate the problem
- Consult with another staff person or volunteer leader who can troubleshoot with you on ways to resolve the problem
- Document any incidents immediately and seek help if you do not feel you can resolve the problem

Volunteers should help manage themselves. Once volunteers are identified, a list of backup names and phone numbers should be provided in case they are unable to attend their designated volunteer shift. Include other staff information for emergencies.

## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Recognition makes volunteers feel appreciated and valued. If volunteers don't feel like their contribution is valuable or necessary, they won't return. Volunteer recognition can take many forms, from a simple thank you card to a large annual event. An ideal recognition system makes use of many different levels in order to have something for every volunteer that is both personal and meaningful.

Volunteers have different personalities, are motivated to serve for different reasons, and serve in different ways. Therefore, you should use a variety of recognition methods for your volunteers. Tailor your recognition to individual volunteers, to make it most effective and meaningful.

Volunteer appreciation can be as simple as:

- Greeting volunteers with a smile
- Learning and using volunteer names
- Asking for volunteer opinions
- Not wasting volunteer time
- Giving volunteers credit for their work
- Organization swag (create volunteer name badges w/ their photo on it)

Beyond that, you can also:

- Say thank you daily when checking in



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- Send a handwritten note
- Send birthday cards
- Hold yearly awards dinner/luncheon
- Have a volunteer of the month
- Nominate volunteers for local/national awards
- Recognize volunteers in organization's newsletter

## UNITED WAY ONLINE VOLUNTEER CENTER

The United Way California Capital Region's Volunteer Center utilizes Get Connected software, an easy-to-use web-based platform that matches volunteers with opportunities in the Sacramento region. Volunteers and the community at large can use the online volunteer center to find ways to volunteer to make a real difference, give unused materials and household items to agencies in need of donations, learn about upcoming special events and fundraisers, and advocate for causes that require a passionate voice.

Your organization can create a free profile on the Volunteer Center and begin posting your volunteer needs immediately. To get started, please visit [www.yourlocalunitedway.org/volunteer](http://www.yourlocalunitedway.org/volunteer).

For additional questions regarding this resource guide or the United Way online Volunteer Center, please email [volunteer@uwccr.org](mailto:volunteer@uwccr.org).

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