Volunteer Recruitment & Retention

Julie Vastine
North Central Regional Watershed Group Workshop
April 25, 2018
Agenda

• ALLARM background
• Volunteer planning
• Volunteer recruitment
• Volunteer retention
• Q&A
• Full Time Staff: Julie Vastine, Jinnie Monismith, Natalie McNeill, Helen Schlimm
• Science Advisor/Founder: Dr. Candie Wilderman
• 12-16 Dickinson College Students
• Program of Dickinson College
• 40% supported by the college, 60% funded by federal, state, family foundation grants
ALLARM Areas of Support

Technical

• Study design creation
• Chemical monitoring
• Macroinvertebrate monitoring
• Visual assessment
• Data interpretation and communication
• Shale-gas monitoring

Programmatic

• Strategic planning
• Volunteer recruitment and retention
• Fundraising
Why programmatic support?

- PA perspective
- Cycle of volunteerism
- Strategic planning
- Volunteer recruitment and retention
- Programs always need resources
Organizational Check In

• Strategic plan?

• Annual Work Plan
  – Do you identify role of volunteers?

• Annual Budget
  – Do you have a budget for volunteer management?
Volunteer Planning

1. Establish a clear vision for how volunteers help to achieve your goals.
2. Have full organizational buy-in.
3. Make sure you have the resources needed to fully support your volunteers.
Volunteers

• Cost effective, not cost free.
Volunteer Strategic Planning

• “while volunteers operate without receiving compensation for the work performed, [volunteers] require a strategic vision and outlay of time, attention, and infrastructure...”
Volunteer Involvement Framework

The Volunteer Involvement Framework™

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<th>CONNECTION TO SERVICE</th>
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<td>Affiliation Focus</td>
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<td>Skill Focus</td>
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TIME FOR SERVICE

Episodic

Long-term

Strategic Volunteer Engagement, RGK Center for Philanthropy & Community Service, 2009
Volunteer engagement strategy

• Diverse projects
• Multi-layer engagement experiences
• Short and long term opportunities
Long-term vs. short term volunteers

- Retention
- Time investment
- Management

“Volunteer turnover impacts an organization like staff turnover.”

- Corporation for National & Community Service
Volunteer recruitment

• Tools
  – Clear job description
  – Understanding why people volunteer
  – Avenues for appropriate volunteer placement
1. Know your organization
2. Know what you want
   a) Skills
   b) Time frames
3. Develop recruitment resources
4. Design a recruitment strategy
   a) Advertising – print, online, media
   b) Reach out to partners
5. Manage your volunteers *** Volunteer Coordinator
Recruitment – Active & Passive

• Newspapers/newsletter
• Social media
• Community organizations
• Community centers
• Public fairs/events
• Online
  – www.volunteermatch.org
  – www.idealist.org
  – http://www.pointsoflight.org/handsonnetwork
  – https://scistarter.com/
Volunteer Management

- Volunteer coordinator
- Job descriptions
- Clear start and end points
Volunteer intake process

- Organization orientation
- Ask about their motivation
- Survey skill sets
- Ask what they would like to get out of volunteering
- Open two-way communication
Volunteer Check In Process

• Care and feeding
• Opportunities for feedback
Assess Volunteer Impact

• Connect to mission of project.
• Data entry? # of hours volunteered?
• How do you communicate impact?
Reasons for burnout

- Voice and role ambiguity
  - Make sure volunteers play a role in decisions that affect them
  - Make sure volunteers have a clear sense of what they are signing up to do – job description
Volunteer Retention

• 1 out of 3 volunteers who participate one year do not continue the next

Retention

- Change it up
- Provide leadership opportunities
- Effective feedback
- Recognition
Volunteer Acknowledgment

• 101 Ways to give Recognition to Volunteers
  – American Hospital Association Committee on Volunteers (COV)

Tips for acknowledging volunteers

• 6 month check in
• Celebrate anniversaries
• Annual volunteer celebration
• Coordinator check-ins
  – Re-evaluate commitment
  – Identify new interests and goals
Bringing it home

• “Charities are receptive to best practices in volunteer management, but commonly adopt them only to some degree...”

https://www.urban.org/research/publication/volunteer-management-practices-and-retention-volunteers
Resources

• *Strategic Planning Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations*, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1997


• [https://www.volunteeralive.org/docs/Strategic%20Volunteer%20Engagement.pdf](https://www.volunteeralive.org/docs/Strategic%20Volunteer%20Engagement.pdf)


Questions?

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