

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

An important key to your chapter's success is cultivating volunteers and leaders. Perhaps the most important indicator for success is strong, enduring leadership. This is no easy task. Successful chapters are turning to a different model – one that focuses on developing a talent pool of members who are willing and able to assist on short-term and bite-sized volunteer opportunities.

This model is built on a Volunteer Coordinator or Talent Scout responsible for learning members' interests and matching those with the needs of the organization. The talent scout may work with a team, a partner or run solo. The focus is on engaging members in the work of the group rather than on finding volunteers. In this paper, we'll offer a look at the first steps, a few volunteer coordinator position descriptions, advice from the field and resources.

The First Steps

If you are just introducing this role, the volunteer coordinator's first responsibility will be to get people registered and entered into a database. We suggest you consider this as part of your member welcoming. Consider having a “tell us about you” form with questions about the interests and skills. Then, the volunteer coordinator can match those skill sets with the needs of the group. As the program evolves, the next steps will likely include:

- Conducting an inventory of all possible volunteer opportunities with an eye to identifying those short-term or ad-hoc jobs.
- Preparing materials describing volunteer responsibilities.
- Setting up marketing channels for sharing the volunteer story.
- Planning and implementing volunteer orientation and training programs.
- Keeping accurate records of volunteer service time.
- Planning activities, awards and recognition opportunities to keep volunteers motivated and enthusiastic.

Four Position Descriptions

What is an ideal candidate for this position – whether paid or volunteer? A volunteer coordinator is by definition a “people person” – one who honestly enjoys working with all types of people. The right “people person” for your organization is one who understands your group and your mission. In this role, your coordinator will be the face of the organization in many ways and potentially even a member's first point of contact. Therefore, it's important that your coordinator is able to convey an immediate feeling of welcoming and support will go a long way in recruitment and retention of your volunteer base.

We asked chapters from around the country to share their position descriptions and suggestions for implementing.

Example 1: Talent Scout/Volunteer Coordinator Description

This position will use profile data, along with job descriptions and competencies to match members to volunteer positions and to scout for potential volunteers within the chapter. The coordinator will ensure that new and potential volunteers get appropriate follow up including warm welcome, orientation and training.

Duties include: Actively recruit volunteers for chapter positions and ad hoc projects, train (if applicable) and place volunteers according to their interest and provided data, build volunteering awareness, engage volunteers and potential volunteers, match members to other chair member committee needs and determine human resources needed by chapter.

Example 2: Volunteer Chair (leads Volunteer Engagement Committee)

The Volunteer Chair shall lead the committee to 1) build volunteering awareness within the chapter, 2) engage volunteers, and 3) act as a liaison between members and volunteer leaders.

Responsibilities:

1. Work with other committees, task forces and the board to identify volunteer needed.
2. Recruit members to volunteer.
3. Match members to volunteer positions.
4. Repeat.

Skills:

The Volunteer Chair should have good organizational and people skills. The Chair should be able to communicate and delegate chapter tasks to the appropriate volunteers; matching the need with the skill set.

Example 3: Volunteer Coordinator

The volunteer coordinator falls under Membership; we use a co-chair structure to accomplish the work. The position was created to help with 3 issues:

1. Resource allocation
2. New member involvement/orientation
3. Member retention

Overview:

The purpose of the position is to match interests and talents with committees who require resources to perform their duties. The Volunteer Coordinators are responsible for acting as liaisons with the various committees to understand the nature of the duties to be performed by volunteers, and to act as a resource for new and current Chapter members who are looking for ways to be involved in Chapter operations.

Specific tasks:

- Use the data from our annual survey and monthly program evaluations to collect information from potential volunteers
- Regularly attend committee meetings/be in contact with committee chairs and the Board of Directors to remain apprised of volunteer resources they need
- Attend Chapter functions to meet and engage with new and returning members, extending personal invitations to become involved
- Follow up with volunteers placed on committees to monitor progress and satisfaction
- Keep the Board of Directors informed of volunteers needed, placed, and progress

Example 4: Volunteer Coordinator (for AFS)

Goal: Help welcome new volunteers into the team and assist returning volunteers in finding roles that fit both theirs and the team's needs. *Responsibilities vary depending upon the team, but can include:*

- Collaborate with and lead Team Leadership to assess local volunteer needs and create a volunteer development plan for the Team
- Establish and maintain a cycle/program of "new volunteer orientation/welcome" events
- Ensure adequate publicity to attract volunteers to become involved and aware of the full range of AFS volunteer opportunities available.
- Ensure follow up with new volunteer leads in timely manner (7 days)
- Ensure training, orientation registration, and integration of all new local volunteers within 30 days of assigning a volunteer role.
- Work with the Team and chapter/local units to develop and implement a plan to recognize volunteers including making them aware of national recognition opportunities
- Cultivate and support local volunteer network by keeping regular contact with chapter/local units.

Time Required: 5-10 hrs/mo.



What Makes This Work?

We asked chapters to tell us in their words what works ...

“Two things we have found to be particularly useful:

- *Persons in a marketing/business development role have been very successful, due to the number of contacts and people they reach on an ongoing basis.*
- *Volunteer coordinators need to know enough about the Chapter’s operations to be able to effectively “match make” but not necessarily be on the BOD or long-time seasoned volunteers; sometimes the “fresh eyes” and the relative newness to the Chapter (relative to those on our Board or other committee chairs) is a real source of encouragement to new members.”*

“We do believe it has been a valuable position and resource. Like anything new, it takes a little time and diligence to catch on, so make sure you choose the right personality types (very outgoing!!) to take on this role and encourage them to stick with it. It will pay off. We have seen a rise in volunteers and a real rise in membership numbers.”

Resources

For more information on Volunteer Coordinators from a career perspective, visit these resources:

[How Can Volunteer Coordinators Become Networked Nonprofits](#), Beth’s Blog
[Volunteer Coordinator Tips](#), Volunteer Hub (search site for other relevant posts)
[What’s in a Name or a Title](#), Energize.com

For more ideas on increasing volunteering:

[Power up Your Volunteer Succession Plan](#)
[7 Ways Chapters Have Succeeded in Volunteer Recruitment](#)
[Finding Micro-Volunteering Jobs to Offer](#)



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