



## **The 3 R's: Recruiting, Retaining, & Recognizing Volunteers**

### **Recruiting Volunteers**

*Recruiting is:*

Getting the right person in the right job, with the right skills at the right time.

A volunteer program is a two-way street: it must meet the needs of the organization and the needs of the volunteer. Everyone wins!

*5 Easy Steps to Successful Recruitment:*

1. Define the Job
2. Determine the Qualifications
3. Develop a list of potential candidates/places to conduct outreach
4. Interview the volunteer (*this may not always apply: for instance, we do not need to interview volunteers who use our Flexible volunteer program*)
5. Appoint the volunteer

*Additional Tips*

- Get all active volunteers involved in thinking up new methods for recruiting. Pool these ideas.
- Use every available source - radio, television, newspapers and personal contacts.
- Offer stimulating, in-depth orientation sessions.
- Have current volunteers tell their story at meetings or gatherings of membership.
- Try to think what would interest YOU in volunteering.
- The best volunteer recruiters are volunteers who are happy with your organization.
- People are attracted to programs that utilize positive, honest, enthusiastic appeals.
- Be interested in your members, not only as volunteers but as individuals.
- Don't over-recruit. Volunteers will lose interest if they have signed up to help and there isn't a job for them.
- Involve volunteers in decision making. Make certain they feel they are an important part of the organization.
- Recognize their efforts. Saying "thanks" goes a long way.

## Retaining Volunteers

Adjust your thinking: Shifting the focus to volunteer retention!

*“Volunteers who quit after a short time are costly. Typically, ex-volunteers or almost-volunteers take away their acquired learning and leave little behind. Turnover, especially high turnover, can create havoc in the administration and management of volunteer programs.”- Fischer and Shafer (1993)*

Retention Strategies for Today’s Volunteers:

1. Understand and meet people’s needs
2. Be a matchmaker
3. Set people up for success
4. See volunteers as customers
5. Designate a volunteer resource professional
6. Maintain a positive organizational climate
7. Welcome diversity
8. Be flexible
9. Don’t burn people out
10. Recognize contributions

REMEMBER: This dynamic between recruitment and retention hinges in part on the relationship developed between the volunteer and the organization. This working relationship needs to be many things (meaningful, rewarding, productive, respectful) as well as supportive from a good volunteer management perspective.

## Recognizing Volunteers

*Why Recognize?*

- Success breeds success. A satisfied, happy volunteer tells three others; a **dissatisfied, unhappy volunteer tells 13 others.**
- Recognition lets volunteers know that others acknowledge and appreciate what they do.
- Recognition is closely associated with motivation

Ways CVNL can help recognize volunteers:

- Marin IJ Volunteer of the Week
- Volunteer Times Newsletter
- Social Media outputs (ex.: *why not include your volunteer’s story on our blog? It’s a great way to share their experience, and recognize the work they did!*)

\* Recognizing volunteers does not always have to mean throwing a party. In many cases, a simple thank you is enough to keep volunteers coming back.