



Tips on Recruiting and Sustaining Volunteers

1. Expand the Volunteer Position beyond TBB-NC

The best volunteers are committed to your organization's mission and goals. Except in cases where an organization is receiving a high volume of clients specifically coming in to use The Benefit Bank® to complete applications or taxes, an organization's volunteers should have responsibilities beyond being TBB™-NC counselors to avoid volunteers from becoming bored or disinterested.

2. Use a Volunteer Job Description, Application and Interview

A common mistake when working with volunteers is to not give them enough responsibility or direction for the role to be fulfilling. Write a job description that includes the role of being a TBB-NC counselor along with other roles. Be sure to make use of the *TBB-NC Counselor Description Template* in the [Site Resources](#) section of the [TBB-NC website](#) as a starting point. Having a volunteer complete an application gives the volunteer a sense of commitment and belonging. The application is also an important place to collect basic contact info, availability, and interests. Review the *TBB-NC Volunteer Interest Form* in the [Site Resources](#) section of the [TBB-NC website](#) to get ideas on how to create a basic volunteer application. Conducting a friendly, informal interview with volunteer helps you gauge whether the person is right for the work, and also their strengths, talents, and networks which could all be valuable to your organization.

3. Recruit Volunteers through Staff and Volunteer Networks

Many people don't volunteer because they weren't asked. People want to feel valued and that they have something to offer. If someone asks them to lend a little time to a good cause, then people will. An organization's staff and current volunteers are the ripest ground for more volunteers. Encourage staff and volunteers to recruit their friends, neighbors, co-workers and congregations to volunteer at your organization.

4. Recruit Volunteers through Community Partnerships

Local churches, civic organizations, and clubs can provide a steady stream of volunteers for your organization. Be prepared to explain what you need volunteers to do and reach out in person or by phone. Ask to be directed to the person or committee in charge of community engagement. Don't underestimate young volunteers! Connecting with college and high school clubs or service groups can bring a valuable resource of enthusiasm and creativity to your organization. Most schools have a service learning coordinator who will help you connect with the right student organizations.

5. Recruit Volunteers through Connector Organizations or Online

Several organizations and online services help to connect volunteers to non-profit organizations, including the United Way. In North Carolina, the NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service keeps a [List of Volunteer Centers and Connector Organizations](#) on their website by county. Several websites allow organizations to post volunteer opportunities into an online searchable database including: [Idealist](#), [VolunteerMatch](#) and [CreatetheGood](#). People looking for volunteer opportunities then browse the listings and contact the organization if they are interested, similar to an online job listing.

6. Orientate Volunteers to Your Organization

Be sure to take the time to tell volunteers about your organization's goals, mission, history, and programs. Volunteers can be valuable advocates for your organization in the community. Set the volunteer up with a regular time when they will volunteer weekly or bi-weekly and be sure to explain what will happen when they arrive, who will meet them, and what work they will do. Likewise, be sure to introduce your volunteers to your organization's system for serving TBB-NC clients beyond the required TBB-NC counselor training.

7. Schedule Your Volunteers

Volunteers want to be helpful to your organization and be held accountable. It is best to set up a schedule and assign volunteers a regular time to come in with specific tasks to complete. For your volunteers serving as TBB-NC counselors, they will know to expect to serve clients using The Benefit Bank when they come to your organization. However, depending on your service model, there may not always be clients for your volunteers to serve. Therefore, to make best use of your volunteers and keep them engaged and coming back, have something else prepared for them to do. What this task is may vary by volunteer, making the interview all the more important. Putting your volunteers on a regular schedule (weekly or monthly) can cut down on the responsibility of a volunteer coordinator to contact and manage when volunteers are needed. Use the Basic Volunteer Scheduling Template in Excel format to track the schedule of volunteers. Find the Scheduling Template in the [Site Resources](#) section of the [TBB-NC website](#).

8. Praise and Honor Your Volunteers

Volunteers serve because they want to make a difference and help make their community a better place. It is important to give out praise to effective volunteers and to notice their consistency, dedication, hard-work and accomplishments. People will continue to volunteer if they feel like they are valued and are making a valuable contribution to the organization. Annual volunteer celebrations or events are one way to regularly honor volunteers. Check out the article "[Twenty Great Ways to Reward Volunteers](#)" from Charity Village for more ways to honor volunteers.

More Volunteer Resources

- For a short summary article read: Recruiting Volunteers – Three Approaches:
<http://nonprofit.about.com/od/volunteers/a/recruitvols.htm>
- Read articles on Volunteer Recruitment from Energize Inc. Resource Library on Volunteering: <http://www.energizeinc.com/art/subj/recruit.html> like *Creative Volunteer Roles* from the “On Volunteers” column in The NonProfit Times
<http://www.energizeinc.com/art/nprea.html>
- Check out The Community Tool Box Chapter on Recruiting and Training Volunteers:
http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/chapter_1011.aspx
- For a comprehensive volunteer resource guide read: Successful Strategies for Recruiting, Training, and Managing Volunteers from the Department of Health and Human Services:
http://www.samhsa.gov/fbci/Volunteer_handbook.pdf
- For more resources on Volunteer Management visit “Developing and Managing Volunteer Programs” from the Free Management Library:
<http://managementhelp.org/staffing/volunteers.htm>