



## Recruiting Volunteers

Recruiting volunteers can be one of the hardest parts of being a volunteer liaison. It is an ongoing effort throughout the whole school year. Some things to keep in mind as you begin recruiting volunteers:

- Do you have meaningful jobs for volunteers to perform?
- Are the administration and staff willing to work with volunteers?

**People are four times more likely to agree to volunteer if they are asked in person** (*Volunteer Impact Leadership Training Series, 02/2007*).

When you are reaching out to recruit volunteers, focus on what each stakeholder gains from volunteering. Different groups of people are motivated differently, so it is important to modify your recruitment efforts appropriately. Please see the section on volunteer motivation for help. Below are some benefits that volunteers bring to schools:

### Benefits for Schools:

- Increased support for teachers and students
- Improved school – community relations
- More parent involvement leads to higher student achievement

### Benefits for Teachers:

- Students get more individual instruction
- Help with non-instructional duties
- Lower adult-child ratio

### Benefits for Students:

- Increased individualized attention
- Enrichment of classroom activities and social skills
- Positive adult role models
- Improved self-image
- Diversity of Experiences

### Benefits for Volunteers:

- Personal satisfaction
- Improved self-esteem, sense of accomplishment
- Experience in diverse urban education
- Knowledge/understanding of school systems
- Work experience
- Opportunities to learn

### Benefits for the Community:

- Decrease in the achievement gap
- Better-educated students
- Improved graduation rates
- Increased confidence in educational system



## Tips/ Best Practices

Tips to remember when recruiting school volunteers:

- **Have patience.** Be aware of volunteers and what motivates them.
- **Use warmth, friendliness, and the “human touch.”** Show a sincere interest in the prospective volunteer- everyone needs to feel important and needed!
- **Reach out.** Personal testimonies are often more powerful than a printed promotional piece. Most successful school-recruitment programs do not wait for volunteers to come to them but develop plans to actively reach the community and bring them in. Be proactive and persistent. View the neighborhood community as a source of potential volunteers.
- **Maintaining momentum throughout the year.** Active recruitment is an ongoing, continuous process. Use real life examples of students who need tutors/mentors, and those successful stories of students, who benefited from the help of volunteers.
- **Make it easy to serve.** Keep the required forms, rules, and regulations to a minimum. Legal aspects of participation must be covered, but the important thing is to get people working with students. Believe in volunteers and the contributions they make to education. Communicate this through all your efforts.
- **Make your needs known.** Be specific about your need for volunteers. A vague invitation to volunteers for an open-ended project will produce few responses. People want to know what kind of a commitment they are being asked to make.
- **Always, always remind volunteers that they are needed and appreciated.** Thank them for every-thing they do!
- **Put out the welcome mat for volunteers!** Create a “volunteer area” somewhere in the school to make volunteers feel welcome, comfortable, and special.

*(Adapted from: School Volunteer Coordinator Toolkit, School Board of Alachua County, Florida)*

## Where can you recruit?

The best places to recruit volunteers are in the community and neighborhood surrounding your school. Reach out to local churches and see if they can put ads in their weekly bulletins. Go to local coffee shop, parks, and community centers and hang fliers. Reach out to non-profits and businesses in the area. Keep in mind that each organization or group of people have different backgrounds and motivations for volunteering, so modify your volunteer requests/fliers accordingly.

Volunteer MPS can also help you with recruitment of volunteers. On the Volunteer MPS website, there is a volunteer request form that you can fill out online or a paper copy ([http://volmps.mpls.k12.mn.us/request\\_a\\_volunteer.html](http://volmps.mpls.k12.mn.us/request_a_volunteer.html)) .

## Recruitment websites

Here are some online recruitment sites that match interested volunteers with volunteer opportunities:

- Craigslist
- Volunteermatch.com
- Twin Cities Hands On
- Serve net: [www.servenet.org](http://www.servenet.org)
- Check local colleges’ job websites services for their students where you can post volunteer opportunities