



THE AMERICAN LEGION

Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers

The Lifeblood of The American Legion



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Volunteer Opportunities





Volunteers are Essential

- The American Legion is a Veteran Service Organization
- In order to serve, we need people willing to step up and fill the needs of our organization, our communities, our Veterans, and the Programs that drive our membership.
- Volunteers at all levels are indispensable in the completion of our mission, vision, and goals.
- Volunteers are: Post Officers, Program Directors, Visible or Behind the Scenes at our Events. We need them to be effective, successful, and relevant in our communities.



Volunteer Value

- Volunteers are, without a doubt, one of the most valuable resources a The American Legion can gain access to. This is primarily the case because we rely on volunteers to carry out our mission and objectives. Volunteers give their time and skills to ensure delivery of our programs.
- Volunteers can provide excellent support to our members, increase contact with the greater community, and make available better expertise inside of our programs.
- *Recent studies estimate that about a hundred million people volunteer each year with an annual value in the range of \$150 billion.*



1. Identifying Volunteers:

Who can volunteer?

- Every person within your Post and community are potential volunteers.

Who WILL volunteer?

- Those who see the value of the Program, project, or event for which they are being asked to volunteer.



2. Where are they hiding?

- In plain sight.
- Members – their families and relatives are frequently willing.
- Many individuals just want to be asked. They are waiting.
- Many businesses just want to be asked. They are waiting.
- Many service organizations just want to be asked.
- Knock on doors, make phone calls, and shake hands.
- Community Service Days are great ways to find volunteers.



3. What will they and you do?

- YOU:
 - Give them something to make them proud.
 - Provide a clearly defined “chain of command/concern.”
Make sure they know who they are reporting to and that the volunteer leader is ready for the task at hand.
 - Have a plan for each volunteer and set them up to win
 - Show them how it needs to be done before you ask them to do it.
 - Offer praise and constructive feedback.



3. What will they and you do?

- YOU:
 - Identify specific jobs for specific talents.
 - Clearly define the role of the volunteer.
 - Have an onboarding process.
 - Offer both short term and long term opportunities.
 - Communicate your expectations.
 - Make it enjoyable.



3. What will they and you do?

- THEM:
 - Tell you their talents, interests, hobbies, and passions.
 - Provide expertise in their field.
 - Share the workload.
 - Deliver amazing results.



4. Why?

- Explain the mission.
- Explain the vision.
- Explain the benefits.
- Explain the goal(s).
- Stress the importance of involvement.
- Explain that we give back as a service organization.
- Show them this is a community endeavor.



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I Have Volunteers. Now What?

- Volunteer retention is just as important (if not more so) than volunteer recruitment.
- Losing a volunteer in a growing program means you have to recruit twice as many people to support the program.
- Retaining volunteers builds value, enthusiasm, and momentum in programs and events and allows you to more readily recruit more volunteers.



Motivating Your Volunteers

- Reward your volunteer group.
 - “Challenge Coins”
 - Mention in the Newsletter
 - Get their accomplishments on TV, radio, in the local newspaper.
- Consider competition between your programs, projects and events.
- Commit to an After Action Report
- Meet regularly. Commit to having it on the calendar.



Overcoming Apathy

- What's in it for me?
 1. Intrinsic value.
 2. Community growth and stimulation.
 3. Possible “reward” structure.
- I don't have time!
- I never volunteer for anything.
 - What can we do as an organization to change your mind?
 - Are there other things you would be willing to do to help?



Follow-up

- Have a system in place, train your volunteers and set them up for success.
- Praise, praise, praise.
- Recognize, recognize, recognize.
- Details about the successful mission.
- Make it “fun” to volunteer.
- Never, ever, take your volunteers for granted.



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Questions?



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