Turning a short-term volunteer into a long-term volunteer

In previous eras, volunteers picked their “cause”, found an organization that matched it, and then dedicated themselves to that agency, only leaving when personal lives demanded change. Those times are over; volunteers today prefer short-term, finite assignments, thereby leaving organizations that rely on committed long-term volunteers struggling to fill their mission. How can an organization function in this atmosphere and encourage volunteers to continue their commitment beyond occasional periods?

There are many factors that are impacting this volunteer change: employment, family stresses, desire for a variety of experiences and people looking to volunteer where their “volunteer time value” matches the organizational expectation. In order to have an effective volunteer program, many factors must be addressed; key components are age and gender of volunteers, days and hours of volunteering, and skills necessary in order to be a volunteer.

To have volunteers commit long term requires careful planning and possible re-organization of the volunteer program structure. Organizational environment is key to welcoming volunteers and demonstrating how their long-term commitment will reflect on the overall mission. The volunteer management must be structured to encourage volunteers, accept their expectations and be able to demonstrate that the program will be able to reflect a volunteer’s contribution. The volunteer program must be pro-active and willing and able to respond to volunteer expectations.

Alaskan concerns:
- Need for long-term “vetted” volunteers
- Transient population
- Numerous demands placed on volunteers

Learn more about these topics at Everyone Ready

VNG-Volunteerism for the Next Generation:
- Organizational Readiness: “Identifying Volunteer Roles”
- Engagement of Volunteers: “Removing Barriers for Volunteers”

Everyone Ready:
- Turning Single Days of Service into Longer Volunteer Involvement
- Pro Bono Service: Get Ready for the Highly-Skilled Volunteer
- Social Networking and Volunteer Involvement