

Quick Guide: Finding and Managing Volunteers

An ARCvi Quick Guide for community violence intervention programs



The main idea: Volunteers can extend a program's capacity, but only when the roles are clearly defined, appropriately screened, well supervised, and matched to work that can be done safely and ethically.

Start with the right question

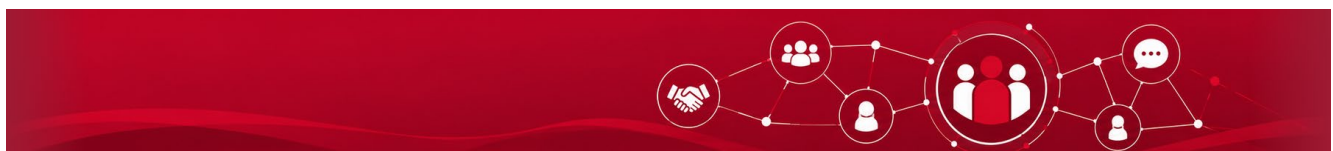
Begin by asking what work needs to be done, whether it is appropriate for a volunteer, and what support the person will need to do it well.

Build a volunteer role before recruiting

- 1 **Define the task.** Describe the specific work, expected product, schedule, location, skills needed, and who will supervise it.
- 2 **Choose the right type of volunteer.** Decide whether the need is a one-time service project, an ongoing operational role, a professional skills project, or an advisory role.
- 3 **Estimate the real staff burden.** Orientation, scheduling, supervision, troubleshooting, and follow-up all take staff time. Recruit only when the program has capacity to manage the role.
- 4 **Decide what information the volunteer may access.** Limit access to participant information and program systems to the minimum necessary. Use confidentiality agreements and role-based permissions.
- 5 **Write a short role description.** State the purpose, duties, time commitment, location, required qualifications, training, screening, benefits to the volunteer, and how to apply.

Good volunteer roles for CVI programs

- Event setup, food distribution, neighborhood cleanups, supply drives, and administrative support.
- Tutoring, résumé support, mock interviews, financial literacy, or structured workshops led by qualified volunteers.
- Graphic design, website updates, photography, communications, data visualization, bookkeeping, or grant research.
- Board, advisory, or committee service that brings a needed professional skill or community connection.



Where to Find Volunteers

Use more than one recruitment channel

- Start with people who already know and trust the organization: program alumni, families, community partners, advisory members, neighborhood associations, and faith communities.
- Ask colleges and universities about service-learning courses, student organizations, internship and volunteer offices, alumni networks, and professional schools.
- Approach employers with employee-volunteer programs, especially when you need teams for a one-day project or professionals with specialized skills.
- Share opportunities through LinkedIn, Instagram, community listservs, neighborhood groups, newsletters, and partner organizations. Ask staff and board members to repost.
- Contact professional associations when you need accountants, attorneys, clinicians, designers, technology specialists, evaluators, or human-resources expertise.

Philadelphia places to list or develop opportunities

Idealist / VolunteerMatch	Create an organization profile and post onsite, hybrid, or virtual volunteer opportunities. VolunteerMatch is now part of Idealist.
Philadelphia Foundation Key Skills Hub	Connect with professionals offering pro bono skills in areas such as strategy, marketing, accounting, human resources, web development, and design.
Global Citizen / Greater Philadelphia King Day of Service	Register or host a service project for the annual King Day of Service and use its planning resources to structure group volunteer activities.
Serve Philadelphia	Use the City's civic-engagement network, trainings, and connections to strengthen volunteer engagement and identify local partners.

Current links: [Idealist](#) | [Philadelphia Foundation Key Skills Hub](#) | [Global Citizen King Day](#) | [Serve Philadelphia](#)

Sample LinkedIn post

Help strengthen community violence intervention

[PROGRAM NAME] is seeking a volunteer [ROLE TITLE] to help us [SPECIFIC TASK OR PROJECT]. This is a [ONE-TIME / SHORT-TERM / ONGOING] opportunity requiring approximately [TIME COMMITMENT]. The volunteer will work with [SUPERVISOR OR TEAM] and receive orientation and clear project guidance.

We are especially interested in people with experience in [SKILLS], but we also value reliability, respect for community expertise, and a commitment to working alongside young people and neighborhoods affected by violence.

Location: [ONSITE / HYBRID / REMOTE]

Timing: [DATES OR SCHEDULE]

To learn more or express interest: [LINK OR EMAIL]

Please share with someone who may be a good fit.



Make the post concrete: Specific roles attract stronger applicants than broad requests to “help our organization.” Include the expected time, location, duties, supervision, required skills, and application process.

Screen, Select, and Onboard Volunteers

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A note on language: Organizations generally recruit, select, and onboard volunteers rather than “hire” them. Even though they are unpaid, volunteers should still be chosen through a fair and consistent process.

Use screening that fits the role

- 1 Use a short application.** Ask about motivation, availability, relevant experience, references, accommodations, and any potential conflicts of interest.
- 2 Hold a structured conversation.** Explain the role and boundaries, ask the same core questions of each candidate, and assess reliability as well as skills.
- 3 Check references when warranted.** Reference checks are especially important for ongoing, participant-facing, transportation, financial, or system-access roles.
- 4 Complete legally required clearances.** Pennsylvania requires certain clearances for volunteers who have contact with children. Requirements depend on the role and the volunteer’s circumstances, so confirm the current rules before service begins.
- 5 Do not over-screen.** A background history should not automatically exclude a person from every volunteer role. Use an individualized, role-related review consistent with law, organizational policy, funder requirements, and the program’s values.
- 6 Document the decision.** Keep a simple record of the role, screening completed, approval, start date, training, supervisor, and access granted.

Pennsylvania clearance information: [Keep Kids Safe: Child Abuse Clearances](#). Consult legal counsel, your insurer, or a qualified human-resources professional when requirements are unclear.

Orient volunteers to CVI work

- The program’s mission, model, population, and community context.
- Trauma-responsive and culturally respectful interaction.
- Confidentiality, data privacy, photography, social media, and media-contact rules.
- Professional boundaries, mandated reporting, safety procedures, and when to contact staff.
- The exact task, expected quality, deadlines, communication channel, and supervisor.
- What volunteers must never do without staff direction.

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Protect participants and staff: Do not give a volunteer access to sensitive case files, personal contact information, legal records, or participant histories simply because access is convenient. Share only what is necessary for the assigned role.

Use a simple volunteer agreement

- Role and expected time commitment.
- Confidentiality and acceptable use of information.
- Safety, conduct, anti-harassment, and non-discrimination expectations.
- Supervision and reporting procedures.
- Ownership and permitted use of work products, images, and materials.
- The program’s right to change or end the assignment.

Coordinate and Retain Volunteers

Good coordination keeps volunteers useful

- 1 Name one coordinator.** Even when several staff members use volunteers, one person should oversee applications, onboarding, schedules, records, and problem-solving.
- 2 Start small.** Pilot a role with one or two people before recruiting a large group. Revise the task based on what you learn.
- 3 Provide a work plan.** Give volunteers a checklist, timeline, point of contact, needed materials, and a clear definition of completion.
- 4 Build in supervision.** Use brief check-ins, feedback, and escalation procedures. Do not leave volunteers to improvise in participant-facing or sensitive situations.
- 5 Track contribution without creating bureaucracy.** Record volunteer hours, completed products, training, attendance, and any issues relevant to safety or quality.
- 6 Recognize and close out the work.** Thank volunteers, explain how their work helped, request feedback, collect program property, remove system access, and invite strong volunteers to future roles.

Ways to improve retention

- Offer meaningful assignments rather than leftover tasks.
- Be honest about the time commitment and respond quickly to inquiries.
- Provide flexibility when the role allows it, including remote or short-term projects.
- Give useful feedback and show volunteers the result of their work.
- Create pathways from one-time service to ongoing roles, advisory service, internships, or paid employment when appropriate.
- Recognize contributions in ways the volunteer values, such as a personal thank-you, reference, certificate, public acknowledgment, or professional-development opportunity.

A final readiness checklist

- ☐ The volunteer role is specific, necessary, and appropriate for unpaid service.
- ☐ The role does not replace essential paid frontline work.
- ☐ A staff member has time and authority to supervise the volunteer.
- ☐ The application, screening, and clearance requirements match the role.
- ☐ Confidentiality, safety, boundaries, and data access are clearly addressed.
- ☐ The volunteer will receive orientation, written expectations, and needed materials.
- ☐ The program has a way to schedule, communicate with, and track volunteers.
- ☐ The program has a process for feedback, recognition, and ending the assignment.



ARCvi Takeaway: The strongest volunteer programs do not simply attract willing people. They match clearly defined work with the right volunteers, protect participants and confidential information, provide meaningful supervision, and treat volunteers as partners whose time and skills deserve careful coordination.

This guide provides general planning information and is not legal advice. Volunteer screening, clearances, insurance, mandated reporting, and labor-law requirements may vary by role and organization.