



# eVOLve

technical assistance for  
leveraging volunteers

## Quick Links

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## Ask Hands On

Do you have a question about working with volunteers? Send it to Hands On Network at [training@handsonnetwork.org](mailto:training@handsonnetwork.org).

Welcome to the inaugural issue of **eVOLve: technical assistance for leveraging volunteers**. In this electronic technical assistance (eTA) brief, you will find tips and tools to help you leverage volunteers in your community. It is sponsored by Hands On Network, a training and technical assistance provider for the Corporation for National and Community Service.

## This Month's Question

How do I ensure that volunteers have a good service experience at my project?

## The Answer Corner

A high-impact, well-managed service project will keep volunteers coming back and simultaneously increase your program's capacity to deliver services. Effective planning is the key to providing your volunteers with a quality service experience - one in which they know they have made a true impact in their communities.

Plan your project with the volunteer in mind. What information do they need and want to have? What details need to be ironed out so that you don't have any major barriers during the project? How can you plan for success?



Planning for a service project, whether a one-day event or a long-term volunteer engagement, can happen in five simple steps.

1. **Focus on your community.**

Work with community members and partner organizations to identify real needs in the community. By working *with* and not just *for* the community, you can help build community interest from the very beginning of your project.

2. **Narrow your scope.**

Research the issue and find out what other community groups are already working in this area. Visit the service site, discuss the needs, and determine your project(s).

3. **Map the project.**

Formulate the plan for how you can achieve your service goals. Prepare for every detail from the number of volunteers you need to how you will lead volunteers in a reflection activity. Consider tasks to be completed, material and financial resources needed, and plans for volunteer orientation and project evaluation.

4. **Secure resources.**

Recruit volunteers and solicit the funding, products, and services you need to complete your project. Always be open and honest with volunteers and donors, ensuring that they have the necessary details to participate in the project.

5. **Finalize your project plan.**

Review your plans and take care of the many, little details that will make your project run smoothly. Make sure that you have a contingency plan and a safety plan; communicate project details to volunteers; and triple-check your supplies, facilities, and ensure that every detail is taken care of before the project begins.

Visit the [National Service Resource Center](#) to read more about planning service projects. You can take the [Project Planning online course](#) or read effective practice briefs such as:

- [Assessing community needs before planning a service project](#)
- [Deciding on the "right" volunteer project for your program](#)
- [Mapping your volunteer project](#)
- [Finalizing your service day project plan](#)

From the Resource Center, you can also download these helpful tools:

- [Project Development Guidebook](#)
- [Project Mapping Worksheet](#)
- [Project Task List](#)
- [Project Supply List](#)
- [Volunteer Project Information Form](#)

Careful planning is critical to the success of your service project. By working with the community, you can identify true needs and issues to address through service. Thorough research of the issue will lead you to community partners and a service project that can make a strong impact. After mapping the details and the resources needed for the project, you will be able to work with individuals, groups, and businesses to recruit volunteers and secure other necessary resources. Then, examine the tiny details that make a real difference to the project, gather for the service event, and work together to change your community.

## Summer Studies Webinar Series

Join Hands On Network for FREE webinars throughout the summer. The 90-minute sessions begin at 2:00 Eastern and are free to anyone involved in national service.

### **June 21: Building Volunteer Leadership to Increase Capacity**

What are the strategies used by successful volunteer leaders to lead other volunteers? Explore six steps to volunteer leadership. These techniques can be used to better engage volunteer leaders and develop a framework for volunteer leader success. After participating, you will be able to engage and motivate volunteers, discuss what motivates people to volunteer, match talents to skills, and develop a plan for increasing active volunteer leader participation.

## July 26: Volunteer Management: Recruitment

Without volunteers, most not-for-profits would cease to exist or would otherwise suffer a drastic reduction in capacity to serve communities and achieve the mission of the organization. Recruitment is the first step in securing volunteer participation in your national service program. This session will help you explore the basics of recruitment and how to create a recruitment strategy. (Participants may also want to attend our follow-up session: Effectively Using New Media to Engage Volunteers.)

## August 9: Effectively Using New Media to Engage Volunteers

MySpace. Podcasts. Wikipedia. Blogs. YouTube. Sure, you've heard about them on Dateline, but did you know they're applicable not just to teenagers? After looking at national technology trends, we'll explore a host of ways you can utilize these new media applications to engage volunteers and market your program to groups ranging from teenagers to first-time or veteran volunteers.

## August 23: Service to Civics

How do you define civic involvement? In this session, participants will spend time crafting personal definitions of civic involvement and discussing the implications of defining civic involvement. You'll be introduced to the concept of reflection and how intentionally combining reflection and meaningful service can deepen the civic commitment of your volunteers. We will also explore a variety of reflection ideas that you will be able to apply to your volunteer program.

## August 30: Going for the Gold: Turning Short-term Volunteers into Long-term Success Stories

Your program needs volunteers to help with tasks such as planning meetings, creating newsletters, designing web pages, managing finances, etc. Finding and recruiting these volunteers can be challenging, but once you have done so, now what? A long-term volunteer who is passionate about the work will benefit the program with continuity of service, reduced costs, increased recruitment and outreach support, and more. This session will explore ways to recruit and retain volunteers and help you transition them into satisfied, long-term volunteers.

[Register](#) today!

## Hands On Training

Hands On Network provides free training and technical assistance to help national service programs leverage volunteers. From live training to webinars, on-line courses to effective practices, Hands On provides a wide variety of resources for your program. Contact Hands On at [training@handsonnetwork.org](mailto:training@handsonnetwork.org) or visit the [National Service Resource Center](#) for more information.

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