



March 2009

<h2>Dear Jennifer,</h2>	<h2>Quick Links</h2>
<p>Welcome to 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 HandsOn Network, a training and technical assistance provider for the Corporation for National and Community Service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Resource Center CNCS HandsOn Network Points of Light Institute <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Join Our Mailing List!</u></p>
<h2>This Month's Quote</h2>	<h2>Ask Us</h2>
<p>"Disability is a matter of perception. If you can do just one thing well, you're needed by someone."</p> <p>Martina Navratilova</p>	<p>Do you have a question about working with volunteers or a suggestion for a future issue of eVOLve? Send it to HandsOn Network:</p> <p>training@handsonnetwork.org</p>
<h2>Dear HandsOn,</h2>	
<p>How do I effectively engage people with disabilities in volunteer opportunities?</p>	
<h2>The Answer Corner</h2>	
<p>Persons with disabilities, like all volunteers, have unique talents to contribute and play an important service role in communities everywhere. Inclusion is the act of engaging people with disabilities in all our daily activities - at school, at work, at home and in the community (The Inclusion Network.) According to the latest U.S. Census, almost 50 million men, women and children of all ages, races, ethnic backgrounds, economic levels and religious affiliations have some disability.</p> <p>Volunteerism is about engaging all Americans to serve in communities across the nation, demonstrating their gifts and talents. According to the 2000 Points of Light Evaluation Report: Engaging Persons with Disabilities, many volunteers with disabilities reported that Service days such as MLK Day or Make a Difference Day were the first time they are asked to serve in projects.</p>	

Here are seven ways to assist you in engaging volunteers with disabilities into your program.

1. Reach out to disability organizations.

Reach out to disability communities with recruitment practices and materials that are accessible and welcoming to people with disabilities. Let organizations know that you want to engage the abilities of people with disabilities. Begin to establish relationships and collaboration. Present at each others' staff meetings. Exchange materials. This may be an opportunity to get feedback on accessibility of materials and practices from disability specialists.

Examples of disability organizations:

- Centers for independent living
- Self-advocacy organizations
- Departments of Vocational Rehabilitation
- United Cerebral Palsy
- National Federation for the Blind

2. Set aside ample time to plan.

According to the 2000 Points of Light Evaluation Report: Engaging Persons with Disabilities, many volunteer centers consistently found that investing ample time in the planning phase of each project led to accessible and successful programs. On average, Volunteer Centers spent at least four months planning and preparing for projects to engage persons with disabilities.

3. Educate staff and partnering organizations on the abilities of persons with disabilities.

To ensure a successful program or project, train your staff to manage volunteers with disabilities. Eliminate challenges with staff on the front end by letting them know what valuable resources volunteers with disabilities and how they bring a high level of motivation and commitment to service.

4. Include welcoming messages in program materials.

Include active, positive images of people with visible disabilities in promotional materials. (Get feedback from the National Service Inclusion Project or other disability professionals.) Always include the following statements on printed materials:

- Equal opportunity/non-discrimination statement.
- "Individuals with disabilities can make reasonable accommodations requests by calling [name of contact] at [telephone/TTY]"
- "Available in alternative formats." Be prepared to deliver alternate formats when requested. Depending on the extensiveness of the request, you may need to request a two-week notification in order to fill them.

5. Review, adapt, and/or use accessible materials developed by other programs and grantees (National Service Programs).

[National Service Inclusion Projects Disability Grants](#)

6. Hold recruitment events and activities in accessible locations.

Create an [accessibility checklist](#) to assist you with events. Visit the National Service Inclusion Project website for information and resources.

7. Contact disability coordinators in your state for information. NSIP maintains an updated list of [disability coordinators](#).

Can they recommend disability contacts? Are they available to speak with potential applicants with questions regarding disability? Find out what they are doing. Have they produced PR materials that would be useful for your program? Ask NSIP for recommendations of disability organizations to contact. Contact the National Service Inclusion Project.

NOTE: This issue of eVOLVe was written in partnership with National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP). Information and resources are provided by the National Service Inclusion Project.

The National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP) is training and technical assistance provider on disability inclusion, under a cooperative agreement (#08TAHMA001) from Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). NSIP partners with the Association on University Centers on Disability, National Council on Independent Living, Association on Higher Education and Disability and National Down Syndrome Congress to build connections between disability organizations and all CNCS grantees, including national directs, to increase the participation of people with disabilities in national service. NSIP provides training, technical assistance and resources to AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and Senior Corps on topics such as recruitment, universal design, reasonable accommodations, and legal compliance.

Resources

To review past eVOLve briefs, please visit the the Resource Center to review [archive evolve briefs](#). The Resource will feature eVOLve in their monthly Resource Alert.

HandsOn Network Training Opportunities

Please join us for our upcoming webinar on *Disability Inclusion - Effectively Engaging Persons with Disabilities as Volunteers*. HON will conduct the webinar on the **Thursday, March 26th at 3:00 p.m. Eastern**. During this session, participants will learn effective ways to engage persons with disabilities in service. Jason Wheeler and Sarah Kaplan with the National Service Inclusion Project will facilitate this session. The session will last one hour and will be recorded. Click [here](#) to register for this free webinar. **You may register for this webinar beginning Friday, March 13, 2009.**

NOTE: HandsOn Network will conduct training webinars on the fourth Thursday of each month. All sessions will begin at 3:00 p.m. Eastern. Webinar topics will coincide with our monthly eVOLve topics. We will continue to notify you when of these and other training opportunities.

If you have any questions, please [contact us](#).



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