

Effective Mentor Recruitment

Effective Mentor Recruitment: Getting Organized, Getting Results is a guide to mentor recruiting created by Michael Garringer and the National Mentoring Center and published by the Mentoring Resource Center in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools.

This invaluable resource for program coordinators, recruitment directors, and other mentoring staffers offers advice and concrete measures that will help you prepare for, focus, and implement your volunteer search process. Providing an array of strategies from which to build a framework for long-term success, ***Effective Mentor Recruitment*** explores, among other topics:

- Why mentors volunteer and how to tap into those motivations.
- How to identify the mentor characteristics that match your participant needs.
- How to effectively target your recruitment efforts to find qualified volunteers.
- How to present your message to appeal to potential candidates.
- How to harness personal and community networks to make direct personal appeals.
- How to strategize your broader volunteer outreach efforts.

What follows is a summary of this resource. The full text is available on the [Education Northwest website](#). Following the summary are direct links to a number of forms and tools that programs can adapt to their own needs.

Guiding Principles

These general principles can help you start your recruitment efforts from a realistic and practical point. They may influence how you approach the planning methods and strategies suggested.

- Recruitment is part of everything your program does.
- Everyone has a role to play – program and school staff, board members, community partners, current mentors, parents and youth.
- Set realistic goals.
- Be determined.

- Be creative.
- Be flexible.
- Know the strengths and limitations of your recruiters.
- Allocate proper funding to recruitment tasks.
- Track your efforts.
- Partner rather than compete with other area programs.

Preparing to Recruit

Laying the groundwork for volunteer recruitment is crucial. While some of this may have already taken place when developing your grant application or in the course of your program operations, these steps may offer additional suggestions not previously considered.

- Determine the personal qualities you want in your mentors and what demographic and social groups you want to tap. Look at the needs of the youth you serve, the needs of the community, your geographic area, and how your services will be delivered.
- Develop a formal mentor job description which includes: duties, qualifications, benefits, information about your organization and its purpose; and application instructions.
- Inventory potential recruitment locations: businesses, religious institutions, civic groups, professional associations, etc.
- Inventory your internal resources: financial resources; staff time and talents; community connections; partnerships and in-kind resources.
- Understand the possible motivations behind volunteerism.
- Analyze potential recruitment barriers and plan responses to each.
- Have your policies and procedures in place and ready to use.

Recruitment Methods

Included here are (1) marketing-themed approaches that can reach larger, less-targeted groups of potential recruits; (2) common recruitment strategies that many programs employ and how to customize them for your use; and (3) additional creative strategies that your program may be able to adopt.

Marketing-Themed Recruitment

- Applying proven consumer marketing principles to mentor recruitment:
 - Analyzing effective marketing campaigns.
 - Developing and testing your key message.
 - Branding your program.
 - Projecting a professional image with high-quality materials.
- Marketing methods:
 - Your program website.
 - Public service announcements.
 - Posters and flyers.
 - Newsletters.
 - Public relations: press releases; media interviews; op-ed pieces; press events.
 - Electronic community bulletin boards.
 - Annual reports.

Common Mentor Recruitment Strategies

- Formal presentations to local businesses, religious institutions, professional organizations, neighborhood associations, and colleges.
- Personal appeals: perhaps through targeted mailings or recruitment contents among staff, board members and volunteers.
- Tying into National Mentoring Month and state partnerships.
- Formal partnership agreements.
- Using the resources of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS): AmeriCorps; VISTA; and SeniorCorps.
- Booths at community events.

Additional Recruitment Strategies

- Using current volunteers as recruitment ambassadors.
- Working with local business to distribute your printed materials or promote your program:
 - Inserts in grocery bags, with employee paychecks, in sporting event or theater programs, with newspapers, etc.
 - Restaurant table tents and creative ad placements such as public transportation, program ads or public restrooms.
 - Movie theater slides.
- Creating unique, personal approaches to mentor recognition.

Making a Recruitment Plan

Once you've completed your background work and considered a wide variety of strategies, you can begin to construct your recruitment plan. In it, be sure to address the following:

- What?** Define your approach and have clear goals for your specific strategy.
- How?** Itemize the smaller tasks that make up the larger strategy and determine what resources (time, money, skills) you need to accomplish it.
- Who?** Clearly delineate who has responsibility for each task and be sure they have the skills for the job.
- When?** Timelines are important (1) to help you allot staff time to recruitment tasks and (2) to fit your recruitment campaign into your annual calendar and coordinate it with external schedules and events like Mentoring Month.
- Where?** Detail whether your recruiting necessitates interfacing with the community or placing messages at strategic locations.
- Review and revise.** Set goals and benchmarks and track your progress against them. Review your overall strategy at least quarterly to see if it is meeting expectations. Make adjustments if some approaches work better than others. Schedule these reviews as you would other program tasks.

Useful Planning Tools

Effective Mentor Recruitment includes a completed sample plan, a blank plan template, and a number of useful planning tools that may be customized.

Sample Recruitment Plan

[Sample Plan Description](#) – p 44

[Sample Plan](#) – pp 46 - 53

Additional Planning Tools

[Worksheet: Defining Our Mentors](#) – p A-3

[Worksheet: Mentors Position Description](#) – p A-4

[Worksheet: Inventory of Recruitment Locations](#) – p A-5

[Worksheet: Inventory of Internal Resources](#) – pp A-6 & A-7

[Worksheet: Volunteer Motivations & Our Response](#) – p A-8

[Worksheet: Potential Barriers & Our Solutions](#) – p A-9

[Planning Worksheet: Marketing Strategy](#) – p A-10
[Planning Worksheet: Recruitment Activity](#) – p A-11
[Planning Worksheet: Recruitment Timeline](#) – p A-12

Additional Reading & Resources

[Recruitment and Program Development Resources](#) – p B-3
[Marketing Resources](#) – p B-4
[References](#) – pp 55 - 56

Additional Forms, Charts & Resources

[Who Mentors?](#) – p 14
[Sample Mentor Job Description #1](#) – pp 17 - 18
[Sample Mentor Job Description #2](#) – p 19
[Recruiting for School-Based Programs](#) – p 23
[Recruitment Barriers](#) – pp 24 - 25
[Analyzing Effective Marketing Efforts](#) – p 30
[Good Advice for Seeking Corporate Volunteers](#) – p 39