



Volunteer Engagement Plan for COVID-19 Recovery, Reopening, and Return

While every organization that engages volunteers has been affected to some degree by the COVID-19 pandemic, no one approach can guide all of them in recovery and return to operations. Each organization must abide by its local mandates and protocols, its capacity, and the unique nature of its mission and services. Nevertheless, all organizations will likely reopen, return, and recover in phases and the ways that volunteers are engaged should align with organizations' plans. Use this template to guide your planning.

Background

Briefly address each of the following so that the volunteer engagement plan aligns with and supports the organization's plans.

Mission

What is your organization's mission? Has it shifted at all due to the pandemic?

Vision for Volunteer Engagement

What is your shared vision statement for volunteer engagement (if you have one)? Have you developed one over the past year to guide your COVID-19 response?

Strategic Priorities

What are your organization's strategic priorities, and have they been revised considering COVID-19? Will the priorities (including audiences served or issues to be addressed) be expanding or changing as the organization reopens and recovers?

Organizational Reopening Plan

What is the organizational plan for reopening? What are the anticipated phases and what conditions will trigger shifts from one phase to another? Include the anticipated timeframe.

Volunteer Engagement Plan

Volunteer engagement efforts and opportunities will differ from phase to phase. In planning each phase, consider each of these components of volunteer engagement – including the activities (if any) for each and how success will be measured.

Roles

Assess and identify which volunteer positions will be safe, necessary, and possible during the phase. Consider both onsite and virtual opportunities.

Recruitment

Outline the recruitment efforts necessary to fill the roles identified above. Will you prioritize “current” volunteers, outreach to new audiences, or both? How will you monitor the recruitment efforts so your recruitment meets capacity rather than exceeds it?

Retention

Clarify how your organization defines retention and whether that definition has evolved in consideration of pandemic safety concerns (especially if your organization has established active vs. inactive status for volunteers). Identify retention goals and strategies to achieve those goals.

Reorientation and Retraining

How will new and current volunteers be oriented and trained? Consider virtual and in-person roles, new protocols and procedures, and new services or programs. Consider also updates on changing expectations as the organization moves from phase to phase.

Recognition

Outline recognition strategies, noting how they will address active versus inactive volunteers, if applicable. For example, will volunteers who are inactive still accrue time towards their tenure as volunteers?

Release

Explain the steps to helping volunteers retire or exit in an honorable and respectful manner.

Risk Management

How will volunteers be integrated into the organization’s overall risk management plans? Consider, for example, expectations for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), cleaning procedures, insurance, and policies around screening and vaccinations.

Revisions to Policy

Which policies will need to be updated? Policies regarding cyber security and social media may remain consistent across all phases while policies on volunteer eligibility and screening may vary phase by phase.

Resources

Detail the financial, technological, space, and other resources needed to successfully implement these activities. Consider also professional resources, such as colleagues and peers who will advocate for engagement and help to lead the way.

Report

Describe how you will measure and track volunteer involvement and impact and develop a communications plan to share that impact with leadership, colleagues, funders, volunteers, the community, and others, as appropriate.

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Mission

Vision for Volunteer Engagement

Strategic Priorities

Organizational Reopening Plan

Phased Volunteer Engagement Plan

Phase Name

Anticipated Dates/Conditions/Duration

Develop a plan for each phase that addresses:

- Roles
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Reorientation and Retraining
- Recognition
- Release
- Risk Management
- Revision of Policies
- Resources
- Report