



Engaging Leadership Volunteers

VOLUNTEER IMPACT

In FY12 SMART Site Coordinators volunteered 48,570 hours, an in-kind value of \$458,809

BEST PRACTICES

- **Screening and Setting Clear Expectations**
 - Create clear and thorough volunteer position descriptions including time involved.
 - Screening process similar to a job interview.
 - Be very clear and open about position expectation and ensure that people understand what is being asked of them. Don't downplay the time or level of involvement needed.
- **Ensure Open Communication and Consistency**
 - When volunteers understand the context and reason for certain mandates, policies and procedures they are more likely to follow them.
- **Create Volunteer Teams**
 - By breaking up the role and creating teams, it allows individuals to share responsibility, use their unique skill set and creates opportunity for social engagement.
 - Designate one person that is clearly noted as the point person for the team.
- **Thorough Training**
 - A well structured consistent training process from the beginning for all volunteers is critical to their success.
 - Issues, poor performance and misunderstandings can typically be traced back to lack of proper training and setting of expectations.
- **Recruitment**
 - Start with your own connections and mission. 60-70% of SMART's coordinators have either read or coordinated before.
 - Personal asks are always more effective.
- **Encourage Ownership of the Program/Position**
 - Find the right balance between autonomy and need for following instruction and consistency within the role.
 - Identify the critical components of the role that must be consistently applied and followed and those that can have a level of creativity and autonomy.
- **Accountability and Addressing Performance Issues**
 - Having a process in place is necessary so that everyone understands that feedback is expected.
 - Structured feedback and performance reviews allow issues to be addressed in a way that looks towards additional support and training needs.



Engaging Leadership Volunteers

- Volunteers should be held accountable for the expectations of the job.
- In some cases it might not be a good fit and we need to let someone go.
- **Retention and Recognition**
 - Volunteers return when they feel supported, appreciated and like they are making a difference.
 - Relationships are critical to the success of good volunteer management.
 - Recognize good performance and say thank you.
 - Take the time to know your volunteers and what motivates them.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Don't assume that someone does not want to take on a leadership role. If you don't ask, they don't have the opportunity to say yes.
- Make sure someone is the right fit- " the warm body" approach doesn't work.
- Speak clearly to what the role and need is and do not apologize for it.
- Volunteers need feedback about performance and structure. Address issues as they come up, or the problem will become worse.
- Being too flexible creates more work for staff. Managing volunteers takes time. Structure and consistency creates more efficiency and effectiveness in the volunteer program.