

Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

Volunteers form the basic foundation for most ultimate organizations, playing a vital role in the sustainability and success of each organization. It can be challenging to recruit committed people to volunteer their valuable time and it may be even harder to retain those volunteers after initially recruiting them. This guide endeavors to be a helpful resource in developing a volunteer retention strategy that will help grow your volunteer base over time.



Recruiting Strategies

- Advertise your mission and culture. Volunteers tend to donate their time to organizations that align with their values and you want people that align with your values.
- Create a list of talking points to engage volunteers in conversation about your organization.
- Know what you need help with and be able to guide volunteers towards your organization's goals.
- Recruit early. As soon as you scheduled an event start asking volunteers to help.
- Ask for help. People usually want to be helpful and feel the sense of achievement from making a real difference, especially with an organization they care about.
- Set expectations up front in order to recruit volunteers that are ready and able to run a high-quality event.
- Invite people who you know are already proven to be good leaders in other areas or organizations.
- Use social media channels and email list-servs. Ask the community if they are willing to help and also if they have friends or family that would like to get involved.
- Contact local club, college and high school teams. Younger volunteers may be particularly interested in opportunities to network, gain skills, expand their resume or earn a reference letter.
 - Ask a team coach to sign up players for volunteer roles during practice to get their commitment.
- Ask parents of players to volunteer.
 - Example: For youth league ask or even require parents to sign up to help setup or tear down fields. *Tip: Be flexible enough to let parents be free to watch their child's games.*



Recruiting Strategies continued...

- Recognize and show appreciation for current volunteers. This helps retain current volunteers while recruiting new volunteers.
- Create a relationship with new and old volunteers to make volunteers feel valued and in turn make them want to help out again.
- Create a community with back and forth opportunities to communicate and engage with one another. This can be at events or through social media.
- Get creative in your advertisements. Instead of using the word “volunteer” you could instead use “help out” or “make a difference”.
- Emphasize position title, not only so volunteers know what to expect but, so they can feel a sense of pride in owning a title. Field Coordinator, Water Supplier, Score Keeper, Spirit Leader, Admissions Coordinator, etc....
- Take & share photos. Show off the work and the results from your events. Represent your community and the people you want to attract.



Volunteer Retention

- Show recognition and appreciation for your volunteers' accomplishments.
- Illustrate volunteers' impact. Share numbers, how much money was donated, how many people attended, etc. Give a tangible result of their volunteer time.
- Incentivize
 - Cover league participation fee
 - Point system to earn incentives
 - Non-cash incentives like gift cards
 - Ask event teams to bring volunteer gifts to show their appreciation.
- Appreciate that volunteers likely have other commitments and be as flexible and understanding as possible.
- Build a positive rapport. Get to know your volunteers and their motivation for getting involved.
- Give volunteers, especially those in more of a leadership role, respect and trust to take ownership. Volunteer leaders are often experienced and can offer a lot of value to your organization and events, if you let them.
- Communicate and keep volunteers engaged. Prior to an event, communicate clearly what is needed and expected with all relevant event details. Make it as easy as possible for them. Arrive at the event location early so that volunteers can become familiar with the space and their duties without feeling rushed.
- Be organized so that your volunteers can accomplish their tasks with ease.
- Keep a volunteer database with contact information. Some organizations have had success with volunteer management software applications finding the value to be worth the cost.
- Say "Thank You" and then say "Thank You" again.





Volunteer Roles

Developing your organization and recruiting the right people into the right positions can be challenging but once you have established a solid committee you'll be able to smoothly manage your organization.

Here is a list of recommended roles that an organization might consider. These roles are not limited to one person each necessarily, sometimes, it works well to have multiple people collaborating to fill a role.

- **President** – Manages the administration tasks and coordinates details with all members of the committee
- **Vice President** – Manages and coordinates details with all members of the committee
- **Treasurer** – Manages the finances of the organization
- **Secretary** – Records and shares meeting notes and tasks with the committee
- **Social Media Coordinator** – Manages social media posts
- **Marketing & Communication Coordinator** – Manages website, emails, & newsletters
- **Tournament Coordinator** – Runs tournaments throughout the year
- **League Coordinator(s)** – Manages leagues throughout the year; to avoid burnout, consider having a different coordinator for each league.
- **Events/Programming Coordinator** – Plans social events and helps with event logistics
- **Youth Coordinator** – Runs youth-focused events and recruits youth players
- **Pickup Coordinator** – Manages pickup logistics communicates pickup details, collects waivers, memberships, and keeps a running roster
- **Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator** – Works on introducing ultimate to underserved communities and to diverse populations
- **Volunteer Coordinator** – Maintains a relationship with volunteers as well as a living list of contacts to help at events
- **Fundraising Coordinator** – Develops programs and events to bring money into the organization
- **Athlete/Competition Advisor** – Helps answers rules questions, spirit of the game issues, and other athlete related inquiries



Volunteer Roles continued...

Your board/committee does not have to be comprised of all ultimate players, and actually it may be quite beneficial for your organization to have members who bring in a non-ultimate perspective. For example, someone with financial experience, social media experience or a parent who has experience with PTAs might be a great addition. Why would someone who's not in ultimate volunteer for an ultimate organization? Volunteering for a board or a committee is a great way to give back to your community, a great opportunity to expand your network and looks great on a resume. Ask your friends and family if they know anyone who may be interested in volunteering their time and expertise.

The following list is a recommendation of volunteer roles for a tournament, league, pickup or other event type.

- Competition Director – Manages schedule, teams, communication, bid fees, spirit scores
- Tournament Director – Manages venue, food, water, on-site logistics
- Hospitality Coordinator – Manages food, social events, hotel discounts
- Volunteer Coordinator – Recruits volunteers and manages their daily tasks
 - Roles of Volunteers *(for these roles it's often a good idea to have people only scheduled for shifts of a few hours at a time and rotate people throughout the day).*
 - Water – make sure water never runs out
 - Score Keepers – help keep stats and scores during a game and collects spirit scores from teams
 - Admissions/Welcome/Info Tent – collects any admissions or welcomes people to the event, answers questions, and sells merchandise
 - Trash/Recycling – Not the most fun job, but a very much needed job especially to keep the field site relationship going well. Plus, it's a role where you don't have to sit still!
 - Hospitality assistant(s) – helps with food and social events