

Engaging Student Volunteers

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SKILLS SERIES

Student Volunteers: An Overview

College students are often tapped as volunteers because they represent a huge pool of passionate, curious, and skilled individuals who can contribute to nonprofit missions in variety of ways. Because students are trained in many different fields, universities in your community are an excellent resource to find volunteers that meet the needs of your organization.

Many student organizations such as fraternities, clubs, and campus groups have service requirements as part of their membership, and universities themselves manage programs that connect students with volunteering opportunities in the community. Tapping into these can create lasting partnerships that are beneficial to everyone involved!

Managing Student Volunteers

Students are a unique group of volunteers, and specific considerations should be given when engaging them.

Here are some things to consider when managing student volunteers:

PLAN

Your student volunteers may be able to be present for just a single service day or may be interested in coming more regularly. By having concrete goals and specific work outlines, you can be better prepared to receive and manage them. Don't wait until they show up to figure out what they could do! Opportunities should be decided in advance and clearly advertised.

BE RESPECTFUL OF THEIR TIME

Students often have a variety of responsibilities, like homework, jobs, families, and other student groups. Their choice to volunteer on top of all that demonstrates their interest in your cause! Making sure your programs have a variety of times and opportunities for volunteers to serve can help attract and retain student volunteers. Open programming hours are great opportunities to engage students.

ASSIGN STUDENTS BY THEIR INTEREST

Because of where they are in life, students are often eager to serve, but may not know where they fit in. Try to figure out students' interests and assign them based on their passion.

OFFER SKILLBUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

By offering opportunities to either apply or learn skills, especially those related to their students, you can create opportunities for the students to grow as well. For instance, having students of web design help with your organization's website, or having communications students assist with newsletters are great ways to have students plug into your organization.

SHARE VOLUNTEER STORIES

Student volunteers want to feel connected to the mission of your organization. By sharing the stories of your volunteers through your newsletters, social media, and other channels, you can both thank volunteers for their passion and show them how they have helped.



Strategies for Connecting with Student Volunteers

Social Media

Many students currently learn about their communities through social media. If you do not already have a social media presence on organizations like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, consider creating accounts. These tools are also great portals for organizational storytelling, promotion, and communication with various stakeholders.

University Job Boards and Career Fairs

Many university job boards and career fairs have space for volunteer opportunities. Find out about when local college job fairs are occurring, and where you might post opportunities.

Greek Societies

Many fraternities and sororities have proud service traditions. Identifying those in your area can help create lasting partnerships.

Connecting with Student Volunteers in Metro Detroit

In the Detroit metro area, university students have a variety of service-learning and volunteering programs available for students to get involved. As a nonprofit organization looking for volunteers, it can be very helpful to make sure your organization is listed as an opportunity with some of the following university programs:

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY VOLUNTEER HUB

[HTTPS://DOS0.WAYNE.EDU/GETINVOLVED/VOLUNTEER](https://dos0.wayne.edu/getinvolved/volunteer)

Wayne State University's Volunteer Hub was created as a resource to connect students to volunteer opportunities on campus and in the Detroit community. It serves as a directory of opportunities for students who are interested in volunteering.

By clicking the ["Volunteer Opportunity Promotion Request"](#) button, you can have your organization listed as an opportunity. Wayne State programs like [Alternative Spring Break Detroit](#) source their volunteer opportunities from this list.

UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY SERVICE LEARNING

[HTTPS://UDMERCY.EDU/ABOUT/MISSION-VISION/LEAD-SERVE/SERVICE-LEARNING.PHP](https://udmercy.edu/about/mission-vision/lead-serve/service-learning.php)

University of Detroit Mercy's Service Learning department is the avenue through which many of the university's classes and student groups partner with regional organizations who have volunteer opportunities.

To have your organization or opportunity listed, contact Tim Hipskind S. J.

EMAIL: HIPSKIJT@UDMERCY.EDU OR THEINSTITUTE@UDMERCY.EDU

PHONE: 313-993-2003

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

[HTTPS://OAKLAND.EDU/OSI/VOLUNTEER/](https://oakland.edu/osi/volunteer/)

Oakland University's Office of Student Involvement also lists opportunities for individual events and regular volunteering opportunities. You can contact them via email or phone to be listed as a volunteer opportunity.

EMAIL: OSI@OAKLAND.EDU

PHONE: 248-370-2400



Auntie Na's Village, a community organization on Detroit's west side, relies on student volunteers to execute many of its programs.

Hear more at:
<https://youtu.be/wAKroC9c9-Y>