

# Toolkit for Hosting a Group Volunteer Event (for Organizations)



Prepared for the **Coalition on Volunteerism** in Boise, Idaho, by a group of Boise State Service-Learning students and members of the Coalition. Please send comments and suggestions to [KaraBrascia@boisestate.edu](mailto:KaraBrascia@boisestate.edu). 6/11/14

## Preface

A group has contacted your organization asking to volunteer. Congratulations! These short term volunteers—if they have a meaningful experience—may become long term volunteers, donors, and advocates.

**Working with large volunteer groups can be rewarding, but also very challenging.** Is the group an appropriate fit for the project? How many people will actually show up and stay? Will the opportunity meet their expectations? This toolkit will offer insights, checklists, and forms for the organization hosting the volunteer group.

**Note: Please read through the complete guide before you start your process.**

## 1. Prepare Projects

**Create a list of tasks and projects that can be completed by groups of various sizes.** (Involve your staff in brainstorming possible meaningful volunteer projects).

See Appendix for a comprehensive “*Volunteer Group Event Checklist*”

Include details about each task or project, such as:

- What is the desired outcome? What would success look like? (Is it okay if only *half* the barn is painted?)
- What type of group is a good fit? How many people would be ideal? Is there an age limit? Any special skills necessary? Any training necessary?
- How much time will volunteers need to complete the job?
- Will you need supplies, equipment, or food? Prepare a budget for the project. Will volunteers need to bring anything?
- Who will manage the project? What are their roles and responsibilities? Is management willing to allocate time for staff to volunteer? How much and what type of supervision will be required by your staff? Write down their contact information, as well as a secondary contact person.
- Are there specific dates for this project? (Ex: every Saturday during the school year, etc.)
- How will you track the “value” of the experience (# of people, # of hours, # of x completed, How will you report the impact of the activity?)
- What will volunteers get out of it (team building, photo opportunity, learn about issue, meet specific leaders, develop skills, etc.)
- Are there necessary environmental factors (weather, power, traffic)?
- Are there any safety or risk issues? Exposure to hazardous situations or materials?

### Plan for risk management

Take a 30-minute tutorial ([www.nonprofitrisk.org/tools/volunteer/volunteer.shtml](http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/tools/volunteer/volunteer.shtml))

Prepare for onsite medical care, first aid, allergy response, water, injury prevention, and evacuation.

## 2. Managing Requests

**Create a system in your organization for identifying projects quickly.** Share plan with your staff. When the group calls, you will be ready.

**Post information about volunteer opportunities online, and keep them current.** Post on your website, as well as United Way of Treasure Valley’s website ([www.unitedwaytv.org/volunteer](http://www.unitedwaytv.org/volunteer)), Volunteer Spot, and with the local university volunteer opportunity list.

**Consider using online volunteer sign-up process,** as well as a volunteer application that can be submitted online. Provide an option for paper applications if that option is better suited to your audience. Here are some examples of online volunteer sign up forms:

United Way of Treasure Valley ([www.unitedwaytv.org/volunteer](http://www.unitedwaytv.org/volunteer))

Volunteer spot ([www.volunteerspot.com](http://www.volunteerspot.com))

Doodle ([www.doodle.com](http://www.doodle.com))

Google forms ([www.google.com/google-d-s/createforms.html](http://www.google.com/google-d-s/createforms.html))

### 3. Scheduling

Remember that flexibility is paramount when working with volunteers, but so is making sure the group fits the project.

**If groups call at the last minute**, you don't necessarily want to turn away a group inquiring about volunteering; however, it is okay to say "Yes, we have a need for volunteers, but we need time to organize it. Could you volunteer on xx/xx/xx date?"

**Have project ideas with various time requirements.** Plan full-day and half-day projects, long-term projects (ongoing). TIP: Generally, if the task requires volunteers to be on their feet, especially if there are children in the group, the volunteer timeslot should be limited to two hours.

**Communicate clearly and often to confirm all details**, including the number of volunteers expected. If the project or task is sensitive, or will require a lot of supplies or supervision, call again the day before the event. For very large events confirm: 30 days before events, 2 weeks before, 1 week before, and 3 days before.

### 4. Discuss details with the Volunteer Leader

**Ask the group leader to visit your agency** in advance to see the site where their group will volunteer and discuss details.

Ask the group leader about their group, including:

- How many people? What are their strengths? What do they care about? What do they want to get out of the experience, e.g. team building?
- How will the volunteers sign up? Discuss the need for an accurate—and updated—list of volunteers, especially if the project requires a lot of supplies or supervision.
- Can they send a sign up list by xx/xx/xx date?
- Discuss strategies they will use to promote commitment among their group members
- How and when will you communicate with each other and the entire group for updates?
- Exchange contact information, including a secondary contact person for each side.
- Consider asking the group leader to sign a "Group Volunteer Application" and/or "Volunteer Agreement" (see appendix).
- Provide Volunteer Guidelines (see appendix) explaining any rules, safety issues, dress code, check-in expectations, etc.

### 5. Getting Commitment

Use a thorough volunteer sign up process, stay in touch with the group leader, and help energize their group. Here are some specific tips:

1. **Ask volunteers to sign-up in advance** and to state when they will be there (ex: 9am-12pm) as part of the sign-up form.
  - **Ask the group leader to take charge** of getting group members to sign up by a certain date. If you are using hard copy, ask the group leader to send the sign-up sheets x days in advance. If you are using online registration, send the leader the list.
2. **Energize the group**
  - Send out emails to group leaders/members to create excitement about the project. Educate the group about the issue and what impact they can have by volunteering. Make sure they understand why this project was chosen.
  - If time allows, offer to visit the group in advance to discuss the project and its importance.
  - Consider volunteers' motivation for getting involved in projects. Try to meet group members' needs for affiliation, achievement, and influence.
3. **Stay in touch with the group leader.** Touch base two days in advance to ask for an updated number of volunteers.



### 6. Knowing When to Pull the Plug

Set benchmarks and discuss when to pull the plug with volunteer group leader.

1. Agree on a GO / NO GO review date.
2. Is there an essential number of volunteers?
3. Are there essential resources?
4. Are there essential environmental factors (weather, power, traffic)?

## 7. Policies and Safety

Policies should be put into place to ensure the safety of staff, clientele, and volunteers.

These policies need to be:

1. Specific to your organization
2. Included on a “volunteer guidelines” sheet
3. Posted online or provided with the volunteer application

### Background Checks

Depending on the duties to be conducted by your volunteers, it may be a good idea to perform background checks on them prior to the volunteer activity. Plan in how long it takes to process the checks.

**Sources for background** checks include:

Idaho Supreme Court Data Repository: [www.idcourts.us/repository/start.do](http://www.idcourts.us/repository/start.do)

Department of Health and Welfare: [www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov](http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov)

HireRight: [www.hireright.com](http://www.hireright.com)

Intellicorp: [www.intellicorp.net/marketing/home.aspx](http://www.intellicorp.net/marketing/home.aspx)

**Felony conviction?** Include on the application an inquiry as to whether any group members have been convicted of a crime and whether any are registered sex offenders. Volunteer managers should use their discretion regarding placing volunteers who have been convicted of crimes. Care should be taken not to discriminate against potential volunteers’ past acts, while protecting the safety and wellbeing of the organization’s clientele, staff, and other volunteers.

### Accessibility and Accommodations

Be sensitive to the needs of your volunteers while being careful to ensure their safety.

- Ensure there is an activity for everyone.
- Ask if any volunteer requires accommodation (dietary, access, medication, language interpretation, allergies, etc.).
- Use people-first language and refrain from discriminating against those who may require certain accommodations.

## 8. Orientation

**A quality orientation gives meaning and context.** Invest time, and volunteers will feel connected to your organization and its mission. Prepare all project leaders to orient and train volunteers.

- **Greet your volunteers and thank them** for giving their time and talents.
  - ✓ Wear a name tag, and make yourself easy to visually identify
- **Tell them about your organization.**
  - ✓ Share your mission, who you serve, what you do,
  - ✓ Introduce all staff and project leaders and their role in event
- **Explain how volunteers fit into the organization**
  - ✓ Why is there a need for their service?
  - ✓ What they are contributing?
  - ✓ Who they are helping by donating their time?
  - ✓ Distribute Volunteer Guidelines (see appendix)
- **Outline expectations for the day** (remember to mention fun!)
  - ✓ What is their role, including specific tasks and specific benefits to the agency, and specific importance to the population served, and to the community in general?
  - ✓ Risk and safety guidelines. Discuss safety procedures and potential risks.
- **Ask individuals to sign in**
  - ✓ Collect email addresses and ask whether they’d like to be added to the mailing list.
- **Ask if they would be interested in other volunteer opportunities**
  - ✓ Prepare a flyer outlining specific activities
- **Tour the facility**, if appropriate.

## 9. Getting it Done

Provide sufficient supervision during the event to ensure safety, quality work, and fun. Review this timeline with project leaders to ensure everyone is on the same page.

### One Week Out

- Finalize preparation (supplies, equipment, scheduling staff, etc.)
- Check in with volunteer group leader, help energize the group (see messages in “Getting Commitment” section)
- Develop a back-up plan (Do you have rainy day plan?)
- Develop a risk management plan; prepare emergency contact information

### Two Days Out

- Email volunteers (see messages in “Getting Commitment” section)
- Finalize checklist for day of event with your responsibilities as well as others’
- Ask group leader for finalized participant list, adjust plans as needed

### Day of Event

- Arrive early to greet the group
- Prepare materials/resources for the group
- Welcome everyone, and have them sign-in; if folks have to leave early ask them to check out with you
- Gather everyone and thank them for participating; introduce your project and leaders
- Provide an orientation to the project, including why it’s important and how it ties into the bigger picture (see “Orientation” section)
- Assign tasks and make sure each volunteers has a task.
- Make sure that each person understands their task correctly. Remember that the tasks may be new and confusing to your volunteers; be patient and understanding, and make accommodations where necessary.
  - Check in with volunteers regularly.
- Attend to their social needs. Check in with them; introduce them to other volunteers, etc.
- Monitor basic needs. Provide snacks, hydration, and breaks to rest and stretch.
- Take pictures to share with your volunteers and to post on your website or other social media. Remember to obtain a signed “Photo Release” (see appendix).

*Other sample timelines and schedules are available at [www.oregonvolunteers.org](http://www.oregonvolunteers.org)*

## 10. Closing and Recognition

**Ask volunteers to reflect on their experience.** Discuss highlights and challenges of the day and next steps.

- What did they enjoy?
- Did they have everything they needed to perform their assigned task?
- Do they have suggestions for improvement?
- Discuss next steps: does the project need to be finished at a later time? Are participants interested in volunteering again? Provide comment cards, if desired.

**Thank volunteers and talk about their impact.**

- Review what they have contributed and who they have helped.
- Translate their time into something concrete, like the number of meals served or the number of rooms painted.
- Remind them their work is a small piece of a larger program and the need continues.

**Provide information on how to stay involved, and cultivate the connection.**

- Send a thank you letter/note to the group leader (see appendix).
- Email pictures to the group contact, and invite people to share their photos. Post the pictures on your organization’s website or social media site.
- Follow up with individuals who expressed interest in returning.

**Consider recognizing the group leaders or volunteers who exceeded expectations.**

### **REMEMBER:**

Build a relationship with your volunteers and begin recruiting them to return as individuals or a group.



# Appendix

## Group Volunteer Application

Name of Company/Organization/Group wanting to volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Size of group:  6-10  11-20  21-50  51-99  100+

Group composition (# of each): \_\_\_\_\_Men \_\_\_\_\_Women \_\_\_\_\_Boys (<18) \_\_\_\_\_Girls (<18)

Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteering availability:  Monday  Tuesday  Wednesday  Thursday  Friday

(check all that apply)  Saturday  Sunday  Morning  Afternoon  Evening

Length of volunteer activity:  2 hours  4 hours  All day  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Have any of the volunteers even been convicted of a crime?  Yes  No

If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Any registered sex offenders?  Yes  No

Any special accommodations needed?  Yes  No If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes/Additional information: \_\_\_\_\_

Why is your group interested in volunteering? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your group hoping to gain from experience? \_\_\_\_\_

Project ideas/interests? \_\_\_\_\_

Any special skills, talents, or training that the group would like to offer? \_\_\_\_\_

Will your company be donating supplies or other items? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like a tour of our facility?  Yes  No

Would you like to be added to our mailing list?  Yes  No

How did you hear about us? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Photo Release:**

This organization may capture photos or video during your group's volunteer activity. Signing this application confirms that you agree to our use of your group members' photographs, silhouettes, or reproductions of physical likenesses; to copyright the same, and to use and re-use the same, in whole or in part, individually or in conjunction with other visual, audio, or written material, in any medium for any purpose. If your group does not wish to be photographed, please notify us prior to signing this application.

### **Volunteer Guidelines:**

Please be aware that you will be held accountable for this organization's rules and regulations, created to maintain a safe environment and available by request. By signing this application, you are accepting responsibility of this organization's policies and procedures.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Agreement (from HandsOn Network)

ORGANIZATION

We, \_\_\_\_\_ (organization name), agree to accept the services of \_\_\_\_\_ (volunteer group name) beginning \_\_\_\_\_ (date of event) and we commit to the following:

- 1. To provide accurate information, training, and assistance.
- 2. To ensure supervision and provide job assessment feedback.
- 3. To respect the skills and individual needs of each volunteer.

VOLUNTEER

We, \_\_\_\_\_ (volunteer group name), agree to serve as volunteers and commit to the following:

- 1. Provide \_\_\_\_\_ (number of) volunteers
- 2. To perform volunteer duties to the best of our abilities.
- 3. To adhere to agency rules, policies and procedures, including record-keeping requirements and confidentiality of organization and client information.
- 4. To meet time and duty commitments or to provide adequate notice so alternate arrangements can be made.

AGREED TO:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer group leader signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Organization staff signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer group leader name (print clearly)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Organization staff name (print clearly)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Volunteer Group Appreciation and Feedback Note

(from Volunteer Bureau of Montreal)

TO: (group name)  
FROM: (community organization name)  
SUBJECT: (name of volunteer project)

On behalf of (host community organization name), thank you for volunteering on (date). With your help we were able to (project results/benefits). (Community organization name) was impressed with your hard work and dedication to the community.

We hope your volunteer experience as a group was a fun and rewarding one. We would appreciate receiving your feedback so we can make our next volunteer activity even better. Please take a moment to fill out a brief evaluation form by (date).

Thank you again for doing such a great job and for making our project a huge success! We couldn't have done it without you!

Sincerely,  
(Volunteer coordinator or Director name)

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### Photo/Video Waiver and Release Form (For groups)

I (team leader full name), acting on behalf of (name and address of group) authorize (name of organization) to:

Please check the appropriate box(es)

- Take pictures, record audio, or film video while our group participates in the organization's volunteer activities.
- Use these images in any publications, displays, presentations or other related use in any format (print, electronic, online, or other media) for the purposes of documenting and promoting their activities and projects.

On behalf of, (name of the group), I hereby waive any copyright or other rights we might have to these images, in perpetuity.

Team leader name (please print clearly): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Volunteer Guidelines Example

## BOISE RESCUE MISSION MINISTRIES VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES



The following guidelines are intended to help all volunteers have a safe and rewarding experience. For the safety and welfare of our volunteers and the people we help, we require strict compliance with the following guidelines:

### GUIDELINES

- Outside contact with those in our Discipleship Recovery Program and guests must be approved and scheduled through a Program Manager or other appropriate personnel.
- We want volunteers to get to know the people we help; however, be careful about being naive. Many times, people who are disadvantaged have learned to survive by becoming adept at using others. Volunteers should remain on a first name basis. Do not give your last name, address, telephone number, e-mail or any other personal information to any guests or program participants. Also:
  - Do not give or loan money to anyone.
  - Do not give rides or take anyone to your home without approval.
  - Do not be alone with someone of the opposite sex.
  - Do not leave personal belongings unattended.
  - Do not date or pursue a romantic relationship with people in our programs.
  - Do not make any decisions or be involved in counseling people in our programs; instead, refer them to appropriate personnel.
- Keep confidential all information that is obtained directly or indirectly concerning those in our programs.
- While volunteering for us, please refrain from smoking and consuming alcohol. Please be aware that you are coming along side our ministry and your behavior can help or hinder our work efforts. Please conduct yourself in a manner consistent with our values.
- You must sign in/out when you volunteer at any facility, event or project.
- If you are concerned about the safety or wellbeing of any individual for any reason, please contact the person leading your volunteer/ministry assignment or the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible.
- Be aware that there could be registered sex offenders staying at any of the Mission's shelters.
- Complete assignments as directed. Seek clarification if needed.
- Be punctual and conscientious. If you are unable to fulfill your commitment, notify the staff member who leads your work at least 24 hrs in advance. Often times we schedule work around volunteers' availability. If you need or want to change your volunteer status from active to inactive or vice versa, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible.

**Should you have any questions or concerns while volunteering, please contact the person leading your volunteer/ministry assignment or the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible.**

### DRESS CODE FOR VOLUNTEERS (YEAR ROUND)

This dress code is addressed to all volunteers. Please use common sense in your choice of clothing. We disciple a variety of men and women with various social vulnerabilities, thus it is important to observe a conservative dress code. Please comply with these guidelines while volunteering at any of our facilities or events. If you are dressed inappropriately, you may be asked to reschedule.

Long or short sleeve shirts are permitted. T-shirts are acceptable but should not contain vulgar language, sexual innuendos or advertisements for alcohol and cigarette products. Please do not wear sleeveless tops, halter tops, bare midriffs or anything tight or revealing. Pants, shorts or skirts should be knee length or longer. For safety, volunteers should not wear open toed shoes, especially in kitchen area or where food is being prepared or served. (4/06)

CITY LIGHT Home for  
Women and Children  
1404 W Jefferson St  
Boise, ID 83702

LIGHTHOUSE  
Rescue Mission  
472 Caldwell Blvd  
Nampa, ID 83651

RIVER OF LIFE  
Rescue Mission  
575 S 13th St  
Boise, ID 83702

MINISTRY CENTER  
Warehouse & Admin  
308 S 24th St  
Boise, ID 83702

(208) 343-2389 | PO BOX 1494, BOISE ID 83701 | EMAIL [INFO@BOISERM.ORG](mailto:INFO@BOISERM.ORG) | [WWW.BOISERM.ORG](http://WWW.BOISERM.ORG)





(Begin completion at least two weeks prior to the scheduled event)

**A. Initial Screening: Before the Event**

- Volunteer group leader has completed Group Volunteer Service Agreement (IDPR form VOL 50.09)
- Staff volunteer supervisor has reviewed the site to determine feasibility
- Determine the exact nature of the project: painting, pulling weeds, building flower boxes, etc.
- Determine the number of volunteers needed
- Match the volunteer group with the project (make sure it is age and situation appropriate; evaluation of skill level conducted)
- If using court workers, determine if it is appropriate to involve other groups. If so, which groups (Eagle Scout candidates, service learning students?) Notify them.
- Verify date and time with volunteer group leader
- Tour project site with the volunteer group leader
- Identify the type of materials needed
- Decide which materials the group will provide for itself and which the park/program is to supply:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tools (rakes, shovels, work gloves, traffic barricades, orange reflector vests, trash bags, paint, etc.)</li> <li>• Dumpsters</li> <li>• Other Special Equipment:</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food/refreshments/napkins</li> <li>• Water containers /cups</li> <li>• First Aid Kit</li> <li>• Sunscreen</li> <li>• Sharp Objects/Medical Waste Container</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

\_\_\_\_\_

Cost estimate & Budget Computation (if necessary):

Food:	\$ _____
Special equipment:	\$ _____
Special services:	\$ _____
Staff overtime costs:	\$ _____
Value of donated materials:	\$ _____

- Transportation and parking arrangements if needed
- Arrangements for restroom facilities to be open or to have portable toilets available
- Arrange for security (Police patrol)/emergency medical staff if necessary

**B. Implementation**

- Approval for work on private property secured (if necessary)
- Secure state vehicle to transport tools
- Confirm that group leader understands what the group is expected to do and verify that the information is passed on to volunteers
- Give group leader your contact information
- Confirmation of event (at least 48 hours prior to the event)
- Take all necessary materials and tools
- Take a cellular phone/two-way radio
- Take a camera (obtain before & after, and group photos)

**C. At the Site/During the Event**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review what is expected of group members and other supervising staff members</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review safety procedures for all equipment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review the purpose and scope of event with volunteers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have participants sign the designated form(s): time sheet/parental consent</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on accomplishments and obtain feedback from volunteers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide group leader with 2-way radio for on-site communication</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

**D. After the Event**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recognition of volunteers (Send Thank-You notes as appropriate)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follow up with group leader to discuss outcomes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Send (email) photos to group leader or participants</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Send Group Volunteer Time Sheet to Volunteer Services Coordinator by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

