



Volunteer Recognition Tips

All volunteers want to know that their contribution is valued and not taken for granted. Here are a few tips to help your organization recognize the work of its volunteers and to let them know that their efforts are meaningful and appreciated:

- ❖ **Make it a priority.** Recognizing the work of volunteers is crucial for an organization who wants to retain them and attract others. Designate someone to be responsible for ensuring that ongoing recognition takes place.
- ❖ **Do it often.** Recognition of volunteers should happen year-round. It can be on a frequent and informal basis – begin with saying “Thank you!” often.
- ❖ **Do it in different ways.** Vary your recognition efforts from an informal “thank you” and spontaneous treats to more formal events, such as dinners and awards.
- ❖ **Be sincere.** Make each occasion on which you recognize your volunteers meaningful and use it as an opportunity to truly reflect on their value to your organization.
- ❖ **Recognize the person, not the work.** Phrase the recognition to emphasize the contribution of the individual rather than the end result. “You did a great job!” as opposed to “This is a great job!”
- ❖ **Make it appropriate to the achievement.** For example, a paper certificate may be appropriate for a few months of service, but a public dinner and engraved plaque may be better suited to ten years of volunteering.
- ❖ **Be consistent.** Make sure whatever standards of recognition you establish can be consistently maintained by your organization in years to come. Holding a volunteer recognition dinner one year sets up an expectation for future dinners.
- ❖ **Be timely.** Try to arrange for recognition soon after the achievement has been reached – delaying until months later diminishes the value of your gratitude.
- ❖ **Make it unique.** Getting to know your volunteers and their interests will help you decide how best to recognize each individual and make them feel appreciated.