

# 8 STRATEGIES FOR CREATING A MORE INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



# ABOUT MAVA



- MAVA connects, educates, strengthens and advocates for volunteer engagement leaders and their organizations to positively impact communities.
- Inclusive Volunteerism Program was started in 2017; our work in this area dates back to 2010.



**BUILD RELATIONSHIPS**

STRATEGY #1



# STRATEGY #1: BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Be Specific

**WHO**

do you want  
to engage?

Be Authentic

**WHY**

do you want to  
engage them?

# STRATEGY #1: BUILD RELATIONSHIPS



## HOW?

- Identify groups that represent the community or events that celebrate the community
- Collaborate with others in your organization
- Hold open houses
- Be persistent





**SHIFT YOUR LANGUAGE**

**STRATEGY #2**

# STRATEGY #2: SHIFT YOUR LANGUAGE



## Definition of VOLUNTEER

“ Someone who does something without being forced to do it; such as a person who does work without getting paid to do it.

”

(Merriam-Webster.com)

# STRATEGY #2: SHIFT YOUR LANGUAGE



## Definition of HELP

“ : to give assistance to;  
: to make more pleasant or bearable;  
: to be of use to;  
: to change for the better ”

(Merriam-Webster.com)



# STRATEGY #2: SHIFT YOUR LANGUAGE



Focus on how volunteers can help their community instead of how they can help your organization.



# UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

STRATEGY #3

# STRATEGY #3: UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS



- Those in “survival mode” volunteer differently
- Consider providing amenities like:
  - Child care
  - Transportation stipend
  - Food
  - Gift cards or tickets for outings





# EMBRACE SKILL-BASED OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGY #4

# STRATEGY #4: EMBRACE SKILL-BASED OPPORTUNITIES



- Many people looking to build resumes
- Internships
- Be flexible and consider short-term volunteers
- Online recruitment more effective for these opportunities





**RECRUIT FROM THOSE WHO  
USE YOUR SERVICES**

**STRATEGY #5**

# STRATEGY #5: RECRUIT FROM THOSE WHO USE YOUR SERVICES



- Concept of reciprocity
- Builds awareness of and appreciation for your organization and programs
- If diverse populations are not using your services, start there
- Re-evaluate policies that exclude clients from volunteering





**PARTNER TO ENGAGE  
GROUPS OF YOUTH**

**STRATEGY #6**



# STRATEGY #6: PARTNER TO ENGAGE GROUPS OF YOUTH



Young people are often more familiar with the concept of volunteerism as a resume-builder and extracurricular.

Many already-existing groups of youth are looking for service projects.

One-time projects work best.

Engage youth to engage youth, not as a bridge to adults in a particular immigrant or diverse community.



REMOVE BARRIERS

STRATEGY #7

# STRATEGY #7: REMOVE BARRIERS



Background checks

Lack of flexibility

**BARRIERS**

Language

Exclusive policies



# CREATE AN INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

STRATEGY #8

# STRATEGY #8: CREATE A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE



Influence  
change  
throughout  
your entire  
organization:

- Educate your colleagues across departments
- Gain support from organizational leaders and ask them to communicate a message of inclusion
- Create culture of inclusion within your own department

# STRATEGY #8: CREATE AN INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE



**Prioritize your own professional development around diversity, equity and inclusion.**

# IN REVIEW: 8 STRATEGIES



Build  
Relationships

Shift Your  
Language

Understand the  
Importance of  
Socio-Economic  
Status

Embrace Skill-  
Based  
Opportunities

Recruit from  
Those Who Use  
Your Services

Partner to  
Engage Groups  
of Youth

Remove Barriers

Create an  
Inclusive  
Organizational  
Culture



**Learn more about MAVA's work on racial equity in  
volunteerism at  
[www.mavanetwork.org](http://www.mavanetwork.org)**

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