



Volunteers help judge students' projects at the state Ohio History Day competition. Volunteers can help your organization with a wide variety of projects. Photo courtesy of the Ohio History Connection.

Fantastic Volunteers and Where to Find Them

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Overwhelmed and understaffed? Consider utilizing volunteers to assist with the workload and strengthen community involvement at your site. The benefits of volunteerism are many – for both the volunteer and the organization. Volunteers can provide a wide variety of tasks including:

- **Administrative** – mailings, filing, phone calls, data entry, web development and/or management, email, newsletters
- **Interpretive** – presenting tours, costumed interpreters, creating or maintaining costumes, hands-on activities or demonstrations, greeters, guides
- **Maintenance & Grounds** – cleaning, lawn care
- **Customer Service** – admission, gift shop, call center, scheduling, reservations
- **Events** – set up, tear down, ticket sales, day-of assistance

- **Curatorial/Research** – organization or preservation of collections, library or internet research, archival assistance for programs or events

Before kicking off a volunteer recruiting campaign, conduct an assessment. Use your mission statement to determine how volunteers can impact what you do, what you offer the community, and how you do it. If you have used volunteers in the past, what were the pros and cons?

Next, develop a comprehensive list of volunteer needs – what tasks can they accomplish to save you time and expand your services? Create position descriptions for each task that list specifically what the volunteer will do and your expectations. Find out what each area's needs are, what meaningful opportunities can be created, and what kind of support you can provide to volunteers.

Once this volunteer management system is in place, move to recruitment. What types of volunteers will best fit your needs and where can you find them?

People who volunteer at your site do so for a love of history, culture, community involvement, and an appreciation of your mission. Begin recruiting within your community and spread the word to your regular visitors and supporters. Always have a business card ready to distribute – you are

the best advertisement for your site!

Tap into online volunteer sites such as Volunteer Match (www.volunteermatch.org), Idealist (www.idealists.org), the Hands On Network (www.handsonnetwork.org), AARP (www.aarp.org), and UGIVE (www.ugive.org). These allow many organizations to post volunteer openings, which can be searched by location, topic, or time frame. Explore local or regional organizations' online volunteer posting opportunities.

Use Facebook, Twitter, or your website to post volunteer opportunities and target younger audiences.

Newsletters, mass mailings, or posts in community or church bulletins are excellent ways to reach a large audience.

For short term projects or group volunteers, connect with leaders of local youth or faith based groups or businesses with community service projects. Finally, many high school and college students seek volunteer or internship opportunities for experience and resume building.

Do you have questions on volunteer management or recruitment? Contact Annamae Kacsandi, the Ohio Historical Society's lead volunteer coordinator at akacsandi@ohiohistory.org or 614.297.2392.