DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 454 460 CG 030 993

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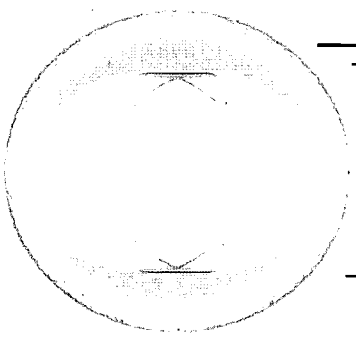
TITLE Recruiting Mentors: A Guide to Finding Volunteers To Work with Youth. Technical Assistance Packet #3.
INSTITUTION Public/Private Ventures, Philadelphia, PA.; Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, OR.
SPONS AGENCY Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Philadelphia, PA.; Department of Justice, Washington, DC. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
PUB DATE 2001-02-00
NOTE 46p.
CONTRACT 1999-JG-FX-K001
AVAILABLE FROM Northwest Regional Educational Lab., 101 SW Main St., Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204. Tel: 800-547-6339 (Toll Free); Web site: http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring; e-mail: mentorcenter@nwrel.org.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Children; College Students; Higher Education; Human Services; *Mentors; Older Adults; Program Development; *Program Effectiveness; Social Support Groups; Volunteer Training; *Volunteers

ABSTRACT

Recruiting mentors is a continuous challenge for most programs. A systematic recruitment plan, carefully developed and implemented, will increase a program's chances for success. Drawing from effective practices used by volunteer-based organizations and research findings about mentoring, the material in this document describes recruitment strategies that programs can adapt to meet their needs. Following a description of the strategies, an outline is provided on key steps in developing and implementing a mentor recruitment plan. Specific sections are devoted to approaches for recruiting from two large groups of potential mentors: college students and older adults. A checklist and worksheets are provided to guide planning. It suggests that a screening process be used to ensure that mentors are safe, suitable, and will follow up with their commitment. It also suggests taking time to evaluate each recruitment strategy. This will provide information on which strategies are effective and which do not yield results. The appendix lists several references and Web sites for additional information. (Contains 35 references.) (JDM)

NATIONAL MENTORING CENTER

recruiting mentors



a guide to finding volunteers to work with youth

Technical Assistance Packet #3

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

P/PV

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This project was supported by Award No. 1999-JG-FX-K001 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

NATIONAL MENTORING CENTER

at Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Recruiting Mentors

a guide to finding volunteers to work with youth

written by

P/PV

February 2001

with support from:

Big Brothers Big Sisters

OJJDP

Acknowledgments

Linda Jucovy wrote *Recruiting Mentors*. She would like to thank Jean Grossman, of Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), who provided feedback on a draft of the material, and Carla Herrera, also of P/PV, for contributing insights and information. A special thanks goes to the Center for Intergenerational Learning at Temple University, which, in connection with an earlier project, shared its expertise about recruiting older adults. Suzie Boss, of Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), edited the material, and Michael Garringer, also at NWREL, handled the design and production. The JUMP technical assistance project is being managed by Rex Hagans, at NWREL; Jean Grossman, at P/PV; and Scott Peterson, at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

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Introduction

"You have to be the type of person that's not going to be discouraged. You want to throw in the towel so often, especially when you feel like you're not getting through. A lot of times, you feel like you're in this thing by yourself."[1] A mentor is speaking here, describing what it takes to succeed in her role. But the statement could just as easily describe the people who recruit mentors. Recruiting is a difficult and often frustrating job, requiring patience, creativity, organization, and persistence.

Recruiting mentors is an ongoing challenge for almost all programs. In most communities, there is increased competition for volunteers—and especially for people who possess both the available time and the kinds of personal characteristics that are required of mentors. There are no easy solutions for the challenges of recruiting. However, a systematic recruitment plan, carefully developed and implemented, will increase your chances of success.

Drawing on effective practices used by volunteer-based organizations and on research findings about mentoring, the following material describes recruitment strategies that programs can adapt to meet their particular circumstances. The next section outlines key steps in developing and implementing any targeted mentor recruitment plan, while later sections look more specifically at approaches for recruiting two large groups of potential mentors: college students and older adults. The conclusion lists some important next steps after recruitment. The material also includes a checklist and worksheets to help guide your planning, a list of additional resources, and an appendix that contains sample forms and useful readings.

First, though, here are two basic principles that apply to all mentor recruitment efforts:

1) Maintain broad name recognition in the community—and then target your recruitment.

The decision to volunteer is usually a two-step process—a person thinks generally about becoming a volunteer and then a "trigger event" transforms this general thought into concrete action. The "trigger" is often something very simple: someone they know asks them to volunteer in a specific role, or they learn about an opportunity through an organization to which they belong. The volunteer role they are attracted to will generally be something that allows them to address an issue they care about because of their values, beliefs, or experience.

This two-step process suggests it is important to create broad local visibility so that when people are ready to volunteer, they will recognize your program's name and mission. It also suggests the importance of targeting your recruitment so you are asking people who are ready to volunteer and who will be interested in the possibility of mentoring in your program.

[1] Freedman, M. (1992). *The Kindness of Strangers: Reflections on the Mentoring Movement*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

As one recruitment expert notes: "If your recruitment message is aimed at no one in particular, don't be surprised when no one in particular responds to it."[2]

2) Create a written plan.

The plan should include:

- Goals: Write down the number of mentors you want to recruit and the deadline for recruiting them. Keep recruiting even if you seem to have reached the number of applicants you set as your goal—undoubtedly, some of those applicants will not follow through with the process; others will be screened out; and still others may drop out during training.

- A timeline of scheduled activities: As you develop the timeline, pay attention to both the nature and timing of the activities. Use at least three or four different kinds of recruitment strategies, and use them often. The more effort you make and the more people you connect with, the more likely you are to reach your recruitment goals. Remember: no one volunteers unless they are asked. And when you recruit, be sure your organization is ready to move quickly to screen, train, and match the volunteers with youth. If you recruit volunteers but are not ready for them, they will lose interest.

- The name of the person responsible for each item in the timeline: Some of the activities might be organized and conducted by a staff person; some by a volunteer. But someone must be responsible for each item. In addition, when you develop or revise staff job descriptions, be sure that someone has official overall responsibility for mentor recruitment. This will help everyone in your organization recognize that recruitment is, as it must be, a priority.

- A budget: Be sure to figure in staff time, the cost of creating and producing materials, expenses involved in making presentations, and all the incidental costs connected with recruiting efforts.

The following pages are intended to guide you through the process of creating a targeted recruitment plan.

[2] McCurley, S. (1988). *101 Tips for Volunteer Recruitment.* Downers Grove, IL: Heritage Arts Publishing, 1988.

Developing a Recruitment Plan

Think strategically as you develop and implement your program's mentor recruitment plan. This section outlines key steps that can help you focus your efforts and resources as effectively and efficiently as possible.

1) Identify characteristics of your program that could positively or negatively affect your ability to recruit particular groups of mentors.

Among people who might be interested in volunteering as mentors, different groups will be more or less likely to be attracted to your particular program. To help you target your recruitment efforts more efficiently, think about:

- The population of children or youth your program is serving. How old are the mentees? Elementary school-aged? Early adolescents? High school-aged? Do they have specific risk factors that might require special qualities in a mentor? For example, have they been involved with the juvenile justice system? Are they in the foster care system? Do they have emotional disabilities?

- Whether your program is place-based or community-based. Do mentors meet with their mentees in a school or some other designated setting on a regularly scheduled basis? Or do mentors and mentees arrange the time and place of each meeting?

- Transportation needs of mentors. If the mentoring takes place in a school, for example, is the building safely accessible by public transportation? If your program is community-based, will mentors need a car?

- The time commitment mentors are required to make. How often (once a week? twice a month?) are mentors expected to meet with their mentees? How long is each meeting expected to last? What is the length of commitment (nine months? a year?) you require from mentors?

2) Identify the groups that are most likely to respond to your recruitment efforts, given the characteristics of your program and the children or youth it serves.

What groups are most likely to respond to your call for mentors? School-based programs, for example, have found they can attract volunteers (including college students and working adults with families) who feel they do not have the time available for community-based programs, which typically require longer meetings between the mentor and youth and a longer-term commitment. In addition, older adults, who may be concerned about their safety in community-based programs, might be more interested in volunteering for a school-based or other place-based mentoring program.[3]

[3] Herrera, C. (1999). *School-Based Mentoring: A First Look Into Its Potential.* Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
and
Herrera, C., Sipe, C., & McClanahan, W. (2000). *Mentoring School-Age Children: Relationship Development in Community-Based and School-Based Programs.* Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

3) Draw up a list of requirements and preferences for your mentors.

Listing the requirements/preferences for mentors serves several purposes. It provides information you can use in your mentor job description and other recruitment materials, and it identifies the criteria against which you will screen volunteer applicants. While requirements/preferences will vary among individual programs, they are likely to include:

- Time requirements or preferences: frequency and length of meetings; length of commitment (in months); other required time, such as preservice and inservice trainings.
- Desired personal characteristics: for example, being nonjudgmental, a good listener, reliable, and flexible.
- Transportation requirements or preferences, if any: for example, do mentors need to have a valid driver's license and access to an automobile?
- Safety requirements: a criminal history records check and a child abuse registry check; a driving records check may also be required.

Programs might also have requirements/preferences related to their particular population of children and youth or growing from their beliefs about who would make the most effective mentors. Some programs, for example, might need mentors who are fluent in a second language such as Spanish. Some programs want all of their mentor-mentee pairs to be of the same race. (For a discussion of this issue, see "Same-Race vs. Cross-Race Matches" in the Appendix.)

4) Think about what could motivate people to volunteer for your program.

There are a number of reasons why someone might wish to become a mentor. For example, they might want to:

- Give back in return for something they received when they were young that helped them in their own lives
- Support a cause that is important to them
- Improve the quality of life for children and youth in their community
- Have fun
- Make a new friend—their mentee
- Develop new skills
- Become part of a group

The following two sections discuss more specific motivations that college students and older adults might have for volunteering. But remember, no matter how motivated anyone feels about becoming a mentor, people do not volunteer unless they are asked!

5) Write a mentor job description.

A mentor job description is an extremely useful recruitment tool. The act of writing it will help you clarify your thinking about mentors' responsibilities in your program and the essential qualifications necessary for someone to become a mentor. The job description can become the basis of the recruitment message you develop to "sell" your program to potential mentors.

While there are many ways to write a job description, it will likely include these key sections:

- A general description of the program and of the mentor's role in helping the program achieve its mission and goals.

- Mentor responsibilities: This section should specifically describe such items as the required time commitment and where the mentor-mentee meetings take place. It should also describe the mentor's role (a friend? a role model?) and some of the ways the mentor and mentee might spend their time together.

- Eligibility requirements or preferences: This section can identify essential personal characteristics as well as any other specific requirements/preferences your program might have, such as availability during the school day (for school-based programs).

- Benefits: You can use this section to describe what people gain from being a mentor. Think about the factors that could motivate someone to volunteer (see the list in item 4, above, as well as motivating factors outlined in the next two sections). Include the benefits that will be most appealing to the particular group of people you are trying to recruit. Also be sure to note the training and ongoing support your program provides for mentors.

  (See the Appendix for a "Mentor Job Description" form.)

6) Create your recruitment message and materials.

Develop a consistent, but adaptable, recruitment message you can use to "sell" your program to potential mentors and to organizations that can help you with recruiting. Consider the following questions as you think about how you can appeal to your audiences:

- What motivates people to volunteer as a mentor?

- What is it about your program's mission, goals, and population of participants that would motivate people to volunteer for your specific program? What successes has your program had to date that can convince people it is worth their contribution of time?

- How will people benefit by volunteering in your program? (Consider the list of benefits you have identified in your mentor job description.)

You can adapt your recruitment message for a wide range of materials, including flyers, posters, brochures, direct mail letters, press releases, newsletters, articles, videos, and Web sites. Remember that the materials you produce and distribute are a reflection of the quality of your agency and your mentoring program. Pay attention to how they look and "feel."

Be sure your print and other media materials appeal to the specific groups of people you are trying to recruit:

- Does your recruitment message address potential concerns or barriers that could deter people from volunteering? For example, the group of people you are targeting for recruitment might be concerned that becoming a mentor will cost them money they cannot afford to spend; they might worry about travel expenses or believe they will be expected to buy gifts for their mentee or spend money during the activities they do together. Is there a way your recruitment message can address this concern, if only indirectly?

- Do the photographs reflect the diversity of the groups your program is targeting for recruitment? For example, if you want to recruit African American males, are they shown as mentors? What about college students? Older adults?

- Have your materials been reviewed by people who represent the particular groups you are trying to recruit? One good approach is to organize focus groups to respond to the materials. In addition, if you have translated your text from English into another language, have native speakers of that language carefully review the text.

  (See the Appendix for a sample recruitment message.)

7) Use a range of strategies to get out your message.

Strategies for recruiting mentors range from the uncomplicated and cost-free to the more complex and relatively expensive. They include:

- Word-of-mouth. This is often the most effective recruitment strategy. Everyone connected to your program—including staff, board members, and current volunteers—can help with recruiting by "talking up" the benefits of mentoring to their friends, relatives, neighbors, and coworkers. Be sure that all of these people have materials (including mentor job descriptions, program brochures, and volunteer application forms) to give to people who express interest in becoming a mentor.

- Presentations to community groups, organizations, and businesses. When giving presentations to recruit volunteers, don't just stand in front of the group and talk about your mentoring program. Make your program "come alive" by using some of these strategies:

- ✓ Have a current mentor share his or her experiences. The mentor should be representative of the group you are trying to recruit. For example, if the presentation is to an audience of older adults, the mentor-presenter should be an older adult as well. If your program is just starting up, but you are modeling it after another program, you may be able to get a mentor in that program to speak at the presentation.

- ✓ Let people see how their efforts can make a difference. If possible, use videos, photographs, and slides.

- ✓ Let people understand that mentoring does make a difference—and that the time they invest in volunteering is time well spent. Speak about the successes of your program. You can also briefly refer to findings from national research on mentoring. (See the Appendix for a bibliography of evaluation reports.)

- ✓ Allow time after presentations to talk informally with the people who attended. Having refreshments available will encourage people to stay and talk.

- ✓ Have materials available that people can take home with them. These should include mentor job descriptions, brochures about your program, and application forms.

And be prepared for people who express interest. Pass around sign-up sheets with spaces for names and phone numbers. Get back to those people within a week.

- Print materials. These can include:

  - ✓ Brochures, flyers, and posters. Place them where they will attract the attention of groups you are trying to recruit. Depending on the community, this could include grocery stores, barber shops, restaurants, gyms, libraries—wherever your potential volunteers may go.

  - ✓ Local newspapers—and especially, local newspapers targeted to the groups you are trying to recruit, such as the African American or Latino/a community. Try to get the newspapers to run a feature story about your program.

  - ✓ Community newspapers. Take advantage of the fact that they are understaffed and are looking for good copy. Write, or have a volunteer write, a good press release, and also send along a high-quality, black-and-white photograph.

  - ✓ Other organizations' newsletters. Ask churches, synagogues, agencies, businesses, and other organizations to run a notice or short feature in materials they distribute to their members.

- Other media. These could include local cable television shows or radio programs aimed at the particular audience you are trying to reach. In addition, have your recruitment message posted on Web sites that are likely to be visited by the groups of people you are trying to recruit.

- Take advantage of other opportunities—and create your own. Have information tables at community events. Invite potential mentors to a recruitment breakfast, lunch, or potluck dinner. Brainstorm with your staff, board members, and volunteers about creative strategies you can use to recruit mentors.

8) Forge linkages with organizations that can help you gain credibility with, and access to, the groups you are targeting for recruitment.

Potential recruitment partners could include service-oriented fraternities and sororities, senior centers, colleges and universities, businesses, retiree organizations, civic clubs and lodges, religious institutions, human service agencies, and community organizations. Identify the specific agencies, institutions, and other groups that are most likely to help connect you with potential volunteers. Then take the time to build relationships with those organizations and enlist their support.

To identify potential partners for recruitment:

- Survey staff, board members, and current volunteers to find out what organizations they are or have been involved with as members or board members or in some other capacity.

- Use print sources and the Internet to help you identify organizations. You can, for example, use the Yellow Pages of the telephone book, directories of organizations, and city or regional Web sites. In addition, local newspapers that are aimed at the same audience of people you are trying to recruit (for example, neighborhood newspapers or newspapers for the African American community) are likely to include articles or press releases that refer to organizations you might want to contact.

After you have identified potential partners, take the first steps in forging linkages. You can:

- Identify who should make the initial contact—the program director? A board or staff member or a volunteer with a connection to that organization?

- Arrange a one-to-one meeting to describe your program. Your goal for this meeting is to begin to build respect and trust. Be sensitive about who is representing your program at the meeting. Begin with a general, exploratory discussion, but also be prepared to be specific about what you want from the potential partner.

  Before the meeting, think through your own "selling points." For example:

  ✓ Do you have staff or board members from, or affiliated with, the groups the organization represents or serves?

- ✓ In what ways has your program demonstrated commitment to and involvement with those groups?
- ✓ What successes has your mentoring program had thus far?
- ✓ What can you do for that organization? How would the organization's involvement with you contribute to its own goals?

Remember that building relationships is a key factor in developing effective linkages with organizations that can provide help. Allow time to develop trust.

A note on forming linkages with businesses:

The strategies for connecting with businesses in order to recruit their employees to serve as mentors are not very different from the partnership-building approaches that are most effective with any organization. However, a few special tips are discussed here. In addition, see "Assessing the Benefits of Corporate Volunteer Programs" in the Appendix.

Building relationships is a key factor in developing effective partnerships with corporations, and you can lay the groundwork for building those relationships by doing a little research. Community relations managers for corporations advise nonprofit agencies to learn about a corporation's volunteer interests, policies, procedures, and levels of involvement before approaching it.

Their recommendations include:

1) Learn what kinds of issues the corporation's employee volunteers are currently involved in. They might, for example, be focusing their efforts on education or environmental issues, on children, youth, or the elderly.

2) Learn how the corporation's volunteer efforts are organized. Corporate employee volunteer programs generally fall into two broad categories:

- Corporate-sponsored volunteer programs are essentially top-down programs, with varying levels of internal support. The corporation might simply promote volunteering by posting opportunities. Or it might actively encourage volunteering through, for example, group projects and recognition of volunteers. It might also sponsor volunteer efforts through financial support, including paid time off that employees use in volunteer activities. Nonprofit agencies that want to connect with a corporate-sponsored volunteer program could begin by connecting with a manager in the corporation's community relations or public affairs department.
- Employee-driven volunteer programs are essentially bottom-up programs. Employees determine priorities and choose volunteer projects, while the company's role is to promote, support, and recognize the efforts of its employees. Nonprofits that wish to develop relationships with employee-driven programs should start by connecting with interested employees and allow them to build the internal support in the corporation.

3) Decide whether there is a good fit between your agency's mission and goals and the priorities, policies, and procedures of the corporation. If there is not, it is probably a good idea to begin looking for a different corporate partner.

4) Establish a personal contact. Then start building the relationship.

5) Be concise and clear about your request. Identify how many volunteers are needed, what they will be doing, if particular skills are needed to do the work, where and when the work will be done, how frequently employees will be expected to volunteer, and the length of commitment expected.

6) Be prepared to talk about the benefits to the employees and the corporation. Corporate volunteers are looking for the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to the community, and corporations and their employees are increasingly interested in the impact their contributions will have on the clients served. In addition, corporations benefit from their employees' volunteer activities in a number of ways. These include:

- An enhanced reputation in the community
- Increased employee morale and loyalty to the company
- Improved employee teamwork
- Increased employee job satisfaction[4]

And if you do recruit mentors through local businesses, make things as easy as possible for the potential volunteers. Hold orientations, intake interviews, and training sessions at the place of business during lunch time or at other convenient hours.

A checklist for developing a recruitment plan appears on the next page. The following two sections then look more closely at issues connected with recruiting mentors from two specific groups: college students and older, retired adults. You can adapt the approach taken in those sections to help you create a targeted recruitment plan for other groups, as well.

[4] Points of Light Foundation. (1999). *Corporate Volunteer Programs—A Strategic Resource: The Link Grows Stronger.* Washington, DC: Author

CHECKLIST: DEVELOPING A RECRUITMENT PLAN

Have you:

- ☐ Identified the number of new mentors you want to recruit and a deadline for recruiting them?
- ☐ Developed a recruitment timeline and assigned staff (or volunteers) to be responsible for each item in the timeline?
- ☐ Defined the eligibility requirements and preferences for mentors?
- ☐ Identified factors that could motivate people to volunteer?
- ☐ Developed a mentor job description?
- ☐ Created a recruitment message and materials?
- ☐ Created a presentation to give to community groups that will help people become excited about the possibility of becoming a mentor?
- ☐ Decided on the recruitment strategies you will use?
- ☐ Identified and approached organizations and businesses that can connect you to potential mentors?

Special Considerations for Recruiting College Students

During the past decade, college students have increasingly become a source of community volunteers. In part, this is a result of the understanding on the part of many colleges and universities that they should be an integral part of the communities where they are situated, and community service is one aspect of this larger commitment. In addition, service learning has come to be seen as an important educational strategy that can help students apply what they are learning in their classrooms and deepen their academic experience.

College students can bring unique strengths to a mentoring relationship. They are generally fairly close in age to the youth they are mentoring, and this can help the mentee see them as a supportive friend and role model. In addition, in some programs, mentees at least occasionally meet with their mentors on campus; those meetings can provide a powerful introduction to the importance of higher education. However, as outlined below, there may also be potential drawbacks to having college students as mentors. This section discusses key issues in recruiting college students.

1) What are some of the concerns that programs might have about recruiting college students?

The concerns include:

- College vacations—including winter, spring, and summer breaks—which disrupt the continuity of the mentor-mentee relationship
- Students' time constraints, which become even more pronounced during exam periods, and might prevent mentors from meeting consistently with their mentees
- Transportation, which can be a major problem unless the campus is very close to the community being served

From the point of view of college students, these same three factors—vacations, time constraints, and transportation—could be barriers that deter them from volunteering.

2) Given these concerns and barriers, what kinds of mentoring programs might be most interested in recruiting college students?

Programs are more likely to have success in recruiting college students, and to have those students become effective mentors, if they:

- Do not require a commitment from mentors that is longer than the nine months of the school year

- Have mentor-mentee meetings that take place at a particular location, such as an elementary school, and at a regularly scheduled time
- Will provide ongoing supervision, structure, and support for the mentors; in general, college students require more supervision and support than older mentors[5]
- Can provide incentives, such as course credit or extra credit, for consistent participation

3) What motivates college students to become mentors?

College students may have a number of different motivations for wanting to become a mentor. These include:

- Making a difference in their community
- "Giving back" in return for support they received when they were younger
- Strengthening their "record" for job applications or other college/university applications
- Fulfilling a college service requirement
- Earning credit or extra credit for a course
- Applying what they are learning in their courses to the real world
- Learning new skills
- Becoming a friend to a young person
- Having fun
- Making new friends among their peers
- Networking with other mentors from diverse backgrounds

4) What are effective recruitment strategies?

Before you begin recruiting on campuses, be sure your recruitment message and materials will appeal to an audience of college students. Adapt your message so it emphasizes the motivations (or benefits) that are most important to students and addresses, if possible, the particular barriers—such as transportation—that might deter them from volunteering. Also be sure that photographs of mentors include at least some college students.

[5] Tierney, J.P., Joseph, P. & Branch, Y.A. (1992). *College Students as Mentors for At-Risk Youth: A Study of Six Campus Partners in Learning Programs*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
The study notes that meeting rates vary widely among college mentors and their mentees, suggesting that regularly scheduled meeting times would help encourage consistency. The study also suggests that college students who are mentors typically require more administrative structure, support, and supervision than that provided to adults. One potential problem, for example, is that because of their age, college students may be less able to see themselves as the "adult" in the relationship. Thus, they sometimes expect more reciprocal behavior from their mentee and do not follow through on the relationship if their mentee fails to show up for meetings or does not return phone calls. Ongoing supervision can help overcome this problem.

The following strategies can be particularly helpful in recruiting college students:[6]

- Word-of-mouth (especially one-to-one recruitment by students who are currently mentors).
- Tabling. You can "table" at the entrance to dining halls, outdoors on campus, or wherever students tend to pass by in large numbers. (See the sidebar for "tabling tips.")
- Presentations at student service organizations, leadership clubs, fraternities, and sororities. Have a current mentor, who is a student at the college, present with you.
- Presentations in classes. Convince professors that volunteering as a mentor could be beneficial to their students—particularly in courses such as social work, education, or psychology. Ask if you can make a short presentation in their classes about the program. Again, invite a currently matched college student to make the presentation with you.
- Articles submitted to college newspapers, particularly feature stories highlighting currently matched students.
- Posters and flyers. Place them strategically in the student union, nearby stores, laundromats, and restaurants. If you use posters, remember to include tear-off sheets with a contact name and phone number.
- Fundraisers or group activities that include youth from your program. These activities introduce college students to your program and the idea of mentoring. While the events may not result in immediate volunteers, they plant the seeds for future name recognition and recruitment. These events could be sponsored by student organizations, including fraternities or sororities.

TABLING TIPS

The Four Golden Rules:
1) You don't need a table.
2) Tabling is an active, not passive, activity.
3) Never leave a table unattended.
4) Make it fun and highly visual.

Other Tips on Tabling:
- ✓ Have a quick five-second intro to "stop" passing students.
- ✓ Give them something to take away to read later.
- ✓ Have students sign up for something. The act of signing one's name goes a long way toward making a real commitment.
- ✓ You are there to activate interested students, not convert uninterested ones.
- ✓ Have an activity planned within one week of when you table.
- ✓ Plug in interested and super-motivated students **right away**. Don't wait. Have them help you table!

From Florida International University, "Recruiting & Keeping Volunteers," downloaded from:
www.fiu.edu/~time4chg/Library/recruit.keep.html

[6] A number of these strategies are adapted from *Recruiting College Volunteers: A Guide for Volunteer Recruitment and Management.* (1995). Philadelphia: Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

- Recruiting through dormitories. Work with residential advisors or dormitory councils to recruit students. Or do a "Dorm Storm" where you go door to door, talking to students and giving out information.

- Recruiting in dining halls and cafeterias. Put information cards on the tables for people to fill out and place in a drop box where you can collect them.

- Free items, especially T-shirts.

- Campus e-mail blitzes.

In addition, investigate the possibility of connecting with the Federal Work-Study program. This program funds jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay education expenses. While many of the jobs are on campus, the program also allows—and even encourages—students to take off-campus jobs in community service roles with nonprofit organizations. You might be able to structure your program's mentoring positions so they qualify as work-study jobs.

5) How can your program "get in the door" to form linkages with colleges and universities?

The following tips can help you begin to develop relationships that will facilitate your recruitment efforts:

- Start with what's in front of you. Does your organization have a positive relationship with a local college or university? Is there anyone connected with your organization (staff, board members, past or current volunteers) who can help you get in the door at a local institution of higher learning?

- Do some research. Learn which colleges in your community have a commitment to service. (This can often be done by visiting the college's Web site.) This can save you many false starts in your recruitment efforts.

- Identify the most promising initial contact. For example, will it be the college's dean of students? The community relations office? The student service and volunteerism center?

- Before approaching the college, know exactly what it is you are asking. For example, do you want information (and a "go-ahead") from the office about getting in touch with student organizations on campus? Do you want to explore the possibility of connecting with particular courses or programs—such as early childhood education—as a source of potential mentors?

- Be prepared to describe what your organization can do to help the college achieve its goals. For example, at some colleges, students must meet a service requirement in order to graduate, and your mentoring program can provide valuable opportunities for

them to serve. Be prepared to talk about the benefits of service learning. While definitions vary, service learning is, at heart, seen as a way to bridge the gulf between school and the real world, to invest students with a sense of connectedness and value, and to deepen their understanding of what they learn in the classroom. (See "Additional Resources" for a Web site that will lead you to information on service learning.)

A few additional tips:

Try to involve students at the college in planning and conducting the recruitment campaign. They can be a valuable asset in helping you develop effective strategies. Also consider these points:

- The timing of your recruitment efforts. In general, students are most likely to begin new volunteer activities at the start of new semesters or quarters.

- The age of your mentors. Some organizations do not accept freshmen as mentors, although they might recruit them during the spring to be mentors in the following fall.

- Transportation issues. Before you begin to recruit at a college, be sure transportation is available that will allow the mentors to travel easily to where they would be meeting with their mentees. This might be public transportation or a van that is provided by your program or by a partner organization. In addition, to avoid transportation difficulties, hold orientations, intake interviews, and mentor trainings on campus.

And after you have recruited, screened, and trained college students, and they have been matched with their mentees, check in regularly to be sure the pairs are meeting and to address any problems that may be arising. In addition, consider developing procedures that will help the college students and their mentees continue their relationship during summer and winter vacations. You might, for example, ask that mentors telephone their mentees or write them letters. Provide mentees with preaddressed stamped envelopes or postcards so they can write as well. Also be sure that your organization communicates with the mentors during their vacations to help maintain their interest.

WORKSHEET 1: RECRUITING COLLEGE STUDENTS

1) Should your organization spend time and resources recruiting college students? Are college students a good "fit" with your program? Why or why not? Are students likely to volunteer to be mentors in your program? Are there colleges that are located near the population of children or youth your program is serving? Do these colleges view community service as part of their mission?

2) How are you going to "get in the door" at the college? Which office or individual will you first approach? What do you want to accomplish during your initial meeting?

3) What is your recruitment message? Are your recruitment materials appealing to college students?

4) What recruitment strategies will you use?

5) What steps will your program take to monitor and support college students in their roles as mentors?

Special Considerations for Recruiting Older Adults

In his book *Prime Time: How Baby Boomers Will Revolutionize Retirement and Transform America*, Marc Freedman describes the changing demographics of the United States. "America now possesses not only the largest and fastest-growing population of older adults in our history," he notes, "but also the healthiest, most vigorous, and best educated." He urges the nation to "learn to capture the time, talent, and experience of the older population and apply this largely untapped resource to some of the most urgent unmet needs of society."[7]

Mentoring at-risk youth is certainly among society's "urgent unmet needs," and research has shown that older adult mentors are able to develop strong relationships with youth.[8] In addition, retired adults often have more time for volunteering than younger men and women, who sometimes feel overwhelmed by the challenge of creating enough time for their work and family, much less finding the consistent additional time required of mentors. Thus, it makes sense to think about whether older adults would be a good "fit" with your program.

This section outlines some of the key issues in recruiting older adults.[9]

1) What are some of the barriers that can deter older adults from serving as mentors?

Older adults sometimes have specific concerns that make them reluctant to volunteer. These might include:

- Fear about safety
- A lack of self-confidence—concern that they do not have the skills or ability to succeed as mentors
- Problems with transportation
- Financial concerns, particularly that expenses associated with being a mentor will strain their already limited resources

In addition, some older men, because of the cultural conditions in which they grew up, may have difficulty seeing themselves in a nurturing role and, thus, find it hard to envision themselves as mentors.

[7] Freedman, M. (1999). *Prime Time: How Baby Boomers Will Revolutionize Retirement and Transform America*. New York: Public Affairs.

[8] Styles, M.B., & Morrow, K.V. (1992). *Understanding How Youth and Elders Form Relationships: A Study of Four Linking Lifetimes Programs*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

[9] The author originally developed the information in this section in a somewhat different form for the Center for Intergenerational Learning, Temple University.

2) Given these barriers, what kinds of mentoring programs should work to recruit older adults?

Programs that want to recruit older adults need to address the barriers that could deter them from serving as mentors. Thus, programs should consider providing:

- A place for mentor-mentee meetings where the older adults will feel safe
- A meeting place the mentors can reach easily and safely
- Training that will help new mentors develop confidence in their abilities, as well as ongoing supervision and support that will help them deal with problems and maintain their confidence

In addition, programs should attempt to find funding to reimburse the mentors for out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel, and, if possible, pay small stipends, particularly if they are recruiting older adults who are living on fixed incomes.

3) What motivates older adults to become mentors?

While the motivations obviously vary from person to person, in general they include one or more of these factors:

- Sharing their experiences, interests, and knowledge
- Being part of a group and making new friends
- Feeling useful because they are making a contribution to their community
- Having fun
- Leaving a legacy for the younger generation

Many older adults are retired from their jobs, and they might also have lost family members and friends. As a result, they may feel isolated and alone. Volunteering is an important way for them to feel connected to their communities and to meet new people. That opportunity—the chance to connect—can be a powerful motivation for becoming a mentor. At the same time, programs that recruit older adults should be aware that they often do want to feel like part of a group. Thus, it is a good idea to bring the mentors together every month or so for inservice trainings or other group activities.

4) What are effective recruitment strategies?

As you prepare to recruit older adults, be sure your recruitment materials address the barriers that could deter them from volunteering and emphasize the motivations that could encourage them to think seriously about the possibility of becoming mentors. In addition:

- Pay attention to your language. Some older adults do not like to be referred to as "senior citizens" or "elders." Ask older people in your community what terminology they prefer.

- Pay attention to your photographs. Be sure they include at least some mentors who are older adults, including older men.

- Make sure the fonts used in written materials are large enough for older adults to read comfortably.

In addition to using the recruitment strategies outlined in Section 2—and, particularly, word-of-mouth recruiting by current mentors—programs have found that the following approaches can be effective:

- Targeting geographically. Focus intensively on neighborhoods near the locations where the older adults would be meeting with their mentees. Contact senior centers or tenant committees of apartment buildings where many older adults live and offer to give a presentation. Place flyers and posters at locations where older adults are likely to be, including medical practices that specialize in geriatrics.

- Using direct mail. Work with community groups, local chapters of the AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons), and similar organizations to have them send recruitment letters to people on their mailing lists. Your organization should write the letter, in cooperation with whatever group is sending it.

In addition, recognize that recruiting older men is likely to require some extra effort. Be sure that men who are current or former mentors participate in recruitment presentations and talk about their experiences. And in the presentations, stress the fact that many youth today are growing up with little direct contact with positive adult male figures—thus, men have a particularly important role to play as mentors.

5) What organizations are potential connections for recruiting older adults?

There are a wide range of organizations that could become valuable partners in your recruitment efforts. They include:

- Local chapters of national organizations, such as AARP

- Senior centers

- Senior service organizations, including the Corporation for National Service Senior Corps programs such as the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

- Retiree organizations and unions for teachers, nurses, social workers, police and fire fighters, government employees, and so forth

- Lodges and civic clubs, including Elks, Lions, Masons, Rotary (these are especially good contacts for recruiting men)
- Local chapters of service-focused fraternities and sororities, including Kappa Alpha Psi, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and Delta Sigma Theta
- Religious institutions

Take the time to establish relationships with the particular organizations that could become fruitful partners in recruiting. (Your own organization—or individual staff members, board members, or volunteers—may already have connections you can build upon.) Ask each potential partner organization's staff for suggestions about the best way to publicize your program to their members. Find out what you can do to help that organization fulfill its own mission and achieve its goals.

WORKSHEET 2: RECRUITING OLDER ADULTS

1) Should your organization spend time and resources recruiting older adults? Are older adults a good "fit" with your program? Why or why not?

2) What barriers might deter the older adults in your community from volunteering as mentors in your program?

3) What are the reasons they would be motivated to volunteer?

4) What is your recruitment message? Are you recruitment materials appealing to older adults?

5) What recruitment strategies will you use?

6) What organizations will you approach to work with you on recruiting older adults?

Conclusion: Now What?

As you recruit, be sure your program is ready to respond to the people who are interested enough to contact you for more information or to apply to become mentors. While that point seems obvious, programs at times set up unintentional barriers that discourage the very people they are trying to recruit. Every contact with the public leaves an impression about your program. Having a good recruitment message and getting it out to the right places are not enough. Your program has to be sure it appears friendly and inviting to the people it is recruiting—like any successful "business," it has to provide good customer service.

Your program should always be prepared to respond to inquiries from potential mentors, even during periods when you may not be actively recruiting. Have someone on your staff who is specifically responsible for responding to initial telephone inquiries, and develop guidelines for the staff member to follow. Have materials ready to mail to people who call. These could include materials about your program and its goals, a mentor job description, an explanation of your screening process, and an application form. Finally, be ready to follow up. If a caller completes and returns the application, be prepared to take the next steps.

Those next steps are essential. While you may feel tempted to accept anyone who applies to become a mentor, not everyone will meet the requirements you have identified. Use a screening process to ensure that mentors will be safe and suitable, that they will follow through on their commitment and be able to build a supportive friendship with their mentee. Your screening process should include such tools as a written application, a face-to-face interview, references, and criminal record and child abuse checks (required in many states for anyone who works with children or youth). If your screening process reveals that an applicant would not be an effective mentor, offer that person another volunteer assignment in your agency.

And, finally, take the time to track and assess the effectiveness of each of your recruitment strategies. The tracking can initially be as simple as asking each person who calls for information how she or he heard about the program, so you know which strategies generated inquiries. Then include the same question on the application form, so you know which strategies resulted in actual applications. Evaluating your recruitment efforts will help you avoid repeating less fruitful efforts and allow you to identify and build on what works.

Additional Resources

Further Reading

Assessing the Benefits of Corporate Volunteer Programs: A Research Study. Points of Light Foundation, 1999. (Available from the Points of Light Institute. Phone: 1-800-272-8306.)

Pass It On: Volunteer Recruitment Manual—Outreach to African-American, Latino/a and Other Diverse Populations. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 1992. (Available through BBBSA, 230 North 13th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107. Phone: (215) 567-7000; e-mail: national@bbbsa.org.)

Recruiting College Volunteers: A Guide for Volunteer Recruitment and Management. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 1995. (Available through BBBSA, 230 North 13th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107. Phone: (215) 567-7000; e-mail: national@bbbsa.org.)

Recruiting Male Volunteers: A Guide Based on Exploratory Research by Stephanie T. Blackman. Corporation for National Service, 1999.
(You can download this guide at www.energizeinc.com/art/elecbooks.html.)

Web Sites

nicsl.jaws.umn.edu/
National Service-Learning Clearinghouse—excellent resource for information on service learning.

www.aarp.org
AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons)—a good contact for recruiting older adults.

www.cns.gov
Corporation for National Service—provides information about Senior Corps programs that are possible avenues for recruiting mentors.

www.cybervpm.com/recruit.htm
Information on volunteer recruitment and links to other resources.

www.impactonline.org
Impact Online—connections to Web sites with information on volunteer management, including recruitment.

www.mentoring.org
The National Mentoring Partnership—includes an online guide to help corporations become involved in mentoring programs.

Appendix: Sample Forms and Readings

Recruitment Plan

OBJECTIVES

Number of new, matched mentors:
Date when training begins:
Date when new mentors begin meeting with their mentees:

TIMELINE

	ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1)			
2)			
3)			
4)			
5)			
6)			
7)			
8)			
9)			
10)			

BUDGET

ITEM	COST
Staff time	
Materials (creating and producing)	
Other expenses (list)	

a1

mentor job description

General description of the program and of the mentor's role:

Mentor Responsibilities:

-
-
-
-

Eligibility Requirements and Preferences:

	Required	Preferred
○		
○		
○		
○		

Benefits:

-
-
-
-

SAMPLE RECRUITMENT MESSAGE

Save the Children: Do Good. Mentor a Child. http://www.savethechildren.org/mentors/mentor2a.html

Save the Children®

You Can Make a Difference

More than 65 years of experience has taught us that one of the most effective ways to help young people is through mentoring. Mentors help young people stay in school. Achieve their goals. Avoid unsafe activities. According to a research study*, young people who meet regularly with mentors are:

- 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs
- 27% less likely to begin drinking alcohol
- 52% less likely to skip school
- 33% less likely to hit someone

*"Making A Difference, An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America," Public Private Ventures, 1995

Who is Qualified to Be a Mentor? People Just Like You

A mentor is someone who cares, listens, and offers encouragement. Mentors are partners in change. Mentors help children develop their strengths and talents by supporting the efforts of other significant people such as parents and teachers.

Mentors ARE	Mentors ARE NOT
good listeners	babysitters
caring friends	surrogate parents
confidence builders	therapists
ordinary people	saviors

Mentors are ordinary people, just like you. They come from all walks of life, all economic and educational backgrounds. Mentors do have one thing in common — a commitment to making the world a better place for children.

What Do Mentors Do?

"Those who overcome poverty to reach college often share a common bond: a mentor, or perhaps several, who shepherd students across unfamiliar terrain."

– Arthur Levine and Jana Nidiffer, Columbia University and University of Massachusetts researchers

Every mentoring relationship is shaped by the different personalities, interests, and needs of each mentor and child. The activities they choose — whether they just talk, play sports, or read together — will reflect these unique qualities. But the real force for positive change comes from the fruits of the relationship itself. Trust. Confidence. Enthusiasm. Growth. And most importantly, fun.

What's In It For You?

"Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve... You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."
–Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Children are not the only ones whose lives can be changed by mentoring. For many mentors, the rewards of reaching out to another and building a close, trusting relationship are great, including an increase in personal enrichment, happiness and self-knowledge.

In fact, mentoring benefits all of society: Healthy, educated and nurtured children grow up to be productive adults and responsible parents. They may even grow up to be mentors themselves someday.

How Can You Get Involved?

"The most valuable part of mentoring is the good feeling you get inside knowing that you have helped someone."
–A Mentor from the Norwalk (CT) Mentor Program

There are now thousands of children on the waiting lists of mentoring organizations. At Big Brothers Big Sisters of America alone, more than 40,000 young people are waiting and can wait an average of 18 months to be matched with a mentor. There are many ways you can make a difference in a child's life.

DO GOOD. MENTOR A CHILD.

Research shows that mentoring has a great impact when youth and mentors meet on a regular basis for at least a year. If you'd like to volunteer on a shorter-term, less-frequent basis, be assured that there are many other ways to reach out to children in your community.

Call toll-free 1-877-BE-A-MENTOR to locate mentoring or other volunteer opportunities in your area. If you have already taken this step, we thank you.

Used and reprinted with permission from Save the Children. *This promotional campaign page can be viewed at:*
www.savethechildren.org/mentors/mentor2a.html

Same-race vs. cross-race matches

Evaluations of volunteer mentoring programs provide evidence that mentoring relationships can have positive influences on adolescent developmental outcomes, including improvements in peer and parental relationships, academic achievement, self-concept, lower recidivism rates among juvenile delinquents, and reductions in substance abuse.

Few studies, however, have focused on the role of the mentors' and youth's cultural background in shaping the course and outcomes of the relationship. As a result, critical questions remain regarding the role of race and ethnicity in matches and the relative importance of making matches on the basis of shared racial background. Because of the absence of systematic knowledge, considerable controversy surrounds this issue; and many programs act on implicit assumptions regarding the importance of forming matches on the basis of mentor and youth's racial similarity. One consequence of programs' decisions to make only same-race or same-ethnicity matches is that thousands of minority youth are retained on long waiting lists until adult volunteers of the same race or ethnicity become available.

Based on beliefs rather than research, the arguments for and against cultural matching are deeply rooted in ideology concerning racial and ethnic relations. The two sides of the cultural matching argument are summarized below.

IN DEFENSE OF CULTURAL MATCHING

Proponents of cultural matching firmly believe that one's racial and ethnic background plays a critical role in establishing effective mentor-mentee relationships. This shared background is emphasized over differences in social class or geographical location because it is assumed that problems transcend class and geographical boundaries. Without a similar racial background, the match is believed to be unable to fulfill its potential.

The arguments for cultural matching are deeply embedded in minority groups' historical experience in the United States, cultural legacies, customs, and values regarding self-protection. Proponents of racial matching often base their belief on one or more of the following assumptions:

1) An adult of a different racial and ethnic background cannot teach a youth how to cope in society since he or she cannot understand what it feels like to be a minority in America. Because minority youth internalize the racial and ethnic attitudes of the larger society, they are vulnerable to low self-esteem and have restricted views of their possibilities in life. Only a mentor with a similar racial and ethnic background can really understand these social and psychological conflicts and help frame realistic solutions.

2) Deep levels of trust, sharing, and cooperation will never be realized unless there is a common bond of race or ethnicity.

3) Cross-race matches, where White adults mentor minority children, are an intrusion upon the community and a danger to the child's cultural identity. Culture is deeply internalized, providing racial and ethnic groups with a sense of history, heritage, and continuity. Any mentor who is not representative of a child's racial or ethnic background will subconsciously and inevitably impose his or her cultural values and customs on that child. And if that adult is a White "European American"—as is true in the vast majority of cross-race pairs—the match carries with it all the symbolism of historical treatment that the dominant White culture has inflicted on minority groups.

4) White, middle-class mentors may experience powerful negative emotions such as guilt and defensiveness in relation to this country's history of racial oppression. These mentors' primary goal might be to "save" at-risk youth from the hazards of their environments by engaging them in "mainstream" activities, thus impeding the development of a mentoring relationship that is built on trust and support.

5) Racial and ethnic communities should help their own and foster a sense of solidarity. The African-American community, for example, is becoming increasingly segregated along class lines, and its members need to remember their common responsibility to one another. Mentoring is an important mechanism for forging these ties, particularly since African-American culture has always stressed self-help and the idea of an extended family that expands beyond boundaries of biological kinship.

6) Providing minority youth with a mentors from a different culture will send the wrong message. It will convey to them that the people they should model themselves after are not of their own group, or that there are not enough adults from their own community who can serve as positive role models.

IN DEFENSE OF CROSS-CULTURAL MATCHING

Most proponents of cross-cultural matching do not deny the existence and potential effects of culture on the mentoring relationship. While some proponents do believe that American citizens should live in a "color-blind" society, this is by no means the majority opinion today. Rather, many who defend cross-cultural matching believe that effective relationships can develop despite racial and ethnic differences. Several studies of mentoring programs—including Ferguson (1990) and Tierney and Grossman (1995)—have found evidence of positive cross-race child-adult bonding.

Proponents of cross-racial matching often base their belief on one or more of the following assumptions:

1) The qualities of the mentor are what matters the most. While racially and ethnically homogenous matching may expedite the development of trust, it does not guarantee a successful mentoring match. What is more important is the mentor's personal skills, experience, common interest with youth, capacity to provide sensitive support, and openness to the nuances of cultural differences.

2) As long as mentors encourage their mentees to feel secure with their own cultural identity, engage in activities that will enhance their mentees' knowledge of that heritage, and remain constantly aware of their own cultural baggage and how it may affect their treatment of youth, then racial or ethnic similarity becomes less consequential. People who possess the characteristics of a good mentor can receive training that will help them develop this kind of cultural sensitivity.

3) Differences in socioeconomic status may be a more important concern than differences in race or ethnicity. Social distance-whether it occurs between mentor and mentee of the same race or of different races-may cause the mentor to misunderstand the young person's problems, needs, and thoughts. Yet, skilled and sensitive mentors have succeeded in bridging these social distances, and they can bridge racial and ethnic differences as well.

4) Rather than a liability, cross-cultural matching can be beneficial to youth by breaking down racial and ethnic barriers. By matching people of different backgrounds, it permits exposure to cultures that previously might have aroused negative or uncomfortable feelings.

5) Beyond the potential benefits to individual youth, cross-cultural matching can also contribute to the dismantling of societal barriers. It symbolizes people working together, trying to improve the life changes of youth, and fostering a sense of community among historically separated people.

Supporters of these matches also emphasize that it is essential for the child's or youth's parent to give approval for the cross-race match.

(Adapted from a paper, in progress, by Jean Grossman, Jean Rhodes, and Ranjini Reddy, Public/Private Ventures.)

Assessing the Benefits of Corporate Volunteer Programs

In March 1999 the Points of Light Foundation, sponsored by The Allstate Foundation, conducted a survey of U.S. corporations to monitor changes and identify trends in corporate employee volunteering. This pamphlet contains the executive summary of the resulting report; the full report is available through the Points of Light Foundation's catalog services at 1-800-272-8306.

American companies face a business environment characterized by increasing competition from a variety of sources, the need to function more efficiently while adapting to a global economy, and the threat of a shrinking pool of skilled, qualified workers. The Points of Light Foundation, whose mission includes fostering and supporting strong, strategic, corporate-based volunteer programs, helps American businesses develop, implement, and maintain volunteer programs that contribute to their strategic goals under these challenging conditions.

In March 1999 the Points of Light Foundation conducted a survey of U.S. corporations to update a 1992 survey examining employee volunteer programs. The 1992 study established benchmark data, and the 1999 survey provided a follow-up to monitor changes and identify trends.

The survey was mailed to 2,772 U.S. companies and 248 companies, or 9 percent, responded. The responding companies represented a wide variety of businesses by geographic location, industry sector, geographic region, years in business, and size (as measured by number of employees and annual revenue).

FINDINGS

A Stronger Link to Strategic Business Goals: A major metamorphosis has occurred in the seven years since the 1992 survey was conducted. At that time, only 31 percent of companies reported using their employee volunteer programs (EVPs) to support core business functions. By 1999, that had increased to 81 percent of all respondents focusing employee volunteer programs on core business functions. Moreover, the survey found a significant increase in companies who incorporate the volunteer program into the company's overall business plan, increasing from 19 percent in 1992 to 48 percent in 1999 (see chart 1). Another way companies reinforce the strategic impact of volunteering is to incorporate a commitment to community service in the corporate mission statement, a practice of 52 percent of the companies surveyed. Notably, the exception is among small companies with fewer than 500 employees, in which only 30 percent address community service in the corporate mission statement.

Corporations and their corporate volunteer managers are working "smarter" to ensure that the employee volunteer effort contributes to fulfilling the company's business goals. They do this by using the program to address core business issues (see chart 2), such as:

- public relations (83 percent of programs)
- marketing and communications (64 percent)
- developing employee skills (60 percent)
- recruiting and retention (58 percent)
- valuing diversity (56 percent)

Some corporations are also strengthening the impact of their philanthropic giving and their volunteer efforts in their communi-

Chart 1: Business Issues Volunteer Programs Address

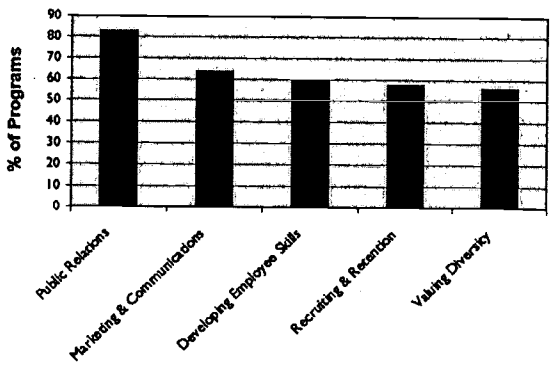
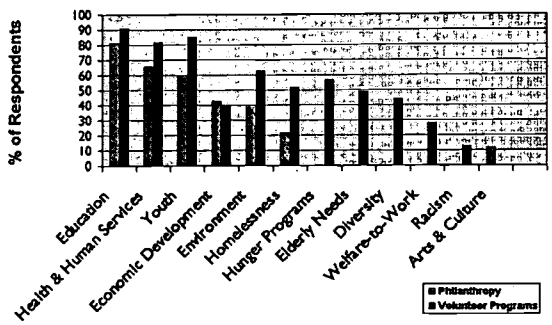


Chart 2: Relationship of Corporate Philanthropy and Volunteer Programs



ties by planning them in concert with one another. Of the most common topics for corporate giving, almost all are also addressed by employee volunteer programs.

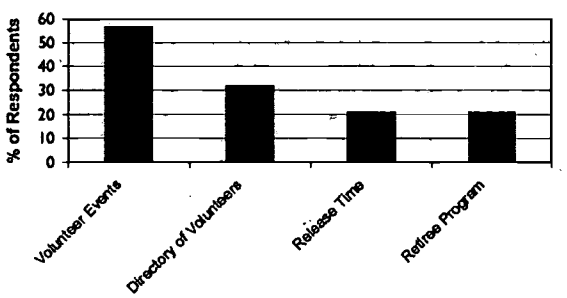
Additional issues addressed by employee volunteer programs include hunger programs (57 percent of programs), elderly needs (49 percent), diversity (44 percent), welfare to work assistance (28 percent), and racism (13 percent). Arts and culture are receiving a smaller portion of corporate philanthropy (12 percent of companies provide funding in this category) (see chart 3).

All business sectors focused strongly on education, health and human services, and youth. Other emphases on issues varied by business sector, however, with health care companies focusing more on health and human services, the elderly, diversity, and arts and culture than other business sectors. In another departure, utility companies place more emphasis on environmental issues than other sectors.

Increasing Professionalism: The survey results revealed that in the seven years since the original survey, employee volunteer managers have become more rigorous in the techniques they use to manage, evaluate, and communicate about the program. This increasing rigor includes using a full range of tools to facilitate volunteering, whether through a formal or informal program. These tools include offering volunteer events on company premises (57 percent of companies use this approach), providing community organizations with a directory of available, skill-specific company volunteers (32 percent), providing release time from work for volunteering (21 percent), and offering a retiree volunteer program (21 percent) (see chart 4).

To ensure recognition of volunteers, 85 percent showcase volunteers in company publications, 78 percent provide awards and certificates, 71 percent host volunteer recognition events, and 64 percent send letters of commendation to volunteers (see chart 5).

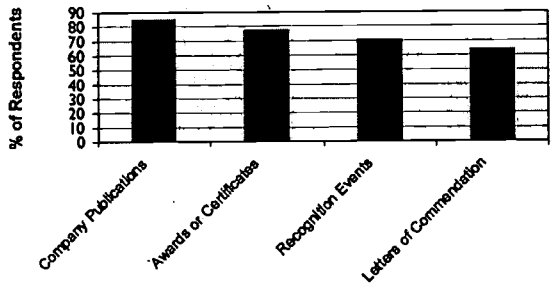
Chart 3: Tools Used to Facilitate Volunteering



Relationship of Corporate Philanthropy and Employee Volunteer Programs

Education	81%	91%
Health and Human Services	66%	82%
Youth	60%	85%
Economic Development	43%	39%
Environment	39%	63%
Homelessness	22%	52%

Chart 4: Tools Used to Recognize Volunteers



Emphasis on Planning and Evaluation: Another aspect of this growing professionalism is that half of all companies have business plans in place for their employee volunteer programs. For larger companies, where the corporate volunteer manager spends a larger portion of time on the program than in smaller companies, 69 percent have a business plan for the employee volunteer program. In addition, there is a widespread commitment to, or interest in, developing more formal evaluation of employee volunteer programs, with 70 percent of respondents conducting both internal and external impact assessments. More specifically, they assess benefits to the company (84 percent), to the community (83 percent), to the employee (81 percent), and to the company's partnership with the community (67 percent) (see chart 6). A significant exception is the smaller companies, with fewer than 500 employees or revenues under $6 million, who are more likely not to evaluate volunteer efforts.

The types of data collected fill two broad needs: to provide feedback to improve the program itself, and to provide insights on how the program can best contribute to meeting strategic business goals. Companies are devising ways to measure the level of benefit to the company, to the community, to the employee, and to the company's key partnerships with community agencies and organizations. In addition, they are collecting rich data on a variety of factors, ranging from the "head counting" function of number of volunteers and number of volunteer hours to obtaining feedback from agencies and communities served. Some companies are conducting evaluations of greater complexity, with 26 percent measuring the impact of company volunteering on employee morale, and 25 percent measuring the effect on team building. Small percentages (6 percent of companies) are investigating the effect on employee turnover/absenteeism and productivity, yet this select few set an example for others to emulate.

Corporations are using a variety of methods to collect data. The most common are:

- E-mail (63 percent)
- Surveys (62 percent)
- Post-event evaluation forms (44 percent)
- Testimonials (35 percent)

Good Corporate Citizenship and Volunteerism: A vast majority of companies rely upon their employee volunteer activity to put on a good face in the community. Eighty-three percent of companies use the EVP directly in public relations activity, 64 percent make use of their program in marketing and communications activity, 58 percent in recruiting or retaining employees, and 56 percent to demonstrate that they value diversity. Furthermore, the survey found that companies also use employee volunteerism to illustrate a commitment to the community in the following ways:

Chart 5: Types of Evaluation Performed—Large Companies

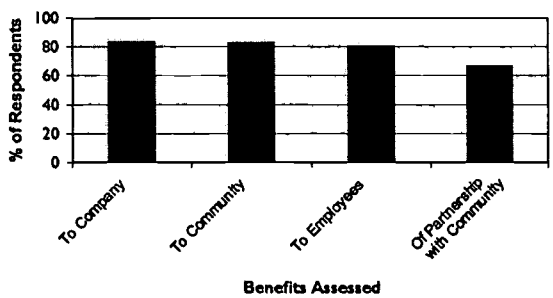
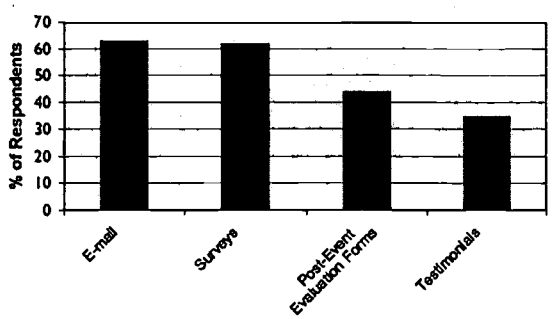


Chart 6: Methods Used to Collect Data



- loaning executives to nonprofit organizations
- employee participation on nonprofit boards of directors
- adding "Dollars for Doers" to nonprofit organizations for which employees volunteer

Additionally, many companies, especially larger ones, embrace the entire family and retirees in the employee volunteer program, extending their reach into the community.

Looking to the Future – Challenges and Opportunities: As the American business environment is increasingly influenced by global forces and competition gets tougher for employees, customers, and investors, employee volunteer programs are perfectly placed to help position companies favorably among all constituencies. Volunteer programs can be—and are—used effectively to address core business functions such as employee recruiting, training, and retention; marketing, communications, and public relations; productivity; and regulatory and government affairs. Yet the survey reveals several challenges to overcome:

- **Common negative perceptions** among companies that do not have programs in place, that they will experience lack of CEO support, lack of middle management support, lack of employee interest, lack of employee time, and concerns over the administrative cost.
- **Lack of stability in the volunteer management function,** with 31 percent of current EVP managers being in their jobs one year or less.
- **The need to develop and implement more sophisticated measurement techniques** that produce a clear correlation that EVPs pay off at the bottom line in employee recruiting, retention, productivity, and direct profitability.
- **Small companies are less likely to feel an ability to undertake employee volunteer programs.** Because small companies represent the bulk of new jobs in the U.S. economy, it is critical to find ways to ease the burden and facilitate volunteering within their ranks.
- **The need to realize further alignment of employee volunteer programs and business goals.** Many companies are planning their EVPs strategically, but all EVP managers must learn to place their programs on this solid footing.

Volunteer managers must continue to strive for more resources and more support, yet they must also continue to provide more accountability, more visibility for the company, and higher return on investment. They must continue the upward path toward more professionalism in their EVP responsibilities, and in so doing create a more fertile ground for future expansion of volunteer programs.

The full report is available from the Points of Light Foundation's catalog services at 1-800-272-8306.

MentorWorks©

MentorWorks© is a service of The National Mentoring Partnership to provide you with the latest information on mentors and mentoring programs. The information helps demonstrate the impact mentoring can have on young people -- giving kids an inside track to a successful life.

An Evaluation of School-Based Group Mentoring - *Under current research*
(2001, Public/Private Ventures/Commissioned By The National Mentoring Partnership and the US Dept. of Education)

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Title: RECRUITING MENTORS: A GUIDE TO FINDING VOLUNTEERS TO WORK WITH YOUTH
Technical Assistance Packet #3, National Mentoring Center

Author(s): Linda Jucovy, Public/Private Ventures

Corporate Source (if appropriate): Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Publication Date: 2/01

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