

The Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) offers training and information to help organizations develop a quality volunteer program that can MORE than pay for itself.

Every year, volunteers provide Minnesota organizations with billions of dollars' worth of time, providing service, leadership, advocacy and talent. Just look at the numbers:\*

- **\$7.9 billion:** Estimated value of Minnesota volunteers in 2004.
- **2.4 million:** The number of Minnesota adults who volunteered in 2004.
- **\$18.04:** Per hour value of Minnesota volunteers in 2005.

\*Based on data from the 2004 Minnesota State Survey conducted by the Minnesota Center for Survey Research at the University of Minnesota (questions on volunteerism sponsored by the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration). The hourly value of volunteer time in 2004 was estimated by the Independent Sector to be \$17.55, based on the average hourly wage for all non-management, non-agriculture workers as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, with a 12 percent increase to estimate for fringe benefits. Visit the Independent Sector at [http://independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer\\_time.html](http://independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html).

[www.mavanetwork.org](http://www.mavanetwork.org)



1800 White Bear Avenue North  
Maplewood, MN 55109-3704



## MISSION **im**POSSIBLE:

*How Executive  
Directors Can  
Maximize the Power of  
Volunteers to Benefit  
Their Organization*

If you lead or fund nonprofits, you may already count on volunteers as one of the critical resources to help achieve your mission.

But did you also know that you can increase your organization's effectiveness, and your organization's Return On Investment by *investing in volunteers?*

## Making smart investments in your volunteer program leads to volunteers who can:

- **Increase production and help your budget go further.** Well-managed organizations can extend their budget and accomplish much more with volunteers.
- **Improve the quality of services.** By engaging the right volunteers in your agency's efforts, the quality of your services can be improved and enhanced.
- **Provide specialized skills.** You might not be able to hire an employee with specialized skills, but you may be able to find a volunteer who has the skills you need.
- **Expand access to the community.** Volunteers can help extend your organization's reach to specific community segments.
- **Enhance your organization's reputation and grassroots support.** Volunteers can become ambassadors to the community and create a committed constituency for your organization. Through their positive experiences, they acquire insight into your group's mission and accomplishments, and enhance your organization's reputation and support through word-of-mouth.
- **Increase diversity.** You can engage diverse opinions and community populations by recruiting volunteers with a variety of backgrounds, experience and opinions.
- **Provide credibility.** Volunteers bring credibility to an organization because of their commitment of time and sincere desire to help advance an organization's mission.
- **Tackle special assignments.** Volunteers can focus on specialized goals/tasks and dedicate time to achieve results.
- **Experiment.** Volunteers can be risk-takers to try out new ideas and approaches before an organization institutionalizes the idea or approach.
- **Innovate.** Volunteers can provide fresh thinking, give an outsider's perspective, and offer new ideas to help keep your organization on its toes. They can also be a source of insight about community perceptions that inform an organization's efforts.
- **Lobby and generally advocate for your group.** Volunteers are credible advocates for organizations and their needs, particularly when they are from the communities served by the organizations.
- **Contribute financially.** Studies show that people who volunteer donate more than twice as much as non-volunteers. And volunteers are essential to the organization's funding and resource development process.

Contact MAVA for additional resources on the value of investing in volunteers or if you have ideas on how to educate decision makers on the value of investing in volunteer resources. MAVA is offering the *Volunteer Impact Leadership Training Series* to provide organizations with information to initiate, improve or re-engage their volunteer programs. To learn more, email MAVA at [office@mavanetwork.org](mailto:office@mavanetwork.org) or call (651) 255-0469.

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## How to Create or Strengthen Your Volunteer Program

### Invest in your volunteer program and reap the rewards.

Volunteers can be one of your greatest resources and help transform your organization and community. Here's how to maximize your volunteer resources:

#### Invest and Commit

- Hire a skilled volunteer resources leader and make that person a part of your management team. Keep in mind that the volunteer resources leader is likely to work closely with most of your organization's stakeholder groups. His or her knowledge base and ability to cultivate resources is vital to your organization's key leaders.
- Commit organizational and financial support. This includes training and systems to develop and sustain a volunteer program. Incorporate volunteer resources expenses into your budget in all programmatic areas where volunteers are engaged. Incorporate volunteer resources costs into proposals for funding.

#### Communicate and Support

- Take a visible role in supporting volunteers. Communicate your personal belief about their importance in helping achieve your mission.
- Recognize volunteer accomplishments on an on-going basis.

#### Involve Volunteers & Staff

- Involve top management and your board of directors in creating and supporting volunteer programs. Remind Board Members that they are volunteers themselves.
- Incorporate responsibility for working with volunteers into staff job descriptions.
- Engage volunteers, staff and management to help evaluate volunteer efforts for results.