

## **Volunteer Center Core Competencies**

Volunteer Centers mobilize people and resources to deliver creative solutions to community problems. To achieve this vision, Volunteer Centers use the following core competencies:

### **Connect people with opportunities to serve**

Volunteer Centers provide people with easy access to a wide variety of opportunities to connect to their community through service. For example, Volunteer Centers:

- Connect people with volunteer opportunities doing centralized recruitment and referral of volunteers through individual interviews, directories, searchable database listings and more;
- Manage and promote community-wide service events such as Make a Difference Day, Day of Caring or large-scale community clean-ups;
- Design programs targeted for special populations of volunteers, including families, youth, seniors, employees, or court-referred volunteers;
- Involve volunteers in ongoing direct service volunteer programs of the Volunteer Center itself, such as mentoring or tutoring programs; and
- Promote episodic and short-term volunteer opportunities through monthly project calendars, their web sites, volunteer clubs, and the like.

### **Build the capacity for effective local volunteering**

Volunteer Centers help the agencies, businesses and individuals who work with volunteers do a better job recruiting, managing and retaining volunteers. For example, Volunteer Centers:

- Provide volunteer management trainings, consultations and direct support to nonprofit agencies and other organizations (like schools, local government, faith communities, businesses, etc.);
- Share volunteer management resource information through newsletters, lending libraries and on-line resource sites;
- Convene and advise professional associations of volunteer leaders and managers, such as Corporate Volunteer Councils and Directors of Volunteers in Agencies; and
- Provide training and support for specialized groups of volunteers, such as potential board leaders.

### **Promote volunteering**

Volunteer Centers raise awareness of the power of service, encourage people to volunteer, provide information about volunteerism and recognize the contributions of volunteers. For example, Volunteer Centers:

- Initiate and support mass media campaigns to promote volunteering through radio shows, newspaper columns, public service advertisements, a national toll-free number and more;
- Recruit volunteers and raise awareness of volunteering through strategies such as speakers bureaus, volunteer fairs and telethons;
- Create opportunities for public acknowledgement of remarkable volunteers and volunteer teams through awards programs, National Volunteer Week activities and a variety of informal recognition efforts; and
- Educate policy makers and community leaders about the importance of volunteering.

### **Participate in strategic initiatives that mobilize volunteers to meet local community needs**

Volunteer Centers serve as a convener for the community and a catalyst for action. Volunteer Centers work through local partnerships and collaborations with businesses, law enforcement, grassroots groups, schools and community leaders to identify needs and mobilize volunteer response. Volunteer Centers impact critical community issues by spearheading volunteer-run gun buy-back programs, drunk driving prevention campaigns, welfare to work efforts, and much more. For example, Volunteer Centers:

- Convene or participate in collaborations to address a specific issue, such as youth violence;
- Coordinate volunteer response in times of special needs such as a disaster; and
- Implement and operate volunteer service programs such as a school-based literacy program or a senior home repair program.

The effective integration of these four strategies positions Volunteer Centers as the local leadership organizations for community volunteering. Volunteer Centers are both catalysts for volunteer action and knowledge leaders about volunteering.