



# Making the Appeal to Potential Volunteers

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## *10 Pointers for Effective Invitations to Volunteer*

1. **Be prepared.** Have a completed position description, and know the gifts, knowledge and time necessary for this position. Understand and communicate why this assignment is necessary to the work of the group or organization. Share why is it important and meaningful to you.
2. **Be sure that you are the right person to extend the invitation.** Find a member of the group who knows the prospective volunteer, or a person with good communication and people skills. Identify the best person to share the volunteer opportunity.
3. **Personalize your invitation.** Why do you want the particular individual you are asking? What makes this person "right" for this position? Talk about how this opportunity will meet an important need that he/she may have expressed, will provide an opportunity for involvement, or will offer a chance to give back to the organization.
4. **Think about how the invitation will sound to the prospective volunteer.** Ask positively and enthusiastically. Don't apologize, distort the facts or ask negatively "You won't want to \_\_\_ would you?" or "You are the last person on my list. Would you \_\_\_?" And don't beg. Show your interest in this position and commitment to the organization's mission.
5. **Be enthusiastic.** Your best recruiter values the work of the organization and genuinely supports this effort. Always speak from the heart. Remember: enthusiasm is contagious.
6. **Be realistic with your expectations.** A newly retired person may need a flexible schedule; a year's commitment to a 15-year-old is the equivalent of asking a 45-year-old for three years of service; a divorced parent searching for a family [volunteering] opportunity may need an alternating weekend schedule.
7. **Remember the "courtesy factor".** Whether you phone a person or initiate a conversation face to face, determine if this is a good time to talk. If not, schedule a time when you might visit with each other.
8. **Bring closure to the conversation.** A member may want to think about the request or may need to consult with family members or a work schedule. Agree upon a time when you will complete the discussion and learn of the prospect's decision.
9. **Follow up quickly.** If the person is willing to serve, be sure that necessary orientation or training is readily available. Introduce the volunteer to others so that newcomers feel welcome and included.
10. **Accept "No" Graciously.** The time and situation may not allow a member to accept the opportunity, even one that seems "perfect" for the individual. Determine if a follow-up invitation is in order and thank the person for taking the time to listen to your request.