

Recruiting and Managing Volunteers Effectively

Why is volunteer management important? As an energy committee leader you are probably a volunteer yourself. Managing volunteers well -- making the most out of people's limited time to maximize impact -- is important to reduce volunteer burnout and make your committee more successful. While energy committees are different than a traditional organization, some of the same best practices apply such as those for recruitment, recognition, feedback and the need to demonstrate impact.

Recruitment:

- Target recruitment for people with specific skills that may be useful to your committee. For example someone in the renewable energy field, a contractor with building experience or someone in communications and web management.
- General recruitment – everyone has something to contribute and as the more people you can get involved the better!
- Ways to reach people:
 - Do you have an online presence through the form of a website, a page on the town website or a Facebook page? If people don't know you exist they won't volunteer. VECAN strongly recommends some kind of online presence and keeping the contact information up to date.
 - Ask for new members! Hold an informational meeting, hang posters in community meeting places. Include language about when and where the committee meets and who to contact to get involved at all your events and in your publications.

Recognition:

- Everyone likes to be recognized for their hard work. Feeling like they are not appreciated is one reason volunteers leave. Recognition can take many forms including, volunteer appreciation events, awards, even a direct person to person thank you.

Supervision/ Feedback:

- Have someone check in with members, this could be the chair or everyone could take the responsibility to "interview" another member. Make sure each member feels like they are doing something useful and valuable
- If in person meetings are logistically impossible, consider an online survey. People may be more honest when anonymous as well.

Demonstrating Impact:

- Articles in the paper or presentations about what your committee has been able to accomplish builds support and recognition in your community. It is also a chance to recruit more volunteers and attract future funders / maintain current funders.

- In order to demonstrate impact it is important to keep records of volunteer time. Did you know the average volunteers time is valued at \$20 / hr? Also consider tracking:
 - The number of people who received education through a workshop.
 - The number of homes weatherized or the number of solar installations.
 - The amount of money saved from a particular project.