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## Recruiting Volunteers - Three Approaches

By [Joanne Fritz](#), About.com Guide

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There are numerous methods you can use to recruit volunteers. However, not all of them will be appropriate for your organization or your specific needs.

Rick Lynch and Steve McCurley, authors of [Essential Volunteer Management](#). (Heritage Arts Press) suggest that there are three basic ways to recruit:

### Warm Body Recruitment

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When you need a large number of volunteers for a short period time and the qualifications of the task are minimal, you might engage in "warm body recruitment." This involves a broad dissemination of information, including:

- Distribution of brochures
- Posters
- Speaking to groups
- Notices in appropriate media
- Word of Mouth

### **Targeted Recruitment**

The targeted campaign requires a carefully planned approach to a small audience. Use this method when you are trying to recruit volunteers that need to have specific skills or not commonly found characteristics.

A targeted campaign requires, at the outset, that you answer several questions:

- What do we need?
- Who could provide this?
- How can we communicate with them?
- What would motivate them?

Working through such questions will help you identify and locate the volunteers that you need. Once you locate a source of such volunteers, simply take your recruitment message directly to them.

### **Concentric Circles Recruitment**

This type of recruitment requires you to identify populations who are already in direct or indirect contact with your organization and then to contact them with your recruiting message. Such populations include:

- Your clients, their families and relatives.
- Alumni of your program/s.
- Friends of your current volunteers and staff.
- People in your organization's neighborhood.
- People who have been affected by the problem you are attempting to solve.

Concentric Circles recruitment involves people who are already familiar with your agency or the problem you address, or who are connected through friends or staff members. It is more likely that you will succeed in persuading them to volunteer than complete strangers. In sales terms, there is a big difference between a "cold" call to a stranger than a "warm" call to an acquaintance or a friend.

### **Your Recruitment Message**

No matter which recruitment method you use, you must have a compelling message. Your message explains why your agency is worthy of a potential volunteer's time. Make your message short, simple, and direct, communicating the need for the volunteer's service and the

good he/she can do. Stress the need of the community for the service, but also delineate the benefits the volunteer will receive. These include doing good, but there may be skills and valuable experience that the volunteer will gain.

## Asking

Finally, be sure to directly ask people to volunteer. The most effective way to do this is to have your staff or volunteers ask their friends and acquaintances to volunteer. Be sure to provide them with the information they need to make an effective "ask."

## Recruiting Volunteers Online

While finding volunteers the old fashioned way through referrals and local contacts still works best, the use of online volunteer matching sites is growing, and is a way of at least doing a first quick cut of possible volunteers.

Here are the some of the most widely-used volunteer matching sites:

- [Idealist](#)
- [Network for Good](#)
- [VolunteerSolutions](#)
- [Volunteers of America](#)
- [VolunteerMatch](#)
- [Points of Light](#)

Be sure to check out sites that serve your particular locale as well. Many large cities have such sites. For instance my city of Baltimore, Md has [VolunteerCentral](#).

## More About Recruiting Volunteers

- [Before You Recruit Volunteers](#)

## More About Volunteer Management

- [How To How to Write a Volunteer Position Description](#)
- [Down-to-Earth Guide to Supervising Volunteers - A Review](#)

## Suggested Reading

- [Top Ten Recruiting Tips](#)

## Related Articles

- [How To Make Friends and Meet People - Tips on Making Friends for Teens](#)
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**Joanne Fritz**  
Nonprofits Guide

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