Volunteer Reboot: Recruitment & Retention
What We Learned
2019

Volunteers comprise a critical cornerstone of the Veterans Connect @ the Library program and are a key to sustainability. They are the lifeblood of the program.
Recruitment

Where to find volunteers:
Stand down programs
Open Houses
Other library departments
Local military collaboratives
Library signage
Outdoor banners
Outreach events with partners
Veteran programs at the library
Volunteers recruiting others
Veteran Work-Study students
Local community newspaper
Volunteer Match

Important to remember:
Don't be shy! Ask!
Not all prospective volunteers are actively looking for a volunteer opportunity.
Don’t prejudge potential candidates.
72% of first-time volunteers with the VRC were veterans.

In Depth Screening:
Spend the extra time during screening to help potential volunteers understand expectations BEFORE you take them on.
Invite them to your volunteer meeting.
Spend time at your initial volunteer interview stage to explain what the average shift is and is not.
Have them spend a shift shadowing your best volunteer.
Explain the need to be patient.
Ask, "why are you interested?"
Get a sense if they can support someone else.
Are they going to be comfortable asking patrons, "have you served?"
If not an ideal fit, consider redirecting them to other volunteer opportunities within the library.

"BE PERSONABLE & ACCESSIBLE. PRACTICE GRATITUDE!"
Align volunteer expectations:
Veteran volunteers and those with close military ties are more satisfied as their expectations are aligned with the mission - to connect veterans with their benefits. Plus there is a natural bond between veterans.
Veterans are committed to service.
Veterans and those with strong ties, receive intrinsic reward from simple daily encounters with other veterans. Typically intrinsic rewards are stronger and less easily shaken than extrinsic motivations, thereby suggestive of a lower turnover rate.

Keep them engaged:
• Share the Veterans Connect monthly newsletter and ask them to share their suggestions, ideas and tips with the editor.
• Bring your volunteers to Regional Meetings - When asked how training could be improved, almost 40% of volunteers said they would like to attend more group meetings with other VRC members.
• Promote interactions - between volunteers and staff, between volunteers and service providers, between established volunteers and new volunteers or volunteers under consideration for the program.
• Give them a permanent name tag or badge with the logo to help them feel that they are part of a team.
• Help keep them up to date by sharing Veteran Connect emails.
• Let them participate in outreach - booth at your local Farmer’s Market, speaker events, public military events. Ask them to be on the lookout for volunteers.
• Include them in your library events.
• Ensure they have regular contact with library staff. Have they met the director?
• Schedule monthly or quarterly meetings with volunteers.
• Consider ways to recognize your volunteers.

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• Veterans are committed to service.
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According to Volunteer Match and Volunteer Hub:
1. Place them correctly. These individuals are volunteering for your organization because they feel that your cause or purpose fits in with their life and their values. Align their expectations!
2. Show them their results. Show them respect and recognition.
3. Give them options.
5. Increase their social involvement and think of more ways to engage them.

https://www.volunteerhub.com/blog/retain-volunteers-engagement
https://blogs.volunteermatch.org/engagingvolunteers/2015/09/16/4-w