



# Attracting and Recruiting Volunteers from Diverse Communities

## Organizational Priority

The American Red Cross Diversity & Inclusion mission statement explains that the Red Cross will provide its services, products and goods in a culturally competent manner. Ensuring that the American Red Cross is a culturally competent organization begins with a diverse workforce of paid staff and volunteers.

A more diverse volunteer staff is vital to our success. More closely mirroring our clients is one step toward enhancing our cultural competency. Capturing the volunteer potential of diverse community members can enrich the delivery of our mission. By expanding the number of diverse volunteers from these communities, the American Red Cross can make our services more culturally appropriate, and can bring diverse viewpoints to inform how we deliver our services.

We must also create an inclusive environment where everyone is welcomed and valued. And, each of us must do our best to learn and better understand those who are different than we are.

## Dimensions of Diversity

Diversity doesn't always refer to race or ethnicity. It may include age, gender, language, or social class—all the things that go into making each of us who we are.

There are three layers of diversity. From the inside out, they are:

- **Internal Dimensions** –age, gender, race, ethnicity, physical ability, etc.
- **External Dimensions** – family status, income, religion, education background, etc.
- **Organizational Dimensions** – management or professional level and status, industry, etc.

We, as an organization, need to be intentional about ensuring diversity in all three dimensions. With the goal of mirroring the community we serve, we ask you to pause and reflect on these aspects of diversity and how the people in your region mirror your community.

## Relationships & Structure

Diversity recruitment is different from regular recruitment of volunteers, as it requires a more strategic and targeted approach. Proactive outreach and recruitment efforts that deliberately focus on reaching diverse communities is the foundation of diversity recruitment. ***The goal of diversity outreach is to build a positive and impactful image of the American Red Cross in the minds of potential volunteers and their communities.*** Outreach lays the foundation for future diversity recruiting success by building valuable relationships with key contacts. It is through these relationships that the American Red Cross can share information about opportunities for diverse volunteers.

Effective diversity recruitment is rooted relationship management. When recruiting volunteers from diverse communities, it is essential to begin with authentic outreach and relationship development. Building a trusting relationship with the community is the goal. Once trust is established and the relationship has begun to form, a mutual understanding of how our needs connect with the needs of the community develops.

To successfully recruit diverse volunteers, we must be able to explain in an enthusiastic, authentic, informative, and convincing manner what services the American Red Cross delivers and why someone from a diverse community would want to aid us in delivering of our mission.



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Successfully engaging with and then recruiting from diverse communities is the work of everyone in the local chapter, not just volunteer recruiters. While working with and engaging with diverse communities is everyone's responsibility, accountability for establishing connections and creating relationships with organizations in diverse communities lies with the local chapter. The volunteer recruiter has the accountability for designing an action plan to leverage relationships with diverse communities to impact recruitment.

It is imperative for volunteer recruiters to build effective internal relationships to maximize the development of external relationships. Recruiters should take steps to build strong relationships with the Executive Directors and others who may own the local relationships. Understanding existing relationships and agreements, aids the volunteer recruiter in maximizing an external partner's commitment to the Red Cross in recruitment and other areas.

## Tactics for Success

Tactic	Role of the Volunteer Recruiter
<p><b>Create an inclusive environment.</b></p> <p>In order to recruit and retain volunteers from minority communities, we must work on creating an environment where people of all ethnicities and backgrounds feel welcome and included. Doing this is the responsibility of all of us, starting with leadership and working down throughout the organization. It is vital to engage volunteers who reflect the diversity of the community we serve and ensure we collaborate with diverse communities as partners.</p>	<p><b>Support</b></p>
<p><b>Build trust.</b></p> <p>After you have identified the communities you wish to connect with, get to know the people, their culture, and their food. For example, you can ask someone from a particular community to introduce you to an organization that would provide access to that community or to a potential volunteer candidate.</p>	<p><b>Support</b></p>
<p><b>Target your outreach.</b></p> <p>Have a presence at cultural, fraternal, faith-based and other community events with representatives who are energetic and passionate about the Red Cross. Be sure you have invited representatives who are from the community being served at the event. And, ensure that everyone representing the Red Cross is comfortable engaging with those from cultures different than their own. Also, have relevant and culturally appropriate materials to share at the event.</p>	<p><b>Lead</b></p>



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<p><b>Embrace skill based opportunities.</b></p> <p>Volunteer opportunities that are based on skills are very attractive to recent immigrants and others who may not be able to get work in their field. Skill based opportunities are also attractive to recent graduates and those looking to gain experience in a new career field.</p>	<b>Support</b>
<p><b>Recruit from those who use our services.</b></p> <p>Many diverse communities have cultures that prioritize helping each other. Neighbors helping and sharing with one another is imbedded many cultures as a way of life. Therefore, someone who has received Red Cross services may have an interest in being a volunteer to give back. How can you leverage this interest? Ask them to help by inviting them to be a volunteer.</p>	<b>Lead</b>
<p><b>Tap into your Region’s Diversity &amp; Inclusion Committee.</b></p> <p>As you begin to develop your chapter or region’s strategy for recruiting from diverse communities, it is important that you reach out to your Regional Diversity &amp; Inclusion Committee. The members of this committee can provide information and knowledge on places to begin recruiting and on specific tactics that can help in your area. This group should also be seen as a valuable resource for making personal connections to a variety of community leaders and organizations. Connect with your RVSO to find the best contact for your Region’s Diversity &amp; Inclusion Committee.</p>	<b>Lead</b>
<p><b>Tap into Red Cross Team Member Resources Groups.</b></p> <p>Team Member Resource Groups (TMRG) can aid in supporting volunteer recruitment, as a way of encouraging more diversity, and attracting potential volunteers who share the beliefs and principles of our mission. Members of our TMRGs can also reinforce our reputation in their respective communities. This in turn, can help to build our volunteer talent pipeline with a focus on “growing your own.” TMRG members can also meet with potential volunteers and talk to them about the cultural fit at the American Red Cross and the value of volunteers to our mission. Find more information on TMRGs at:</p> <p><a href="https://intranet.redcross.org/content/redcross/categories/our_services/diversity/team-member-engagement.html">https://intranet.redcross.org/content/redcross/categories/our_services/diversity/team-member-engagement.html</a></p>	<b>Lead</b>
<p><b>Enlist the support of diverse leaders within the community.</b></p> <p>Members of diverse communities are influenced by those who are visible and making a difference in those communities. Discover who the leaders are in the diverse communities you will be reaching out to by doing some local research. Ask current employees and volunteers what they know about the diverse communities in your area. Connecting with and making a positive impression with those leaders may open the door more easily for you. These local leaders may then be willing to promote the Red Cross to their community.</p>	<b>Support</b>



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<p><b>Make use of existing community resources.</b></p> <p>There are likely other organizations that are already utilized and respected by diverse communities in your area. Collaboration with these organizations can assist you in getting connected to those communities. Those already trusted organizations will make entry for you and buy in from the community more palatable. You start with some trust already established via the other organization.</p> <p>Be sure volunteer centers in your area are aware of your need for diverse volunteers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct joint outreach projects with other volunteer organizations who also have a focus on diversifying their volunteer base.</li> <li>• Solicit support from business organizations, bar associations, and other agencies that serve diverse communities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lead</b></p>
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## Marketing and Communication in Diversity Recruitment

One of the greatest opportunities to capitalize on in diversity recruitment is in how we market to and communicate with potential volunteers. How we display our culture, opportunities, and the importance of our mission in all communities impacts the perception of the American Red Cross in the eyes of current and future volunteers. Do potential volunteers from diverse communities view the American Red Cross as a desirable place to lend their time and talent? Is our message to attract new volunteers from diverse communities genuine? Can they see themselves playing an impactful role as a volunteer? Is our messaging deliberate and intentional?

<b>Communication Tactics for Success</b>	<b>Role of the Volunteer Recruiter</b>
<p><b>Never Assume, Always Engage</b></p> <p>When speaking to potential volunteers from different cultures, avoid using stereotypes and preconceived notions. Appeal to their interests through communications guided by research on their lifestyles, locations and other factors that may influence where they choose to lend their volunteer time and talent.</p>	<p><b>Lead</b></p>
<p><b>Share Red Cross Values</b></p> <p>Recruiting candidates with values that align with the American Red Cross's key values is the best way to elevate our inclusive beliefs and culture, establish a strong team and minimize volunteer turnover rates. Strive to create a message that shows we understand, respect and even share their values.</p> <p><i>Continued ...</i></p>	<p><b>Lead</b></p>



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<p><b>Emphasize altruistic vs. personal reasons for volunteering</b> - Research has shown that people who volunteer recognize that personal gain is possible from volunteering -work experience, self-confidence, and recognition from their community. However, such personal benefits are strongly perceived to be the wrong reasons for volunteering. Efforts to promote altruistic benefits are viewed more positively.</p>	
<p><b>Use a personal appeal</b></p> <p>A personal appeal is the most effective approach. Asking someone to volunteer one-on-one is still the best way to recruit volunteers. Although posters, flyers, and ads do increase awareness of volunteer needs and opportunities, the strongest appeal comes from a more personal touch. The appeal is even stronger if it is made by a member of a prospective volunteer's own diverse community. This is the perfect place to leverage TMRGs.</p>	<p><b>Lead</b></p>
<p><b>Use diversity media extensively.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop short video vignettes of volunteers from diverse communities that can be distributed. Seek out volunteers with great stories. Encourage them to be real. Be transparent. Don't script them. Don't make them play a role. Let them share their truth in their experience.</li> <li>• Distribute marketing materials to radio stations and social media outlets that have a diverse following.</li> <li>• Distribute camera-ready marketing pieces targeted to diverse communities to local magazines and newspapers that market to diverse communities. Take steps to ensure that both visuals and written pieces will attract persons from all communities.</li> <li>• Run PSAs geared to diverse communities on local cable and network television stations.</li> <li>• Enlist the support of radio disk jockeys who can promote volunteerism.</li> <li>• Enlist the help of barber shops, beauty shops, doctors' and dentists' offices and other places in the community frequently visited to distribute brochures about volunteer opportunities.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with your local communications and marketing teams to develop targeted campaigns for major recruitment efforts in your area.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Support</b></p>

**Sources for this information include:**

Corporation for National and Community Service  
<https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/recruitment/encorps/recruiting-diversity>

Casa For Children  
[www.casaforchildren.org](http://www.casaforchildren.org)

Minnesota Association of Volunteer Administration  
[www.mavanetwork.org/](http://www.mavanetwork.org/)