

## Effective Online Recruitment

### Writing Opportunity Postings that Generate Results

American adults average 7.4 hours of screen time per day, with the smartphone outpacing both TV and computers as the device most often used to access information (Pew Internet & American Life, 2014). In today's world of hyper-connectivity and the prevalence of smartphones, having a strong online presence becomes critical. Follow these suggestions to ensure it is one of your *best* recruiting tools:

- **Catchy Headline.** First thing a volunteer sees and will determine if they read on. Be sure it's interesting, concise and describes the need or responsibilities. Avoid "Volunteer Need to . . ." Examples: *Catch the Dust Bunnies* or *Make time. Make friends. Make a difference.*
- **Include Five Parts:**
  - **Need.** Tell people what the problem is; show the need for this work. What bad things will happen if this volunteer work is not done? Devote more space to **need** than logistics. *Are you worth volunteering for* comes before *Can I fit you in my schedule.*
  - **Solution/Position.** Show how volunteers can solve the need; describe the position using action verbs like
  - **Fears.** Alleviate concerns of "Am I capable?"; deal with fears that must be overcome (skills needed, type of clients, subject area, geography, etc.)
  - **Benefits.** Tell volunteers what they will gain in the process (skills, experience, flexible work schedules, new friends, etc.)
  - **Contact.** How do individuals get involved? Giving a name (esp. including a first name) makes the overall message more inviting.



**Even if space is limited, include all five elements in your message.**

*Example:*

***Offer Children a Safe Haven***

*Children are being abused. You can help by offering temporary shelter.*

*We'll show you how you can help these children and help yourself at the same time. Click "Respond" to let Lisa Aden know you'd like to learn more.*

- **Use Pictures.** Choose happy scenes; show volunteers and others enjoying themselves to demonstrate the difference volunteering can make; use two or more people in pictures to hint at teamwork and community.
- **Avoid Jargon.** Unless it will be understood by the targeted audience.
- **Tell the Whole Truth.** Afraid to reveal the risks or real nature of the client? Leaving things out drives volunteers away. Being transparent increases recruitment effectiveness.
- **Use Stories or Statistics.** Adds credibility and vividness.
- **Key Words.** Use the words volunteers will type into the search box within your descriptions.
- **Be Selective on Causes/Interests.** Search engines work best if associated causes and interests are *directly* served or addressed by your opportunity. Less is more here.
- **Did you Include . . .** **When** volunteers are needed . . . **Minimum Age** without adult supervision . . . **Training** offered . . . **Commitment** required—hours/week and length of service . . . **Setting** or location where volunteers will work . . . Proximity to a **Bus Route**.

**Remember:** Recruitment doesn't end when a volunteer responds to your posting. It continues through interviewing (they are checking you out, too) and throughout the volunteer's relationship with you. The day a volunteer feels *taken for granted* will likely be his/her last day with your agency.