

**United Way of Salt Lake***serving Davis, Salt Lake, Summit, and Tooele Counties*

## Volunteer Recognition Ideas

Recognizing volunteers doesn't have to cost a lot of money or be complicated. Below are a variety of ways you can recognize your volunteers.

### Free/Low Cost

- Thank the volunteer in person.
- Greet the volunteer by name.
- Send a handwritten thank you note.
- Send birthday/get well/congratulations/holiday cards (you can send free e-cards online).
- Post a volunteer of the month spotlight in a prominent place in your office.
- Highlight your volunteer or organizations newsletter.
- Include an article about a volunteer on your organizations website.
- Call out your volunteer on your social media sites like Facebook or Twitter if they are particularly engaged in technology.
- Invite them to help in the recruitment of new volunteers.
- Invite volunteers to attend your staff or board meeting to share their ideas or experiences.
- Host a potluck for staff and volunteers. Everyone can bring their favorite dish to share while meeting new people.
- Ask local businesses for coupons, gift cards or discounts that you can share as rewards.
- Put up a volunteer suggestion box. (Be sure to use some of their suggestions or talk to them about why some may not be feasible.)
- Encourage staff and board members to get to know your volunteers.
- Create a welcoming environment for your volunteers. (Set up a volunteer break room, have a secure place to store personal belongings, accommodate their needs and preferences, etc.)
- Provide letters of recommendation for school or work, if requested.
- Have special name badges for volunteers that call out achievements such as hours served, years served, program/unit they serve in, etc.)

### Formal Recognition

- Host an annual volunteer reception, social or recognition event.
  - Ask local vendors or companies to sponsor your event. It never hurts to ask for something free or at a discount. Some organizations have a budget for dollars or in-kind donations they can make through the year so reach out early so you don't miss out if they run out before the year is done.

- Consider hosting your event somewhere that will give you a deal. If you know how many people will attend perhaps a local restaurant could offer a few free appetizers knowing people will buy drinks. Some places may allow you to utilize space free if your attendees purchase food or drinks.
- Sponsor your volunteer to attend a conference or training that would strengthen their skills or allow them opportunities to network.
- Offer a “Lunch with a Leader” for outstanding volunteers. A board member or executive level staff member could take the volunteer out to lunch as a thank you and to share their experiences with the volunteer.
- Nominate your volunteer for a local or national recognition award. Even if they are not selected as the recipient, sometimes nominees are still named in press releases or publications offering a chance for your volunteer to be recognized for their efforts.

## Things to Consider

- Are there local volunteer recognition events you can participate in? Some communities have larger volunteer organizations that host a recognition event that allow local non-profit organizations to nominate their volunteers for awards. Check with your local volunteer center or State Commission on Volunteers to see if they offer any opportunities to recognize your volunteers.
- Even if you're not the type of person who needs or wants recognition, every volunteer will have a different level of need. Some may adore the spotlight while others would prefer a private thank you. Make sure you understand your volunteers recognition preference to avoid embarrassing a shy volunteer.
- You don't have to be creative to recognize volunteers! There are website like [Baudville](#) that are dedicated to all things recognition. Your organization could purchase all your recognition needs or use their free [ePRAISE](#) service to send a recognition ecard to your volunteers.