

Recognizing Impact



Traditional volunteer recognition programs often consist of certificates, banquets, and gifts, but those tactics appeal primarily to volunteers' extrinsic motivation. Today, however, more and more volunteers seek to know that their efforts make a difference and are motivated by being acknowledged for that impact. Tapping into and fueling individuals' intrinsic motivations nurtures a culture where volunteers give their best efforts, stay connected with your organization, and tell others about their experiences.

Use this checklist to inspire additional ways to acknowledge the impact that volunteers have on your organization. This period of developing new volunteer roles and new engagement processes is a great time to also pilot new ways of measuring and communicating the impact of volunteers and acknowledging these individuals for their tangible and lasting contributions.

- Opportunities to **share the impact of their work**:

- Have volunteers make a presentation to the board
- Invite volunteers to write an article on their project for a publication
- Ask volunteers to represent you at meetings
- Offer to write a letter of recommendation or commendation to the volunteer's workplace or school

- Opportunities to **gain or develop new skills**:

- Offer to send volunteers to a conference or cover their registration for a virtual conference
- Provide volunteers with training or mentorship on new technology, practices, or research
- Send volunteers (or cover their registration cost) to a lecture or program by an expert in a field related to their volunteer work or interests

- **Small but meaningful tokens** of appreciation:

- Donate a book to a library in volunteers' names
- Order and distribute cute gifts such as...
 - Miniature flashlight with a note, "Thanks to a bright light"
 - A package of tea with a note, "Since you became a volunteer, things are really brewing around here!"
- Create a survival kit and distribute before an event, including items that will help volunteers thrive even under stressful conditions (e.g., an energy bar, a water bottle, a throat lozenge)

- **Fun and memorable ways** to show appreciation:

- Create humorous awards such as...
 - Best attendance in meetings
 - Best Zoom background
 - Most inspiring pep talks
- Create a photo album or digital slide show with pictures of volunteer activities, programs, or events

Brainstorm additional ideas for volunteer recognition on the reverse side.