HOW TO CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR VOLUNTEERING

We enlisted the help of Galaxy Digital's public health expert to bring your organization these practical solutions for volunteering safely. Together, we can work to keep our community healthy!

PRACTICE VIRUS CONTROL BASICS

Start by adopting these universal precautions for virus control and prevention:

HAND SANITIZER

Invest in hand sanitizer stations.

WEAR MASKS

Require volunteers and staff to wear masks. Provide appropriate PPE.

DISINFECT SURFACES

Disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

Volunteers should avoid volunteering with others for 14 days if they have: (1) Been exposed to COVID-19 by an individual or community, (2) Attended an event with more than 250 people, (3) Traveled by cruise or airplane.

POST SIGNAGE

Print and post these CDC posters to remind your volunteers and staff about safety protocol.

OPT FOR CONTACT-FREE

The CDC recommends that organizations "consider limiting the sharing of frequently touched objects," including pens, touchscreens, and paper documents. Use these tools to replace processes that normally require frequently touched objects (no communal pens and clipboards needed!):

SIGN-UP

Encourage volunteers to view and respond to active volunteer needs online from home.

CHECK-IN

Train your volunteers on how to check-in to a shift on their own mobile devices to limit person-to-person contact.

ONLINE DOCUMENTS

Upload documents like waivers and training materials online, so that volunteers can read, e-sign, and return from online.

PREPARE STAFF

Ensure staff is trained on new protocol and guidelines:

Safely check-in volunteers

Operate new online tools

Conduct work safely

Identify illness symptoms

Protect the vulnerable

Inform your training using these CDC guidelines:

What You Should Know About COVID-19 to Protect Yourself and Others
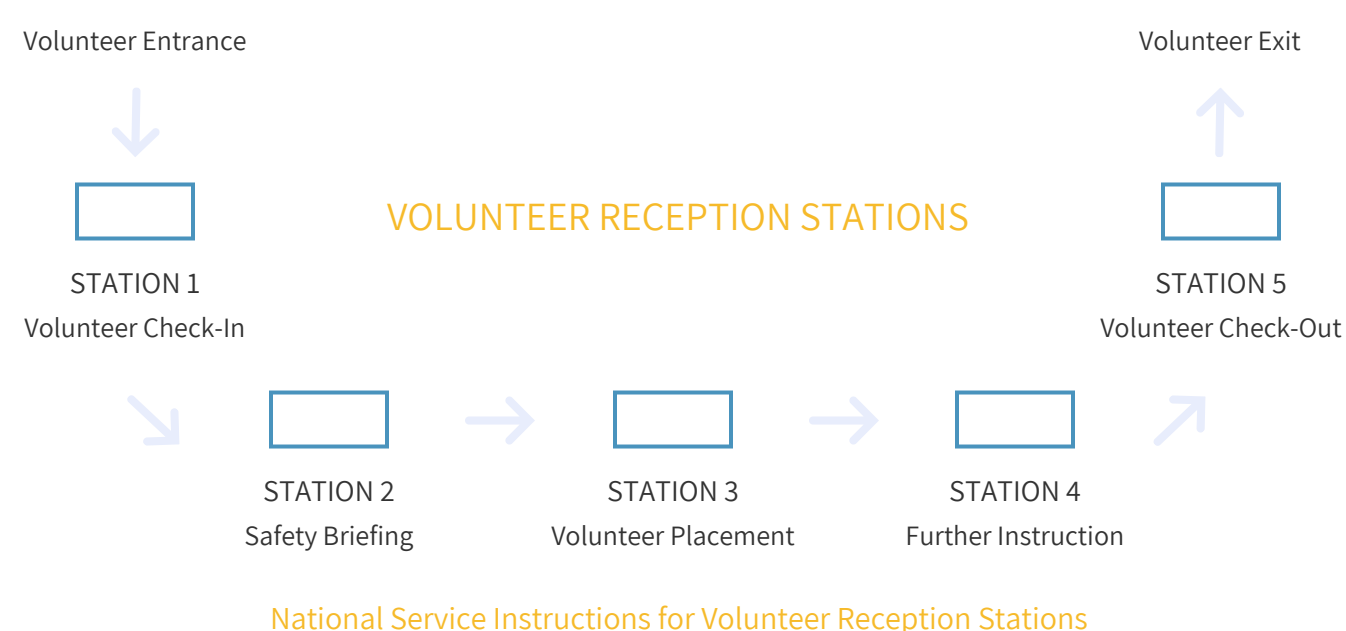
SET UP A VOLUNTEER RECEPTION CENTER

Is your organization ready to receive volunteers in-person? Take notes from highly-organized spontaneous volunteer reception centers. Volunteer reception centers are a way to gather and organize an influx of spontaneous volunteers in times of disaster. Even if you're not receiving disaster-specific volunteers, a volunteer reception center relies on a designated system for organizing volunteers safely. Here are some ways you can use this model to receive, process, place, and train your in-person volunteers safely:

ANTICIPATE SPACES WHERE PEOPLE CONGREGATE

The CDC recommends limiting group gatherings and maintaining a 6-10 foot distance between individuals when possible. People are most likely to cluster when they're waiting, like waiting to check-in or gathering for instructions. So, you'll need to anticipate when and where these instances may occur. From here, you can create stations that allow volunteers and those you're serving to receive the information they need while encouraging a safe, efficient flow of foot traffic.

DESIGNATE STATIONS

What happens when your in-person volunteers and community members arrive on site? Reception centers use stations to check-in volunteers, process their personal information, place volunteers with a task, and instruct volunteers. For non-spontaneous volunteers, much of this work can be done beforehand and online using your Get Connected software to maximize efficiency. However, setting up stations for larger groups can help you manage volunteers and community members safely.

Volunteer Entrance

Volunteer Exit

VOLUNTEER RECEPTION STATIONS

STATION 1
Volunteer Check-In

STATION 5
Volunteer Check-Out

STATION 2
Safety Briefing

STATION 3
Volunteer Placement

STATION 4
Further Instruction

National Service Instructions for Volunteer Reception Stations

Ensure lines and stations are properly spaced. As people move through stations, mark out six feet apart (using tape on the floor or cones). You may consider putting in place rope barriers to guide your lines (think airport security lines).

CREATE MULTIPLE VOLUNTEER RECEPTION AREAS

Volunteers are most likely to congregate at reception areas and check-in tables. Wherever possible, create more than one reception area. Alternatively, stagger arrival times by assigning a check-in time to each volunteer group.

CONSIDER A POINT OF DISTRIBUTION SET-UP

A Point of Distribution, or POD, is where the public goes to pick up emergency supplies following a disaster. Even if your organization is not distributing emergency supplies, POD-style setups will help you to think about how you can move volunteers and community members through space safely and efficiently. POD-style setups are especially useful for both supply collecting and distribution. You may employ a POD set-up in the following instances:

School Supply Drives

Food Banks

Soup Kitchens

Health Checks

Watch this informative FEMA video on how to set up a Point of Distribution.

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