THE HEART OF SERVICE

Building Exceptional Volunteer Programmes

When we nurture volunteers, we strengthen our mission.

Volunteers are the heart of Bermuda's nonprofit sector — bringing time, talent, and compassion that amplify impact. But successful volunteerism doesn't happen by chance. It takes structure, clarity, and care to connect people's skills and passions with community needs.

Here's how to build an exceptional volunteer programme that inspires commitment and delivers results.

1 DESIGN A PROGRAMME WITH PURPOSE

Strong volunteer programmes start with intention.

- Identify where volunteers can add the most value to your mission.
- Use staff input, community consultation, or surveys to map roles strategically.
- Develop clear role descriptions outlining responsibilities, skills, and time commitments.
- Create a simple Volunteer Programme Theory of Change linking activities to outcomes and impact.

✓ ***When roles are purposeful and structured, both volunteers and organisations thrive.***

2 RECRUIT AND SCREEN WITH CARE

Recruitment is about finding the right fit — for both the volunteer and the organisation.

- Advertise roles clearly, highlighting mission, expectations, and benefits.
- Use transparent screening processes, including references or police vetting where appropriate.
- Balance safeguarding with inclusion — protect without creating unnecessary barriers.
- Match volunteers' strengths and interests to suitable roles.

✓ ***Intentional recruitment ensures stronger engagement and lower turnover.***

3 ORIENT AND SUPPORT EFFECTIVELY

A volunteer's first experience sets the tone for their entire journey.

- Provide a structured orientation introducing your mission, values, and safety policies.
- Clarify expectations around confidentiality, conduct, and communication.
- Assign mentors or peers to guide new volunteers.
- Schedule regular check-ins for feedback and support.

✓ ***When volunteers feel welcomed and informed, they become confident contributors and ambassadors for your cause.***

4 ENGAGE, RECOGNISE & RETAIN

Retention starts with appreciation — not just awards, but daily respect.

- Offer feedback and celebrate achievements, big and small.
- Track volunteer hours and impact to demonstrate value to funders.
- Create growth opportunities such as leadership roles or project assignments.
- Host appreciation events and offer certificates or personal thank-yous.

✓ ***Recognition is about connection. Volunteers who feel valued stay longer — and give more deeply.***

5 STRENGTHEN POLICIES & PROGRAMME FOUNDATIONS

Behind every strong volunteer programme are strong systems and safeguards.

- Establish clear Volunteer Management Procedures for recruitment and retention.
- Maintain policies for Confidentiality, Non-Discrimination, Health and Safety, and Safeguarding.
- Include a Grievance and Conflict Resolution process to ensure fairness.
- Review and update policies regularly for relevance and compliance.

✓ ***Solid foundations build trust, protect everyone, and enable lasting impact.***

TAKEAWAY

Exceptional volunteer programmes are built on appreciation, structure, and belonging.

When volunteers feel respected and purposeful, they become your most loyal advocates — strengthening not only your programmes, but your purpose.

Volunteers don't just serve your mission — they sustain it.

Nonprofit Alliance OF BERMUDA

Learn more at nonprofitalliance.bm