



Getting Organized

Tips and tools for organizing your Sullivan Renaissance project and your group!



Schedule your time effectively!

A well thought out schedule allows you to manage your volunteer commitments, while still leaving you time for the things that are important to you. It is therefore your most important tool for avoiding “volunteer burnout”. Minimize your stress by avoiding over-commitment of yourself and others by doing the following:

- Identify the time you have available to work on your project.
- Block in the essential tasks you must carry out to finish your project.
- Schedule “high priority” urgent tasks as well as ongoing maintenance activities.
- Block out contingency time to handle unpredictable delays like the weather.
- Don't forget to make time for yourself!!!



Don't Procrastinate!

Let's face it – everyone procrastinates to some degree, and most often we can boil it down to two main reasons: you find the task unpleasant; or you find the task overwhelming. (Can anyone say BINDER?)

Here is how to avoid procrastinating carrying out elements of your project and putting together your binder:

- Ask someone else to check up on you. Peer pressure works!
- Imagine the unpleasant consequences of NOT doing the task.
- Break the project into a set of smaller, more manageable tasks.
- Start with some quick, small tasks if you can, even if these aren't the logical first actions.
- Treat it as an ongoing process, rather than “cramming” at the last minute.



Make a Work Chart!

A work chart is a list of all of the tasks that you need to carry out to achieve an objective or finish your project. This helps you think about what you need to do, so that you can get help where you need it and monitor your progress. Think of it like a “to do” list on steroids!

To draw up a work chart, simply list the tasks that you need to carry out to achieve your goal, in the order that you need to complete them. Assign timeframes to each task and use color coding to delegate responsibility to individuals if necessary. This is very simple, but is still very useful!

Keep your work plan handy. As you carry out the work, check off completed tasks and add any additional activities that come up.

This is a sample work chart for a typical Sullivan Renaissance single-element project (Category A) involving installation of a sign with landscaping. Use this as an example to create a work chart for your project!

Description of task	April	May	June	July	August
Monthly project committee meetings	■	■	■	■	■
Approve sign design from sign-maker		■			
File paperwork for necessary sign permits		■	■		
Sign fabrication			■	■	
Site prep: prepare soil, install landscape fabric, etc.			■	■	
Install sign				■	
Install landscaping & mulch				■	
Prepare binder (assemble receipts, take photos)				■	
Prepare for judges					■
Renaissance Awards Ceremony!!!!					■

How to complete your work chart:

Break your project into smaller tasks and list them in the chart. Each box to the right of the task represents one week. Shade in the boxes that correspond to the time needed to accomplish each task. For multi-element projects, use a separate work chart for each element. Use colored highlighters and assign tasks to different people!

True delegation means giving up a little of what we would like to hold onto (some measure of control) while keeping what we might prefer to give up (accountability).



Don't Forget to Delegate!

Think about it. Everyone finds it hard to delegate. Sometimes it seems easier just to do it yourself. That way we can make sure things are done completely the way we want them done. Delegation means taking true responsibility and inevitably means giving up some control. Sound a bit scary? Here are some tips for how can you overcome your mindset and become a better delegator:

Realize that you just can't do it all. Everyone has limits. If you fail to acknowledge yours, you will burn out. Maybe not tomorrow and maybe not even next year, but the stress and pressure of trying to do it all will get you eventually.

Start small. Delegation is a skill and learning it requires patience, persistence, and practice. Start by giving away small, uncomplicated tasks. As your confidence grows so will your willingness to delegate more.

Realize that "Your Way" is not always the "Only Way." A big part of letting go is the fear that the task will not be done "right." The problem is that your "right" often fails to consider that there are other ways to achieve the same result.

Give someone else a chance to shine. You might be bored with organizing the group's annual fundraiser, but if another volunteer has never done it, the challenge can be exciting, invigorating, and motivating. The successful outcome is not just a well-organized event. It's the opportunity for someone to shine and get recognized for their achievements.

Organize yourself right out of a job! Delegate every project and every task to a different volunteer. Empower and train those volunteers – by picking up those who fail and giving those who succeed even more responsibility. Then sit back and watch it work magic!



Make the most of committees!

One of the easiest and most effective ways to organize a group of people is around a series of tasks or projects. If your group is large enough, break tasks down into sub-committees of three or four people each who will meet independently and make decisions on their own. If you have a small group, assign individuals to assume responsibility for specific tasks. For example, one person can be assigned the task of maintenance and watering, while another can assume responsibility for fundraising and keeping track of expenses. **Capitalize on individuals strengths and talents and match the right person to the right job.**



Inventory your local talent!

When you hold meeting, or reach out to potential volunteers in your community, instead of passing around a generic sign up sheet to get addresses and phone numbers, use an index card and ask them to list their "special skills and talents" on the back. You would be surprised at the depth of hidden talents that you never knew existed in your community! Work them into your project.



Run your meetings efficiently!

Meetings are notorious for eating up people's time. You can lose some good volunteers if your meetings are not run efficiently. Here are some ways of ensuring that time is not wasted in meetings:

- Make an agenda and start the meeting on time.
- Don't recap what you've covered if someone comes in late: doing so sends the message that it is OK to be late for meetings, and it wastes everyone else's valuable time.
- State a finish time for the meeting and don't over-run.
- To help stick to the stated finish time, arrange your agenda in order of importance so that if you have to omit or rush items at the end to make the finish time, you don't omit or skimp on important items.



Creative Community Outreach Techniques

Getting the Word Out

Don't underestimate the importance of spreading the word about what you do. The more people hear about your group or project, the easier it will be to recruit volunteers and get the support you need.

- **Utilize multiple channels of communication to share information.** Maintain an e-mail database of anyone who has expressed an interest in your group or project to keep them informed. Use flyers posted around town, develop a simple one-page newsletter, or try mailing an outreach letter to everyone in your zip code.
- **Get to know the local press.** Send local newspapers, radio stations and other media outlets press releases about your activities, upcoming meetings and volunteer opportunities. Keep it brief, and send clear, high resolution digital photos to make it easy for the press to run your story or announcement.
- **Meet people where they are instead of waiting for them to come to you.** Offer to speak to other groups and organizations in your community about what you do. Your local scouting troop, church groups, and other civic organizations are a good place to start.

Involving your Municipality

- **Timing is key!** Most towns and villages start working on the next years' budget in October. If you make a request early enough, in most cases your municipality will set aside some funds for you if they are able.
- **Make the ask at a work session, not a legislative meeting.** Most town boards hold "work sessions" immediately before or in between regular monthly board meetings. It is a more casual environment and you are more likely to have a productive dialogue than during a board meeting.
- **Get to know the key players.** While your locally elected officials control the purse strings, it is often the Highway Superintendent, Parks Director or Building Inspector that gets the job done! They may be able to help with donated labor or equipment. All you need to do is ask the right person!

Getting and Keeping Volunteers

- The best way to recruit volunteers is simply to ask people to help. If you never have the conversation, how can someone say yes? And if you are turned down, keep in mind that you have still helped your community by reaching out to new people and lending visibility to worthwhile projects.
- Don't confuse recruitment with publicity. Sending out a flier or email notifying a long list of people about what needs to be done is information, but not necessarily an invitation to come forward. Never assume everyone "knows" what help is needed or whether she or he is right for the job.
- Be clear on what you want people to do before you recruit them. Avoid the vague approach of "Do you want to volunteer?" This can lead to all sorts of incorrect assumptions about what the tasks might be.
- Try writing a "Volunteer Job Description" and posting it around town. The description should include the time commitment and the particular skills you are seeking.
- Be honest. Tell prospective volunteers about the time and effort the role entails, even if you think it may sound like a lot. If you need someone several hours every week, say so.

Though government has an important role to play in meeting the many challenges that remain before us, we are coming to understand that no organization, including government, will fully succeed without the active participation of each of us. Volunteers are vital to enabling this country to live up to the true promise of its heritage.

- Bill Clinton

- Explain why you decided to ask this particular person to help – what skills or personality traits make her or him the logical choice. After all, you are implying this person has the talent to do the job, and that's quite flattering.
- Never recruit anyone by asking her or him to do it as a "favor" to you. Instead, try to communicate that you don't want them to miss a marvelous opportunity to participate in an important project!

The Essential Secrets of Finding and Keeping Quality Volunteers

What?

What exactly are you asking them to do?

- Volunteers thrive when given a specific task that has a clear beginning and end and a well defined purpose
- Assess your needs in terms of tasks and timelines
- Leaders = 5% of Work Force
- Active Volunteers = 15% of Work Force
- Occasional Volunteers = 80% of Work Force
- Critics = 99.9% of Non-Work Force

What are their skills and preferences?

- Volunteers work best when performing tasks that match their skills and interests
- Volunteers must have the freedom to complete the task when and where it is most convenient for them
- All volunteers need a safe and friendly work environment

Tips for Finding Them:

- Be specific about the task you need performed when approaching a new volunteer Example: "Would you help me with...?" "Could I count on you to...?"
- Start volunteers with tasks that require a minimal time commitment and be clear about when their task will end. Example: "Would you be able to work the registration desk at the seminar for two hours next Tuesday?" "Could I count on you to make a few calls to compare prices on sod? It will take less than an hour and you can make them from your home or office."
- Let them know you value their time and skills

Tips for Keeping Them:

- Make deadlines reasonable
- Provide written instructions
- Connect their task to the Big Picture (Why are we doing this?)

- Make sure volunteers have the information and tools they need to get the job done

Who?

Who volunteers?

- Each year 95 million Americans volunteer more than 20 billion hours of service. The total assigned value of this volunteerism exceeds \$200 billion dollars annually.
- Volunteer age bracket: 25 to 65
- 45% of all Men and 52% of all Woman volunteer
- Volunteering increases with education
- Volunteering increases with income
- Name 3 people who fit this profile

Why?

Why they do it.

1. Affiliation:
2. Socialization:
3. Creative Expression:
4. Recognition:
5. Personal Interest & Growth:
6. Leadership Drive & Sense of Duty:
7. Desire to Make a Difference:

Tips for Finding Them:

- Don't assume you know what a potential volunteer prefers. Ask them! "Do you prefer working at home or out on the site?"
- Don't rely on a sign-up sheet or wait for people to call you. Recruit candidates in person and one-to-one.
- Don't limit your list of potential volunteers to the people you know. Look for talent outside your circle of associates, friends, and family members.

Tips for Keeping Them:

- Offer opportunities for media exposure
- Make activities fun and build in (some)time for socializing
- Make the work challenging but not overwhelming
- Team new volunteers with motivated veterans
- Express gratitude, give awards, and be generous with recognition
- Solicit feedback from everyone

Wow!

Leaders provide the wow factor.

Attention:

- It's a Privilege to Give
- Assume the Sale
- Focus On Yes
- Raising Leaders

Imagination:

- Big Picture Politics
- The Elevator Speech
- Professionalism

Communication:

- Network
- No Whining
- Sincerity Sells
- Speak Up

FINDING HELP FOR YOUR PROJECT:

HOW TO REQUEST ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS

There are times when you have a Sullivan Renaissance project to complete and just don't have enough volunteers to get the job done. At other times, you might need specialized assistance. Sullivan Renaissance can help you, and it's easy. Just call, fax or e-mail us using the form on the reverse. We will try to match you with one of our many partner agencies to provide you with help. Of course, some lead time is necessary to put it together, so please plan ahead and make your request early.

WHO ARE OUR VOLUNTEER PARTNERS?

Sullivan Renaissance has partnered with several agencies and organizations that may be able to assist you, depending upon their availability. Let us know what you need and we will contact them on your behalf.

- Alternatives to Incarceration
- Camp Shomria (Liberty)
- Daytop Parksville
- Daytop Swan Lake
- Delaware Valley Job Corps
- New Hope Community
- Occupations, Inc.
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program
- Sullivan ARC
- Sullivan County BOCES
- Workforce Development Board of Sullivan County, Inc.

WHAT KIND OF HELP CAN THEY PROVIDE?

Most of our partner agencies and organizations can provide some level of physical labor such as general clean-up, site preparation, planting, painting, etc. Others may also be able to supply volunteers to assist with special events, fundraisers, or culinary support. If you are unsure about whether the help you need is a good fit for one of our partners, just give us a call.

Remember, volunteers from our partner agencies are intended to supplement your own volunteers, not replace them. Sullivan Renaissance will make every attempt to find volunteers to help you, but we cannot guarantee volunteer assistance. Clearly, the more lead time you give us, the better able we will be to fulfill your request.

REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS FROM PARTNER AGENCIES

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name of group or organization _____

Project _____

Contact person _____

Phone (day) _____ Phone (eve) _____

Mobile _____ Email _____

Please describe your project in general terms and the kind of help you are requesting.

If there is a particular partner agency you would like to work with, please indicate that in the space below.

ASSISTANCE REQUESTED *(please check all that apply):*

VOLUNTEERS

Number of workers _____

When are they needed? Date _____ Time (begin & end) _____

Where will they be working? _____

What do you need them to do? _____

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Backhoe Dump Truck Lift Other _____

OTHER

Please explain: _____

For more information contact:

Richard Sush

Phone: (845) 295-2441

e-mail: rsush@sullivanrenaissance.org

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date received: _____

Agency recommended: _____