

**Supporting  
Communities  
to Volunteer**



**volunteer ireland**  
obair dheonach éireann

**Family  
Volunteering  
Resource  
Pack for  
organisations**





## Family Volunteering Programme checklist

### Volunteer Activities

#### Preparing for Family Volunteers

	Yes	No	Notes
Do you need to develop new methods of recruiting family participation?			
Do you need to develop family volunteer assignments?			
Can you apply your existing screening process for individuals to family groups?			
Do you have current programs that can be made family friendly?			
Do you have activities that will be attractive to families?			
Do you have tasks and assignments that can be developed or altered to be appropriate to the ages, education levels, cultural identifications and experiences of family volunteers?			
Do you have orientation and training material that is sensitive to culturally diverse populations or that cross generational lines?			
Are there additional training programs that need to be considered?			

### Volunteer Recognition

#### Recognising family volunteers

	Yes	No	Notes
Do you need to develop new methods of recruiting family participation?			
Do you have ways of recognising each family member uniquely?			
Do you have a budget for reimbursing volunteer expenses? travel expenses, childcare, volunteer meals, gifts and vouchers			
Do you have policies around volunteer recognition?			





## Volunteer Scheduling

### Effective and flexible arrangements and accommodation

	Yes	No	Notes
Do you have a facility that can accommodate family groups? i.e. physically accessible and/or child-safe.			
Do you have a process to accommodate families with young children? i.e. Is child care available?			
Do you have staff trained to work with children, youth and all types of families?			
Do you have the ability to provide flexible scheduling sometimes required for family volunteering?			
Do you have a process to accommodate for the absence of an entire family on occasion?			

## Volunteer Resource Management

	Yes	No	Notes
Do you have proper intake, data recording? i.e. ability to document family statistics and relationship of the family participant?			
Do you have policies around discipline and performance management?			
Do you have policies around discipline and performance management?			
Do you have staff trained to work with children, youth and all types of families?			
Do you have insurance?			
Do you have policies around safety and rules?			





## Next-Steps Workbook

What programme changes are required to ensure that family volunteering can be effectively implemented?

Refer to the questions outlined in the programme checklist and study the resources provided to identify which program areas require changes and / or further development.

### Volunteer Activities

### Volunteer Recognition

### Scheduling

### Volunteer Resource Management



## Family Volunteering Spectrum: Levels of Engagement

This spectrum highlights different methods or strategies for organisations to engage family volunteers. Each box links to an information package with practices and opportunities for implementing an effective family volunteering initiative.

<b>Volunteer Activities</b>	Offering child care to enable family members to volunteer	Offering distinct activities for children or youth in a family	Pairing volunteers by family age groups	Offering activities that an entire family can do as a group	Arranging unique activities for different age groups / abilities at the same time
<b>Volunteer Recognition</b>	Volunteer Awards / Appreciation	Gifts / Certificates / Vouchers	Meals and snacks	Travel Expenses	Family care: child care costs / aging parents
<b>Scheduling</b>	Occasional	Short Term / Seasonal	On-Call	Flexible	On-Going
<b>Volunteer Resource Management</b>	Evaluating a family volunteer program and volunteer performance	Periodic review of family volunteer opportunities	Formal prearranged evaluation meetings	Incorporating feedback from family members into program	Offering decision making authority to family members



## Family Volunteering Activities

Organisations can develop activities specifically for families with young children. While there may be a limit to how much independence you can grant children, young children have abilities that can be tremendously helpful for organisations. Finding tasks which children feel confident with and enjoy is a useful strategy. Providing options for children and letting them pick the activity they are most interested in can also lead to more fulfillment for children.

If an organisation is seeking to engage family volunteers on a more episodic level, or for a specific event, different families can be paired together around a variety of tasks. This can be a fun exchange for children or youth, providing them an opportunity to work with other people of a similar age. If an organisation requires a large number of volunteers for a specific activity or event, providing collaborative volunteering opportunities for different families can be a way to gather numbers while also creating meaningful experiences for volunteers.



There are a number of group opportunities that can be made available by an organization to a family. This can sometimes be a more favourable option, as less coordination is required if adults are able to supervise their family members. Clear channels of communication are extremely important when working with a diverse group of people. Ensuring reciprocity of communication between the organisation and family can serve to establish a positive volunteer environment.

As an example, a family can be involved in preparing food at a food bank, with each member involved in an age appropriate task. Families can collectively help with activities at a community centre or staff a booth at a festival. Depending on the type of organization, it may be possible to restructure particular activities in ways that make them more family friendly.

In some provinces, youth are required to complete a particular number of community involvement hours as part their curriculum. This has been used as an opportunity for families to volunteer together.

Volunteer recognition is a theme that has surfaced as being an important element for all demographics of volunteers. A gift does not necessarily translate to higher intrinsic value, but by showing that the volunteer's opinions, ideas, experiences or hobbies have been heard, an organisation can more evidently display appreciation. Listening to volunteer's interests, and then finding a way to support them, can go a long way in increasing engagement levels.

Volunteers can be supported and recognised in a variety of ways. Providing food or snacks during a break can be appreciated. If a family is volunteering after work or school, offering a selection of a few healthy snacks prior to their volunteering activity can help satisfy hungry children and allows for some brief socialising before diving into the activity.



Providing a dinner, whether cooking something in a kitchen or taking a family out for dinner at a local restaurant can give parent figures a break from dinner responsibilities while fostering social exchange between a family and organisation. This can be done at a milestone of their volunteering or as an end-of-year appreciation.

Organising a pizza party is another way to show appreciation to volunteers. It gives time for volunteers to unwind and can be an opportunity to connect volunteers with each other, or with staff.



Travel costs can sometimes be an impediment for families to be able to commit to volunteering opportunities. An organisation can provide assistance by providing bus tickets or reimbursing transportation costs. Youth volunteers have identified transportation costs as a barrier to volunteering. It has been expressed that the provision of bus tickets for volunteering can be especially helpful for students who have to travel far from their schools or homes to volunteer. Organisations can talk to family volunteers during orientation to identify whether travel support would be needed or helpful to a family.

Families are often busy with a variety of commitments. Between work, children, aging parents, homes, hobbies, friends and appointments, it can be challenging for a family to commit to regular and consistent volunteering. Organisations can improve volunteer recruitment by offering a variety of volunteer scheduling opportunities from which families can decide the option that is most convenient. Providing a variety of options or talking with families about what is most convenient for them (while still remaining effective for the organisation), can serve to improve satisfactions levels of volunteers. In some cases, offering short-term or one-time opportunities, also called episodic volunteering, can be the most viable option for families. Occasional volunteering can require creativity on the part of volunteer-involving organizations to design suitable positions that fit the volunteer's schedule.

Short term or interim volunteering involves providing volunteer opportunities to families on a regular basis but for an intermediate period of time (for instance a family may volunteer weekly for a six-month period). An organisation may find this option desirable if they are planning a large event which requires advanced planning and support. Families can contribute time leading up to and during the event.

Organisations can allow family volunteers to contribute on a specific project with a specified term of commitment. Organisations can provide families the opportunity to design their own project, terms and activities. This gives volunteer families the ultimate flexibility and influence in their organization. Families may opt for seasonal volunteering, whether in the form of a winter drop-in program, summer nature walks or skiing buddies. There are a variety of opportunities to target potential volunteers who may wish to participate around seasonal activities.