



### **Volunteer Programs Do Not Pay for Themselves, Or Do They?**

Is the volunteer program included in your nonprofit's grant strategy?

Volunteer programs have expenses associated with their activities and the ability to grow the program. Why not get them covered by grants?

You're not just asking for "money for the volunteer program." To get started, it's:

Program support (the mission-oriented programs, not just the volunteer program)

General operating support

Capacity building support

Supplies and equipment

Training support

Percentage of staff salaries and fringe benefits used for volunteer initiatives (regardless of their primary role or job description)

Support planning a new or expanded volunteer program

Support to purchase or upgrade software for volunteer data, metrics, and activities

In many organizations, volunteers are necessary for program implementation and administrative task completion. Including volunteer expenses in department budgets throughout the organization takes little time to initially set up. However, the advantage is that volunteer expenses get partially or fully funded.

Then, the budget for all of the actual expenses of the volunteer program - badges, t-shirts, recognition and appreciation, background checks, software, etc. - can be developed to find funding (including grants) for those costs.

Additional suggestion: Be sure to do a search on all banks and credit unions in your region - search for their community giving or grants program. Build those relationships. Financial institutions always want to partner for their employees to volunteer with your organization! And their grant or sponsorship application will probably ask about volunteer opportunities. ©