

HARBOUR AUTHORITY VOLUNTEER RETENTION

While volunteer recruitment is essential, the retention of existing volunteers and the avoidance of volunteer fatigue may be even more important for HAs.

TIPS ON CREATING A REWARDING VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

BE PROFESSIONAL

- Run things in an organized and efficient manner. If people see that you've got your act together, they're more likely to feel that this is a good use of their time.
- See technology as an opportunity and consider the greater role it can play.
- Don't push volunteers to always do more.
- Increase focus on important aspects such as improving board governance.
- Set clear expectations, roles and responsibilities and respect them.

MAKE THE WORK MEANINGFUL

- Lay out the goals, projected impact and value of the volunteer commitment.
- Create interesting roles and define responsibilities.
- Clarify 'the what', and be more flexible regarding 'the where, how and when' of volunteer activities.
- Foster a sense of belonging and a sense of value.

MAKE THE EXPERIENCE SOCIAL

- What keeps volunteers returning year after year is the connections they build with fellow volunteers and staff.
- Make it a positive experience: recognized, fun and network based.
- Establish an atmosphere of openness and a willingness to trust, to take risks, and to try new things.

THINK ABOUT SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT

- Take the time to learn about their skills, talents and knowledge and find ways to foster or develop them.
- Equip volunteers with information (orientation and training).
- Provide support from staff and foster volunteer well-being.
- Choose effective leaders.

MAKE IT A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP

- Get to know what motivates your volunteers individually, including what they are looking to achieve by volunteering.
- Build strong and meaningful relationships.
- Highlight their impact: board members should be aware of volunteers' contributions to the organization.
- Be flexible, open to feedback and accommodating.
- Be sensitive to gender, culture, language and age.
- Keep connected - make sure they know they can come back.

EXPLORE NEW WAYS OF DOING THINGS

- Network with neighboring HAs to share existing resources, knowledge and collaborate on projects.
- Build partnerships with municipalities, regional development organizations, academic institutions, financial institutions, etc.

CONSIDER INCENTIVES

- Promote the current insurance coverages available for HA volunteers.
- Get creative if you can:
 - Have a draw among the volunteers for free berthage for a year.
 - Facilitate training for a volunteer who would like to take management courses or attend a conference.
 - Offer a scholarship transferable to a child or grandchild of the volunteer.

Most importantly, recognize the contribution your volunteers make. The more you can do to make them feel needed and useful and appreciated, the better chance you have to keep your volunteer program robust and the HA healthy.