**COMMERCE**

**Montana Main Street Volunteer Tips**

**Why People Volunteer**

- ✓ They are looking for a connection.
- ✓ Volunteer opportunities offer something to do.
- ✓ Volunteering is good for resume´ building.
- ✓ Volunteers are passionate about the cause.
- ✓ Somebody asked them to volunteer.
- ✓ They were "volun-told."

**How to Connect the WHY with your Main Street Story**

- ✓ Consider framing your organization's purpose so it creates incentives for people to contribute time and skills.
- ✓ Consider categorizing volunteer opportunities according to the Four Point Approach.
- ✓ Consider:
  - o Who is your audience?
  - o How will you reach them?
  - o How will they reach you?
- ✓ Build out a system for recognizing and thanking volunteers.

**Remove the Barriers**

- ✓ Timing (i.e. time of day, time commitment, flexibility).
- ✓ Are children welcome?
- ✓ Can you offer stipends or meals that might reduce financial burden?
- ✓ Place individual volunteers into pairs or teams. Ask them to share contact information so they can connect before and after volunteering.
- ✓ If you are able/willing to track and sign off on volunteer hours as community service, try to promote opportunities accordingly.

- ✓ Provide clear directions about when, where and what the volunteer will be doing.
- ✓ Provide different levels/types of volunteering. Examples:
    - o Distinguish between ongoing vs. one-time commitments.
    - o Organize opportunities by time requirements, abilities/needs, size of volunteer team.
    - o Identify which volunteer roles are "essential" vs. "nice to have."

## Managing Volunteers

- ✓ Maintain a database with contact information.
- ✓ Consider using online sign-up tools or social media.
- ✓ Send regular reminders.
- ✓ Provide a list of guidelines for do's and don'ts. Be willing to dismiss volunteers or reassign roles as appropriate.

## Retain Volunteers

- ✓ Get to know your volunteers. What are their interests? What are they good at?
- ✓ Create opportunities for ongoing engagement, more responsibility or new challenges for those who want them.
- ✓ Increase connections with team members.
- ✓ Encourage and recognize everyone's efforts.
- ✓ Make it fun!