

Volunteer and Learner Recruitment Ideas

The Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC) works in partnership with volunteer literacy programs to recruit and refer learners and volunteers to adult literacy programs. The following outreach ideas and resources have been gathered from many sources, mainly through input from literacy program volunteer coordinators.

Targeting Learners

Potential learners are:

- People who want to prepare for the GED test
- People who want to complete their high school diploma
- People with low literacy skills or people who want to learn English as a Second Language
- People who want to be tutored one-to-one
- People with low incomes
- People who want a better job
- People who want to go on to college
- People who are on public assistance
- People who want to learn more
- People who need/want to become a citizen
- People who need to improve their skills to keep their jobs or obtain a job
- Friends, relatives, acquaintances of current learner

Targeting Volunteers

Potential volunteers are:

- Friends, relatives, acquaintances of current volunteers
- Those who believe in the mission of your organization
- Retired seniors
- Day volunteers
- Evening volunteers
- College students of all ages
- Day workers
- Night workers
- Displaced workers
- Parents
- Single people
- People new to the area
- People of all levels of income
- Former learners
- People with disabilities
- People of all ethnicities

Key Places to Recruit Learners (many of these sites are also good places to recruit volunteers)

- Other adult literacy programs
- Laundromats
- Subsidized Housing/Apartment buildings/trailer courts
- Grocery/Shopping stores: staff break rooms, bulletin boards, flyers in bags
- Travel offices
- Factory break rooms
- Human resource departments
- Buses
- Transit ticket offices
- Employment offices
- Employment agencies
- Workforce Centers
- Churches
- Food shelves

- Shelters
- Community/neighborhood centers
- Welfare and social services offices
- Public health offices
- Family services agencies
- Correctional facilities
- Clinics and hospitals
- Dentist offices
- Doctors' offices
- Day care centers
- Temporary employment agencies
- Check cashing sites
- Food stamp sites
- Bank marquees
- Salvation Army
- Billboards
- Lawyers offices
- Police department/sheriff
- office/county jails/probation offices
- Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
- Labor unions
- Business/industries: in lunch rooms and personnel departments
- Banks: bulletin boards, back of bank statements, envelop stuffers
- Public schools: for children to give to parents
- High school counselors
- Bowling alleys
- Television: cable access announcements
- Radio: public service announcements (PSAs)
- Through current learners and volunteers

Key Places to Recruit Volunteers (many of these sites are also good places to recruit learners)

- Coffee shop bulletin boards
- Libraries/book mobiles: bulletin boards, bookmarks
- Bookstores
- Staff break rooms
- Business/Retail community boards
- Colleges/universities/technical and trade schools
- Retirement centers
- Corporate community relations departments
- Volunteer fairs (corporate, church, college)
- United Way
- Online volunteer matching sites
- Online social networking communities
- Local volunteer centers
- Faith communities
- Bank marquees
- Billboards
- Newspapers: ethnic, community
- Community Education catalog
- Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
- Post Office
- Service organizations: Jaycees, Rotary, etc.
- Chamber of Commerce
- Tourist information bureau

The following recruitment ideas may apply to the recruitment of volunteers or learners.

Recruitment Through Printed Text

- Design specific recruitment brochures for community audiences
- Business cards
- Posters
- Bookmarks
- Table tents
- Magnets
- Ads in the *You Can Help* section of the St. Paul Pioneer Press and the Star Tribune
- Encourage volunteers to distribute recruitment materials (flyers, posters, etc.) in their community and workplace
- Newspapers: culturally specific, free, neighborhood and larger papers; submit a hard news story, editorials, letter to the editor, calendar items or

- want ads
- Article in your local school district's Community Education newsletter
- Newsletters: parent newsletters, community education, and corporate newsletters for employees
- Ad in your local school district's community education catalog (in the adult education section and also the general interest section)
- Church bulletin
- Packets/mailing to churches, school and businesses
- Literacy flyers inside video/DVD jackets at local video store
- Flyers in community locations, businesses, etc
- Flyer on fast-food restaurant tray

Recruitment through Media/Technology

- Create a program Web site
- Postings on social networking sites
- Write a blog about your volunteer program
- Regular weekly radio spots on local stations
- A TV program for a local station
- Post an ad on the local cable TV station calendar of events
- Local cable access station advertisement (collaborate with local library)
- Create a video promoting your literacy program and post it online
- Public service announcements (PSAs) on the radio. Write PSA's and have learners read them over local radio and television.
- Public service announcements (PSAs) on radio or T.V.
- Story about your volunteer in the local paper

Recruitment through Public Speaking

- Slide show (12 minutes or less) depicting ways volunteers are used in your organization
- Participate in pre-retirement talks at local corporations
- Contact college instructors and service learning staff to announce your needs in their classes, at volunteer fairs, etc.
- Hold informational meetings
- Contact career classes at schools
- Contact schools that have a service-learning requirement
- Contact professional associations related to your field and ask for help
- Volunteer fairs or booths at community events
- Create a speaker's bureau of trained volunteers
- Networking with local organizations
- Contact the Public Affairs office of your city for a list of neighborhood and community organizations
- Attend community meetings
- Ask to speak to local civic and religious groups such as Rotary and the Lions Club
- Investigate other groups you could speak to such as book groups, literary clubs, service sororities and fraternities
- Hold an open house in September. Invite both potential and existing tutors and learners. September 8 is International Literacy Day
- Connect with local religious organizations

Recruitment through Special Events

- Implement high school mentorship program with ESL adult learners
- Hold a Day of Caring to publicize and do volunteer activities
- Hold a Round Up event during September, collaborate with a local restaurant and have them round up every customer's bill (to the next

dollar) and the difference goes to the Literacy Center!

- Have a booth at the county or state fair
- Community Awareness Day at the mall
- “My Mom Can’t Read” - volunteers read this book to kids in school and give them a bookmark with the learning center’s phone number. Tell the kids to show this to their parents.

Notable Dates

- National Volunteer Week is sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation: www.pointsoflight.org
- December 5: International Volunteer Day, designated by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1985.
- September 8: International Literacy Day.

Miscellaneous Recruitment Ideas

- Provide recruitment materials (posters, flyers, brochures) to your volunteers and students and enlist their help. Form an outreach committee and empower them to develop an outreach plan. Conduct a student forum from which you can get student outreach ideas.
- Conduct a community audit to find out “What’s out there? What’s keeping volunteers and learners from coming in?” Hold a focus group of local social service organizations and businesses to understand their perspective on adult literacy and community needs.
- Develop a speaker’s bureau of volunteers who are willing to speak about your program or learning center at open houses, staff meetings, churches, etc.
- Collaborate with literacy centers in your area to create a flyer including a grid of names, numbers and class times of various area literacy centers in the same area.
- Develop a marketing plan to estimate costs of outreach activities.
- Develop a Literacy Action Council, a committee geared toward getting ABE awareness out into the community and to keep attitudes positive toward ABE.
- Keep your program information on the Minnesota Literacy Council’s Adult Literacy Hotline current. Over 3000 calls come into the hotline each year with many others using the online hotline at www.theMLC.org/hotline

Audience: College students

- College activity/volunteer fairs
- Post your positions on the college’s career exploration Web site.
- College English, education, foreign language, and history departments
- Flyers on campus and career centers
- Work-study programs and internships
- Community service departments at colleges. To obtain a list of Community Service Directors in Minnesota, visit MN Campus Compact at www.mncampuscompact.org
- Service learning programs with colleges and universities

Audience: Working adults

- Emails or letters to company community relations department, follow up with a phone call.
- Contact businesses in June/July – it's the off season.
- Collaborate with Chamber of Commerce. Attend meetings, participate in the Education Committee, and ask to place an article or ad in the Chamber newsletter.
- Develop partnerships with businesses to release their staff during work hours, keep track of tutor time, give certificates, etc.
- Develop relations with the human resource department at local companies. Write emails or letters, follow up with a call, ask what recruitment tools they would like, update your posting on their web site and contact them regularly.
- Collaborate with local businesses: check out their mission and design ways they can support your literacy project. Ex: invite the banks to work on checkbook balancing with students.
- Place a volunteer ad in a company's print or electronic newsletter.
- Insert a volunteer ad in the staff paychecks

Audience: Retired individuals and seniors

- Place an ad in senior citizens newsletters.
- Present at senior villages.
- Contact places of worship.
- Place an ad publications such as *Senior Times*.
- Recruit through Senior Corps www.seniorcorps.gov
- Recruit through RSVP <http://www.seniorcorps.gov/about/programs/rsvp.asp>