

Ways to Say “No” to a Volunteer

The following statements are adapted from the book *101 Ideas for Volunteer Management Programs* by Steve McCurley and Sue Vineyard and from suggestions provided by literacy programs. These examples can be modified for dismissal, reassignment, or termination letters and/or discussions. It is absolutely crucial that you dismiss a volunteer in a way that clearly states you are terminating their relationship with your program. Leaving volunteers hanging on to the hope you'll call if the right position comes up disrespects their good intentions and jeopardizes the integrity and reputation of your program.

Here are ways to say “no” to a volunteer:

- No.
- Would you consider a position on our Board of Directors?
- The position you are best qualified for is already filled.
- We do not have any position that is suitable for your skills at this time.
- I would suggest you contact _____.
- Our program does not demand the skills you are offering. Thank you for applying.
- Your interests and skills are not a good match for us, but _____ is looking for volunteers with your exact qualifications.
- I don't think this volunteer opportunity is the right fit for you. We don't wish to lose your skills and talents and would like to offer you a position doing _____.
- Let me refer you to the local Volunteer Resource Center.
- After you receive some additional training, contact the local Volunteer Resource Center for some more appropriate options.
- Have you considered volunteering in/at _____?
- I have some reservations as to whether or not this is the best opportunity for you. Would you be comfortable with me referring you to _____?
- Thank you for taking the time today to visit with me and explore the opportunity of becoming a volunteer tutor. Although a tutoring position in one of our classrooms would not be a good fit for the skills you possess, I believe your interest in adult literacy will lead you to find more appropriate opportunities.