

The Kansas State Extension Community Vitality Community Toolkit: Creating and Supporting Grassroots Community Organizations

Volunteer Overview Guide

About This Toolkit

Community organizations are powered by people who care about making a difference. This toolkit provides practical information, worksheets, and activities to help volunteer groups build strong organizations, recruit and support volunteers, plan for the future, manage funds responsibly, and communicate their impact. If your group is brand new, start with the Readiness Assessment before moving into the toolkit modules.

Readiness Assessment

What Is It About?

Before creating a new organization, it's important to determine whether there is community interest, support, and need. This step helps identify potential partners, volunteers, collaborators, and existing efforts that may already be addressing the issue.

Handouts & Resources

- Stakeholder Identification Table
- Reflection Questions
- Community Conversations Guide

Module 1: Structuring Success Part 1 – Growing Your Volunteer Board

What Is It About?

A strong volunteer board creates the foundation for a successful organization. This module helps groups understand board responsibilities, identify leadership talent, define volunteer roles, and create a structure that supports long-term success.

Handouts & Resources

- Strategic Visioning
- Board Member Essentials
- Where to Find Board Members
- Example Bylaws
- Sample Role Descriptions
- Board Commitment Template
- Board Member Role Agreement

Activity

Board Role Clarity Match Game

Module 2: Structuring Success Part 2 – Conducting Successful Meetings

What Is It About?

Effective meetings keep organizations moving forward. This module focuses on planning productive meetings, understanding officer responsibilities, making decisions efficiently, and involving volunteers in meaningful ways.

Handouts & Resources

- Successful Meetings Checklist
- Roberts Rules
- Attendance Sheet
- Agenda
- Minutes
- Treasurer Report
- Sustaining Progress Checklist
- Volunteer Tip Sheet

Activity

Improve Your Meeting Skills; Getting to Know You

Module 3: Creating a Financial Framework

What Is It About?

Community organizations need sound financial practices. This module introduces budgeting, fundraising, nonprofit structures, working with community foundations, and building relationships with donors and

supporters.

Handouts & Resources

- Example Budget
- Incorporation Framework
- Community Foundation Guide
- 501(c)(3) Information
- Fundraising Tips

Activity

REAL Connections Role Play

Module 4: Staying on Target – Developing a Vision and Mission

What Is It About?

Organizations are most effective when everyone understands the purpose and direction of the group. This module helps volunteers create vision and mission statements, develop goals, and build action plans that guide future work

Handouts & Resources

- Vision Worksheet
- Mission Worksheet
- SMART Goals
- Action Plan
- Elevator Speech Tips

Activity

Vision & Mission Worksheets

Module 5: Telling Your Story

What Is It About?

Sharing your organization's story helps attract volunteers, partners, donors, and community support. This module explores ways to track accomplishments, document progress, and communicate impact effectively.

Handouts & Resources

- Report Example
- Benchmarking Success
- Press Kit
- Ripple Effects Mapping
- Partner Communication Tips

Activity

Short Form Ripple Effects Mapping

Module 6: Volunteer Motivation and Maintenance - Recruiting, Recognizing, and Retaining Volunteers

What Is It About?

Recruiting volunteers is only the first step. This module focuses on understanding volunteer motivations, matching people with meaningful roles, recognizing contributions, and creating positive experiences that encourage long-term involvement.

Handouts & Resources

- Succession Management
- Volunteer Tip Sheet
- Interest Survey
- Self-Evaluation
- Recognition Resources

Activity

Paper Folding Exercise

Module 7: Volunteer Nature - Interpersonal Communication and Engagement

What Is It About?

People volunteer for different reasons and bring different experiences to the table. This module helps volunteers understand communication styles, build relationships across generations, and create welcoming environments where everyone feels valued.

Handouts & Resources

- Generation Connection
- Generational Differences
- Volunteer Tip Sheet
- Bonus Examples

Activity

Getting to Know You Cards

Using This Toolkit

Organizations may complete the modules in order or select the topics most relevant to their current needs. Together, these modules provide practical tools for:

- Building effective leadership teams
- Running productive meetings
- Managing finances responsibly
- Creating a shared vision
- Communicating community impact
- Recruiting and retaining volunteers
- Building strong volunteer relationships

This guide is intended as a quick reference so volunteers can easily see what each module offers and determine which resources will be most helpful for their organization.