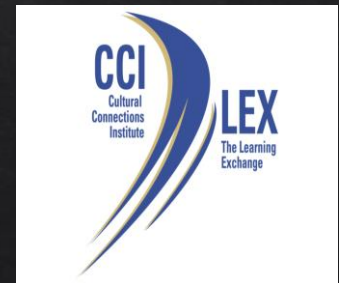


Tips on Volunteer Engagement

Sheida Azimi
Zhenya Tretiakova



CCI-LEX brief history

- English school for adult newcomers in downtown Edmonton with charitable status
- Multicultural learning environment with 1300 adult students/year from more than 80 countries
- Employs about 15 professional ESL teachers, AND **40-50 volunteers /week**
- Classes for both permanent and temporary residents

The LEX Program

Our largest program with an average of 800 students annually

For permanent residents, citizens and refugees

Relies on volunteer instructors who share their knowledge of Edmonton and Canadian culture; **50-60 volunteers required/week**

Funded by the Government of Alberta, Ministry of Labour



The Three Rs of Volunteer Engagement

Recruitment

Retention

Recognition

Recruitment

Clarify what work is needed to be done:

- Identify activities and timeline
- Communicate clearly the commitments the volunteer needs to make to the organization
- Communicate clearly the commitments the organization will make to the volunteer (e.g. Networking or training opportunities, reference)



VOLUNTEER! TEACH ENGLISH

Do you have the time and enthusiasm to help newcomers learn English?

LEX classes are taught by volunteer teachers who receive initial training and ongoing support. Join our team of 100+ volunteers. Visit our website to apply: www.cci-lex.ca.

YOU ARE

- Fluent in English & have clear pronunciation
- Flexible and able to work independently
- Ready to teach a 2 or 3 hour class a week
- Able to commit for minimum 6 months
- Familiar with good volunteer practice

WE OFFER

- ✓ Lesson plans and materials
 - ✓ Free monthly workshops
 - ✓ Classroom teaching experience
 - ✓ Multicultural environment
 - ✓ Bus tickets or parking
- and much more!

CCI – LEX

#428, 10621 100 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

780-944-0792

cci-lex.ca

Recruitment

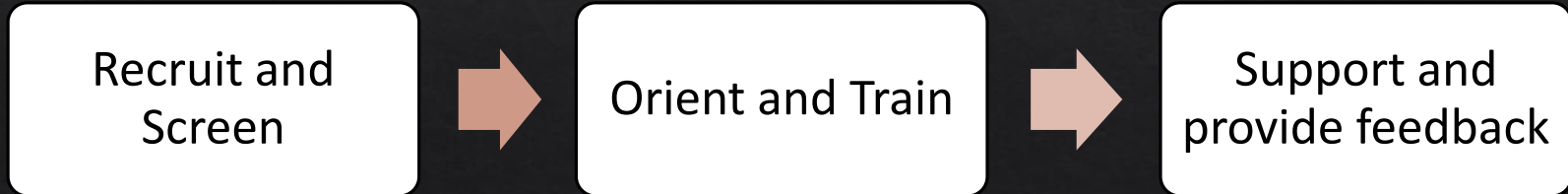
Who would be a good fit?

- Identify necessary skills, experiences and characteristics - **Develop training if needed!**
- Conduct interviews and background check if needed
- Identify groups you need to engage and minimize their specific barriers to involvement - (e.g. bus tickets, parking pass, special training)
- Develop a volunteer manual with clear policies and trainings- update it regularly

Recruitment

Why the work matters?

- The impact and the reason the work matters should be the bulk of your recruitment message



Retention

What are people looking for when they volunteer?

- To make a difference
- To show gratitude
- To realize a sense of accomplishments
- To share their skills and talents
- To maintain proficiency with an unused skill
- To acquire new skills and experience
- To build community
-

Interview...

Retention

Reasons

- ◆ To make a difference
- ◆ To show gratitude
- ◆ To realize a sense of accomplishments

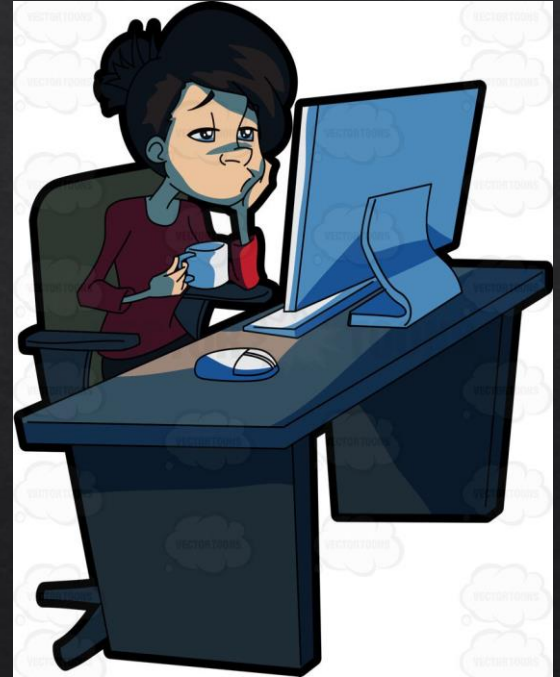
Questions to think about

- ◆ Does the volunteer's assignment provide a feeling of purpose and accomplishment?
- ◆ It's the job of coordinator to help volunteers make the connection between the task and organization's mission.

Retention

What about those dull, mundane tasks?

1. Sincere recognition of the tedious nature of the task
2. Expression of gratitude that the volunteer was willing to undertake the task for the sake of the organisation
3. Reinforcement that the assignment does not reflect your view of the volunteer's capabilities
4. Clear and specific illustration of how or why the task is important to organisation's mission



Retention

Reasons

- ◇ To share their skills and talents
- ◇ To maintain proficiency with an unused skill
- ◇ To acquire new skills and experience

Questions to think about

- ◇ Are there opportunities for personal growth for volunteers?
- ◇ Are they honing their skills, or learning new ones?

HOW?

Provide learning opportunities:

- ◇ Free webinars, workshops
- ◇ Suggest and share related books and articles
- ◇ Networking opportunities

Retention

Reasons

- ◇ To build community
- ◇ To expand their networks

Questions to think about

- ◇ Are you providing a welcoming environment for volunteers to develop relationships and expand their networks?
- ◇ Do volunteers feel that they're being heard? Are you asking for their input?

How?

- ◇ Know their names! Ask all staff to learn their names
- ◇ Introduce volunteers to staff and each other
- ◇ Ask for their feedback (about the tasks, organizational procedures and ...)

Tips on creating a friendly environment

- **Always** greet , welcome and say thank you
- Free coffee, tea and snacks for volunteers
- Create a volunteer wall with pictures and contributions
- Put a jigsaw puzzle in the coffee area and invite everyone to help
- Reply to emails as promptly as possible
- **Always** follow up: ask how the work went, if everything was ok, etc.



Ongoing Recognition – (ON A BUDGET)



Promote their success - Thank you for 50 Hours of your help



Personal occasions (Birthdays, babies and...) – Handwritten cards, gift cards



Recognize your volunteers milestones at your AGM

More Ideas:

- Welcome package (swags from your organization)
- **Go crazy on National Volunteer week in April**
- Provide a reference
- Volunteer Recognition events
- Gift Draws



Don't forget! Pinterest can be your friend!

Examples:

Mint Bags

- Thanks for your commit-"mint".
- Thanks for your encourage-"mint"
- Thanks for making each day an enjoy-"mint"

Selection of teabags

- Thank you for being "Tea"-rrific volunteer

And many more ...



Thank You!

Any Questions?

Daily

- ☐ Greet/welcome/thank you/conversation/small talks/know everyone's names
- ☐ Be always available, reply to emails promptly, be open, positive and willing to help
- ☐ Free coffee/tea/snacks/fruit; paid lunch if volunteer 2 shifts a day
- ☐ Follow up: ask how the shift went, if everything was ok, etc

Monthly

- ☐ BD cards/hours(first 50, every 100, extra help), Anniversaries. If BD or A on a shift day - cake to share with sts or staff, card signed by hand by everyone+ gift card+ flower (let's tell them here how we break down what we give when. It is written on the inside of the red box)
- ☐ We send cards/donations on their behalf if close relative passes away/a child is born, etc - we are more than a vol org; we are friends and support each other
- ☐ Parking/bus tickets
- ☐ Orientations & free welcome package (a bag/pen/pencil)
- ☐ free workshops
- ☐ Provide references - a lot of our vols (both sts and teachers) get paid jobs
- ☐ We used to (in the process of restarting it) offer informal teachers meetings that were run by volunteers themselves/we used to run an ESL professional reading group = we create opportunities for vols to interact and grow
- ☐ Maintaining a BD wall (let's show them a pic) and a volunteer wall (let's take a pic as well as a separate slide) - this also helps them remember each other and we highlight their importance, etc vol wall with years help retain vols because they see how many of others stay here for 5-10 years, some 20, etc.
- ☐ Coordinator observations - feedback/support

Yearly /Occasionally

- ☐ Wine and Cheese Vol Recognition Event + gifts (examples of cards from sts, flowers, etc)
- ☐ 2-3 people take online ACE course/attend ATESL conference
- ☐ Volunteers who've committed are given an opportunity to do an ESL practicum with us
- ☐ Annual teachers meeting
- ☐ Surveys - getting feedback from them and then act on, follow up and tell them what we've changed - we listen and improve, encourage them to be involvement in life of the organization - inclusive. They appreciate it and feel more connected to us.
- ☐ Xmas - gifts/potlucks party for everyone/ Summer celebration

- We should make this presentation more fun - add pics of vols with sts/events/gifts/walls/maybe show our snack bar/, etc
- We should also include the betterimpact somehow because it is super helpful
- Maybe it is too specific to our organization but we can tell them , we give books to keep while teachinh/materials are online in advance/shared teachers drive - it all helps with daily operations and maks it easier for vols
- We have calendar/ everything colour coded/labeled/ we send reminders/invites, etc - all of this reduces confusion and frustration.
- We also (lost my thought!)