



ICO RECRUITMENT GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Volunteers (like you!) are the key to a successful Inner City Outings (ICO) program. Many groups struggle with finding a sufficient number of volunteers. This guide is designed to help you *plan and execute a successful recruitment campaign*. Whether you want to improve your current recruitment practices or you've never developed a process, you'll find strategies and samples that work in this guide.

Based on experience from the last several years, we recommend seven fundamental steps to recruitment success:

1. Identify and set your recruitment goals
2. Plan a recruitment approach based on group needs
3. Identify where to find your volunteers
4. Gather and develop recruitment materials
5. Get the word out
6. Engage potential volunteers and keep them coming back
7. Evaluate your recruitment plan

The process will help you find, place, and keep the best qualified volunteers. We hope it also provides a rewarding experience for current volunteers, leaders and chairs. Thank you for taking this on.

Let's begin!

STEP ONE – IDENTIFY AND SET YOUR RECRUITMENT GOALS

Before you jump into recruitment action, first determine what your group would like to accomplish and write it down in clear and realistic terms.

Questions for Your Group:

Reach an agreement with your leadership team on these questions

- How many active leaders and volunteers do we currently have?
- How many new members do we need to run a more effective program?
- When do we need them?
- What tasks will they perform?
- What special skills will be required of them?
- Who are our ideal candidates?
- Who should be involved in helping select them?
- Do we need to broaden our volunteer outreach to under represented groups?

Record minutes from your meeting, to refer to throughout the recruitment process
Develop a recruitment goal based on the answers to the questions above.

Tips for Goal Setting;

- Planning is crucial to a successful recruitment outcome.
- You can have more than one goal.
- If you get off track anywhere in the process, return to this step to remember your goal.



Fill out STEP ONE on the Recruitment Plan Worksheet – you can download the worksheet online

STEP TWO: PLAN A RECRUITMENT APPROACH BASED ON GROUP NEEDS

Identify several volunteer roles your group would like to recruit for prior to launching your search. Write volunteer job descriptions to help facilitate the recruitment process.

Questions for Your Group:

- Do you know which volunteer jobs need filling?
- Do you have specific volunteer job descriptions?

Why writing Volunteer Job Descriptions is important:

- Job descriptions will help you and your colleagues determine the group's needs and expectations for new members.
- Job descriptions help encourage volunteers from within ICO to take on new jobs.
- Job descriptions document expectations of the job – a valuable recruitment tool. Potential volunteers want to know as much as they can about what is expected of them.

Key components of the job description:

- Position Title
- Date
- Responsibilities and Duties
- Qualifications
- Time commitment required
- Training needed, and from whom
- A “one-liner” about ICO + website URL for those unfamiliar with ICO
- A short sentence or two about any unique opportunities you offer—advanced training in a particular skill, for example, or anything that is unique about your community
- How to apply and to whom (with contact information)
- Make it eye catching. Add photos, tag lines or volunteer testimonials.

On the next page, you'll find a few job description examples. More job descriptions available at: <http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/ico/recruitment>

Sample Job Descriptions:

Inner City Outings Rafting Volunteer:

XX/XX/2XXX

“With ICO, I am taking kids from all walks of life into the outdoors, many for the first time, in hopes that they'll develop a love for the world around them.”

-ICO Volunteer

Sierra Club Inner City Outings volunteer leaders recognize that many youth growing up in urban environments have little or no access to nature due to lack of income, awareness, and skills. In close to 50 cities in the United States, dedicated ICO volunteers take youth who would not otherwise have access to the outdoors on safe and fun wilderness excursions. Many of these youth have never been outside their immediate neighborhoods, let alone into wilderness places.

We're looking for anyone, 14-years-old or older, who is committed to our mission of sharing the outdoors with others. No experience is necessary. We provide all the necessary training, which emphasizes safety, raft guiding skills, equipment care, camp skills, and working with groups.

Responsibilities and Duties

- Volunteer for a minimum of 10 river-days per year for two years after completing the training
- Attend monthly group meetings and yearly equipment work-parties
- Serve on a committee or project team
- Respect and maintain natural resources

Qualifications :

- Ability to deal with physical demands of the position
- Additional health and safety training is an asset
- Ability to work in teams
- Excellent communication skills

Additionally, **all** volunteers are must meet these requirements:

- Be a member of the Sierra Club
- Be certified in CPR
- Be certified in Basic First Aid or more advanced first aid training

Contact our Volunteer Recruiting Coordinator at volunteer@icrafting.org to apply. Check out ICO Rafting online at <http://ico.sierraclub.org/sfbayrafting/>



Anytown Inner City Outing Co-Chair **XX/XX/2XXX**

The ICO Group Chair provides leadership, direction, and oversight to the local ICO group volunteers. The ICO Group Chair is responsible for making sure the ICO group complies with national Sierra Club standards and requirements. The ICO Chair must be both visible and audible to the local volunteers, ICO National Steering Committee representatives, and ICO National Administrator.

Time Commitment: 2 Years

Responsibilities and Duties

- Manages volunteer recruiting, training, and recognition
- Ensures leaders are aware of and meet requirements
- Communicate with and manage volunteers and leaders
- Communicate with ICO National & Regional Rep and the local Sierra Club outings committee
- Develop and prioritize goals for the ICO Group.
- Review and approve outings
- Oversees the management of group finances with treasurer
- Manage risk on outings
- Be familiar with the ICO and Outings sections of Clubhouse.
- Keep records
- Create and follow succession plan

Qualifications:

- At least one year experience volunteering with ICO
- Ability to work in teams
- Excellent communication skills
- Excellent leadership and delegation skills
- Strong problem solving and critical thinking skills
- Excellent organization skills and attention to detail
- Ability to take initiative
- Personable and able to relate well with diverse populations and age groups

What you can expect:

- On the job training with current chair.
- A deeper understanding of how ICO works.
- A connection to more people.

Contact chairs@ico.org to find out more.



Fill out STEP TWO on the Recruitment Plan Worksheet

STEP THREE: IDENTIFY WHERE TO FIND YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Your next step is to figure out exactly what kind of volunteers you're looking for and where to find them.

Questions for Your Group:

- Who would most likely want to join ICO?
- Are we trying to fill key leadership positions that a current volunteer could do?
- Where should we look for potential volunteers?
- Where are some new places we can go to recruit a diverse volunteer base?

Tips for finding volunteers:

- Don't overlook your own backyard when recruiting for key leadership positions! Think about particularly good volunteers who have worked with your organization in the past, or who volunteer with your local Sierra Club chapter.
- Be mission-directed; if your goal is to engage volunteers who are expected to become leaders, then recruit with that expectation.
- Create an action plan that will put into play different approaches to recruit a broad spectrum of people. Diversity recruitment tools and strategies should receive the same attention to creativity and innovation as your overall recruitment efforts.
- Look for groups of people in transition from one phase of their lives to another. For example: People who are leaving or will soon be retiring or graduating from school.
- Survey your current and former volunteers about their motivations to serve and reasons for volunteering. Enlist their help in reaching those people.
- Focus on people who are already active in their community through volunteer service, and particularly on people who have expressed or demonstrated an interest in the activities and participant populations you currently serve.
- Go where the candidates are:
 - AARP Chapters
 - Community Service Restitution Programs
 - Community Events/Farmers' Markets
 - Corporations and small businesses
 - Conferences/Special Events
 - Military units and retired military personnel
 - National associations (League of United Latin American Citizens, etc)
 - Schools, especially service-learning programs
 - Students seeking internships and service opportunities
 - University/college/community college organizations
 - Web Sites (Volunteermatch.org, Volunteer America, eTeambuilder website)

Refer to <http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/ico/recruitment> for a more comprehensive list of suggested places to look for potential volunteers.

Recruiting people from historically underrepresented groups

Diversity should be an essential element in your recruitment plan. Diversity can include many people from underrepresented groups: age, gender, sexual orientation, income level, educational background, ethnic background, race, physical abilities, geography, skills, and more. Bear in mind also that “minority/diverse” and “low income/poor” are not synonymous. Know the demographics of the community your organization serves.

Why embrace diversity?

- Diversity is a conservation necessity and a social imperative that will enable the Sierra Club to continue as a leader of the environmental movement.¹
- Like a healthy ecosystem, our differences strengthen us in our efforts to preserve and protect the natural and human environment.²
- Your group will be more effective if your volunteers reflect the multiplicity of our nation and communities.
- A healthy mix of members can make for a better program and a richer experience for volunteers, participants and agencies by bringing to bear a more diverse mix of experiences, outlooks and perspectives.
- And perhaps most importantly, **recruiting ICO volunteers from underrepresented groups is one way to respond to your community’s need and better reflect your participant populations.**

Tips for recruiting people from historically underrepresented groups:

- Consider recruiting volunteers from the population from which your participant groups come. This demonstrates to the community that you value them as partners, not just as participants.
- Recruit in multiples – your volunteer will feel less isolated and less like a token if there are others of his/her group involved.
- Research and develop a list of colleges that historically have large numbers of people with disabilities, people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and people that identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). Send recruiting teams to those schools.
- Begin to recruit from high schools. Attend career days and come prepared to discuss the benefits of volunteering.
- Develop relationships with diversity related organizations; black student union, native American students organization, Asian American student union, Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) organizations, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), etc.
- Sponsor or attend a variety of community events such as Juneteenth, Cinco de Mayo, Gay Pride, Chinese New Year and Disability Awareness Month.

¹ “Sierra Club Diversity Plan, A Proposal to the Sierra Club Board of Directors.” May 3, 2008
<http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/people/committees/diversity/>

² “

- Use more inclusive language and visuals in policies, guidelines, orientation, and recruiting materials. Publish in multiple languages.
- Advertise in magazines or places different from where you usually announce that your group is looking for leaders.
- Rethink your beliefs that a volunteer should always use direct eye contact, be a certain weight or height, speak the way you do, have children, be single, lead in only one way, not be in a wheelchair, not be hearing impaired.
- Get the entire group on board. It's important that the every member of your group—not just steering committee members, but volunteers at all levels—understands the importance of diversity.

Make use of existing community resources.

- Invite local leaders from your target groups to provide suggestions for recruitment strategies.
- Leave brochures at volunteer centers and be sure they are aware of your need for a diverse range of volunteers.
- Solicit support from local business organizations, minority bar associations, and minority-controlled agencies such as the Urban League. Invite them to go on a trip and/or sponsor ICO participants on an outing.
- Ask local churches, social clubs, and businesses to support an "ICO Volunteer Fund" to defray the expenses of volunteering.



Fill out STEP THREE on the Recruitment Plan Worksheet

STEP FOUR – GATHER AND DEVELOP RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

It's important to have a set of current recruitment materials ready to go when you start your recruitment efforts. In the Online Recruitment Toolkit, you'll find templates for all the materials mentioned in this section at

<http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/ico/recruitment>.

Questions for Your Group:

- Do we have materials about ICO on hand? National ICO has free brochures and DVDs. You can order them on line at:
<http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/common/order.aspx>
- Do we need materials translated into languages other than English?
- Do we have a “one-pager” on your local ICO program with facts, trip statistics, participant and leader quotes, and volunteer needs?
- Do we have a simple ICO program flyer or poster to distribute to target specific volunteers?

Effective Recruitment Materials

Your group should minimally have:

- A simple flyer to distribute to potential volunteers, to existing volunteers within your group and local Sierra Club, and to post on bulletin boards within the community (libraries, local shops, colleges, etc.).
- A one paragraph announcement of the volunteer positions or new volunteer orientation meeting to use in newsletters, classified advertisements, public service announcements, web listings and other outlets.
- A visual presentation (power point, DVD, for example) to use at program informational meetings and new volunteer orientations.

Tips for materials:

- Keep materials simple, but make them visually appealing by adding photos and color.
- Target a specific audience: Recent college graduates? A retiree with life experience? Someone with outdoor experience?
- Create a call to action – a catchy headline to motivate your audience to take the next step. For example, “*Interested in working with kids in the outdoors?*” followed by a smaller headline, “*Need experience?*”
- Sell what you do. What is interesting about your group or the position that would strike a chord to the applicant? Concise, bullet points are best to convey this.
- Focus on the benefits to the volunteer. Identify both tangible and intangible rewards of the job. Use quotes from participants and leaders.
- Include up-to-date contact information and include start dates and application deadlines.
- Make all your materials available both electronically and in hard copies.
- Post job descriptions and recruitment materials on your webpage.



Fill out STEP FOUR on the Recruitment Plan Worksheet

STEP FIVE: GET THE WORD OUT

Use a combination of the basic outreach methods: face-to-face recruitment, orientations, special events, public events and the media to reach potential volunteers.

Questions for Your Group:

- Who will I ask within my own network?
- How do we reach beyond our network?
- Where shall we present? What event should we attend?
- Should we host an orientation?
- How shall we publicize our event/orientation or volunteer needs?

Face-to-Face Recruitment is by far the most direct, and generally the most effective way to recruit members.

Word of mouth consistently ranks as one of the top reasons people join Inner City Outings. This is easily the most cost-effective approach. Tap your own networks and ask your members to tap theirs. Current volunteers, former volunteers, business associates, customers, vendors, agency staff, practically everyone knows someone who might be right for ICO. So while it's important to reach out to new contacts, don't overlook the people you come in contact with every day.

Emphasize:

- The appeal of being part of a national program
- The opportunity to help the community
- The chance to meet new people, and have an adventure
- Training in job skills and career networking opportunities
- The chance to apply education and experience to help communities

Host a volunteer orientation session!

The purpose of a New Volunteer Orientation is to share information about your ICO program with people who have shown interest in the past and others you draw in through publicity of the event. The orientation helps people determine if ICO is the right volunteer organization for them. Many groups find orientations to be so successful in recruitment that they hold them regularly, perhaps twice a year.

If people decide they want to volunteer (and, of course, they will!), the in-person orientation also gets them plugged in immediately to the program. The event can be held at your local Sierra Club chapter, at a local library or college, or in any other space appropriate and accessible to potential volunteers.

You can also host events such as a dinner and auction, service days, an event at a local library, or a program at a local outdoor center as a way to draw potential members, raise money, showcase your program, and attract the media.

In the Online Recruitment Toolkit, you'll find all the resources and tips necessary to host a successful orientation, including a PowerPoint Slideshow, an agenda, public speaking tips and a Facilitator and Preparation Guide. You can find the tool kit at:

<http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/ico/recruitment>.

Attend a community event or meeting!

Once you've thought about where you're likely to find potential applicants, choosing the right community events to attend is easy. Set up display tables at events such as career fairs or expositions, special conferences or meetings, town festivals, or city heritage days.

Tips for attending events and meetings:

- Contact the event sponsors to assess if they have promoted the event sufficiently to draw a crowd.
- Create a display appropriate to the space provided.
- Bring enough materials with you. The first thing potential volunteers read should tell them what ICO is, what your program does and what positions you want to fill. Have a few applications behind the table for people who seem very interested.
- Have a sign-up sheet at your table to collect contact information.
- Make your display space visually appealing. Make sure whoever staffs the table is outgoing and good at talking with people.
 - Use a tabletop display or table banner to brighten up your space.
 - Display large pictures of participants and volunteers in an attractive and professional manner.
 - Show a video, if an electrical connection is available. You can use the Inner City Outings DVD “**An Introduction to Inner City Outings**” (available online <http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/ico/recruitment> or a movie of your program.
 - Stand in front of or beside the table – this helps welcome people to you.
 - Offer food or other giveaways to draw people to your table.
 - Actively pursue event attendees. Greet people as they approach your table or look your way. Start a conversation with a question like, “Are you familiar with Inner City Outings?” If they say no, follow up with, “Well, let me tell you about it.” Then get them talking to you.

Strategic Partnerships

Other Sierra Club programs and local community agencies can join you in activities to cut down on recruitment expenses and volunteer staff necessary for activities. Collaborate early and build a cooperative relationship with your fellow Sierra Club outings programs.

The Media

The best way to reach a mass audience to raise awareness about your program, invite people to your fundraiser or recruit volunteers is to use the media — including newspapers, television, and radio. The media covers what they think their readers, listeners, and viewers want to know about.

Tips for working with the media:

- Distribute camera-ready ads to local magazines and newspapers.
- Express your interest in volunteers from underrepresented groups in your ads, such as this example: “To expand our support throughout the Oklahoma City area, we are especially interested in recruiting Native Americans, individuals with knowledge and experience of different cultures and languages, different abilities, and those from rural communities.”
- Run Public Service Announcements (PSA) on local cable television and radio stations.

The Internet

The Internet can be one of the most effective and least expensive ways to reach potential members. If your group already has a home page, make it attractive to potential volunteers and add a section about how to join ICO. If you do not have a home page, you can refer people to the national ICO site at <http://www.sierraclub.org/ico/>. In addition, you should also be able to post your vacant job descriptions on a number of sites. Many of those same sites post the résumés of job seekers — some people might be encouraged to be ICO volunteers.

- Post your positions in as many places as possible to increase outreach, including craigslist.org, idealists.org, volunteermatch.org or libertynet.org.
- Check to make sure your job description is in the correct category, field, or state to make the most of your posting and increase the number of “hits” from interested job-searchers.
- Update your postings and check websites regularly.
- Respond promptly with next steps to people who express interest.

In the Online Recruitment Toolkit, you’ll find more information about using the media and example templates <http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/ico/recruitment>.



Fill out STEP FIVE on the Recruitment Plan Worksheet

STEP SIX: ENGAGE POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS AND KEEP THEM COMING BACK

Questions for Your Group:

- What percentage of potential volunteers return after their first experience with our group?
- Does our group do any follow up to encourage potential volunteers to return or find out why people do not come back?
- Do we make the process to become a certified leader clear? Do we help our volunteers meet the leader requirements?
- Why do our long-term volunteers stay with our group?
- How do we plug new volunteers into our group?

Following up

Turn *potential* applicants into *actual* volunteers. Call candidates back to follow up and send them more information or invite them to another event or on an outing. It is important potential volunteers know you're interested in them.

Tips for following up after someone expresses interest in ICO or attends an orientation:

- Ask current ICO volunteers to make informal phone calls to encourage people to apply.
- Send postcards with a friendly, encouraging message or ICO story.
- Invite potential volunteers to special events. A few days after each orientation, volunteers can go on an all adult hike and invite the orientation attendees.
- Encourage potential applicants to participate in short-term projects with your program, like a fundraising auction or an Earth day event.
- Send email messages to people in small groups. Large group emails make people feel like they're just another face in the crowd to you.

Tips for following up after a potential volunteer agrees to volunteer for ICO:

- Make sure new volunteers have an experience with you that makes them want to stay.
- Give them something to do. Get them involved right away. Get them on a trip, in a training workshop, volunteering at an event – anything.
- Set up a mentor program where new members team up with experienced people in your group.
- Plan a social event to welcome new volunteers into your group.
- Pair or team members with a participant agency as an initial exercise. This will help them create a link to the program, the participants, the agency staff, and the other ICO volunteers, an important element for a successful experience.

Tips to keep your volunteers and turn them into leaders:

As members begin to settle into their new responsibilities, keep the following tips in mind:

- Agree on expectations, write them down and make sure new volunteers reads and understand them before getting started.
- Meet regularly with your ICO volunteers to discuss their achievements, problems, and needs.
- Make sure leadership requirements are understood and help them through the process. Provide written documents on how to become a leader.
- Provide a solid training program. Partner with nearby ICO groups or your Sierra Club chapter/group to facilitate training.
- Send volunteers to a first aid course.
- Encourage and acknowledge creativity and initiative.
- Treat your volunteers in a professional manner.
- Publicize and welcome new volunteers in your local newspaper, email list and newsletter.
- Appreciate the work ICO volunteers are doing for your group at monthly meetings, Sierra Club meetings and in emails and newsletters.
- Deal with problems as they arise and in a direct and efficient manner.

A Final Thought

Most members come to Inner City Outings because they want to serve their communities and their country, get kids outdoors, and make a difference in people's lives. They're right to feel that way; the commitment to getting kids outside is the heart and soul of the Sierra Club's Inner City Outings program. Realistically, that noble and idealistic motivation is also what keeps ICO's talented volunteers working hard for no financial compensation. Above all else, be sure you find ways to reinforce volunteers' pride in their work, in your group, and in their commitment and self-sacrifice.

The best way to increase your *volunteer* base is to retain them in the first place. We'll go more in depth about how to retain volunteers in the next guide (look for it in 2010).



Fill out STEP SIX on the Recruitment Plan Worksheet

STEP SEVEN: EVALUATE YOUR RECRUITMENT PLAN

Questions for Your Group:

- What have we learned in your recruitment process?
- How do we know this plan worked?
- What changes would we make if we repeat the process?
- How can we ensure that lessons learned are communicated and remembered in future years?

Evaluate

When it comes time for you or somebody else to run the next recruitment campaign, you'll find one of your best planning resources will be the notes you've taken and evaluations you've conducted on previous efforts. Write down what worked and what didn't.

Tips:

- Keep a written record of each event to act as a reminder the next time you or someone else does events.
- Include the names of people you worked with, what they did for you, and their contact information.
- Complete activity reports immediately after each event so the information is fresh in your mind. Note how many people attended, the number of applications given out, the reaction of the audience, and anything else you can measure.
- Attach a copy of the sign-in sheet from the event. As applications come in, you can check them against the lists to see how they heard about you.
- **Follow-up six months later. Check to see how many applications you received and how many of those applicants actually became volunteers.**
- Ask applicants how they heard about you and keep a record of their responses.

If you had a particularly successful campaign, post it to the [ICO Best Practices site](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/ico/chair-resources/best-practice/web-form.aspx) <http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/ico/chair-resources/best-practice/web-form.aspx>, so other groups may benefit from your experience.

Good luck and happy recruiting!



Fill out STEP SEVEN on the Recruitment Plan Worksheet