

HOW TO GET VOLUNTEERS

Recruiting volunteers is essential for a successful service project. Volunteers bring time, skills, and energy—but getting people to join requires clear messaging and strong communication skills. This activity helps youth develop a short, persuasive speech (an elevator pitch) to effectively recruit volunteers for their cause.



CONVERSATION STARTER: What's the craziest thing someone has convinced you to do? How did they convince you?

ELEVATOR PITCH CHALLENGE

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Develop and practice an elevator pitch for recruiting volunteers.
- Understand how to engage and motivate potential volunteers.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Timer
- Print Scenario Cards with different volunteer requests on the page below

An elevator pitch is a short, persuasive speech that explains why someone should support a cause in 60 seconds or less—about the time of an elevator ride.

Instructions:

- Pass out the scenario cards and give 1 minute to write down a few ideas based on the prompt using these to guide:
 - The Hook – Start with a question, fact, or personal connection.
 - The Why – Explain the cause and why it matters.
 - The Impact – Show how the volunteer's help will make a difference.
 - The Ask – Clearly state what they need to do.

Find a partner with a different scenario than you and deliver your elevator pitch.

- Each person has 60 seconds to convince their partner to volunteer.
- Rotate partners and refine the pitch after each round based on feedback. Encourage clarity, engagement, and confidence.
- Optional round: Ask a volunteer to present their best pitch to the group. Instead of voting, the group provides constructive feedback on what was most convincing and how it could be improved.

FACILITATION TIPS

-Remind participants that people are more likely to volunteer when they feel personally connected to a cause.

-Encourage them to make their pitch relatable by sharing a real story or example of how volunteering makes a difference.

REFLECTION

- What made a pitch persuasive? What techniques worked best?
- How did practicing with different people change your approach?
- What emotions or messages made the biggest impact when asking for volunteers?

APPLICATION

- How can we make volunteering feel exciting and meaningful rather than just asking for help?
- What are some ways to encourage people who are hesitant to commit?
- Dive Deeper Question: What makes people say yes to something new? Think about a time you agreed to do something outside your comfort zone—what convinced you? How can we use that to inspire others to volunteer?

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

Did youth apply persuasion techniques to make their volunteer pitch more effective?

Key Takeaway: A strong elevator pitch helps recruit volunteers by making the cause clear, compelling, and relevant to the person you're asking.



You are asking someone to volunteer to:

- "I need a volunteer to be my 'dinosaur impersonator' for a video we're filming, to help promote education at the local museum."

Here are the key elements you may want to include in an elevator pitch

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You are asking someone to volunteer to:

- "I need someone to be my official 'pillow fort architect.' We're building a pillow fort for charity."

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You are asking someone to volunteer to:

- "I need volunteers to be 'Plant Whisperers' and help us plant flowers and trees around the neighborhood while talking to them to make them feel welcome."

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You are asking someone to volunteer to:

- "Come help us organize a 'Compliment Booth' where we give out free compliments to passersby."

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 - The Why – Explain the cause and why it matters.
 - The Impact – Show how the volunteer's help will make a difference.
 - The Ask – Clearly state what they need to do.
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You are asking someone to volunteer to:

- "Help us with a 'Sock Donation Sorting Party!' We have tons of socks to sort for charity, we need help."

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- The Ask – Clearly state what they need to do.