

## Resources for Cities on Volunteer Engagement: Advice for Starting or Expanding City Volunteer Programs

The Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) conducted a survey of cities in July 2015. The survey was sent to contacts at 49 cities that were in the MAVA contact list or found online as cities that listed volunteer opportunities, primarily in the metro area. Responses were received back from 26 cities, including 4 cities from Greater MN and 22 cities in the Twin Cities Metro Area.

### **Develop Support amongst Staff Members & the Community**

*“Work WITH the community. Their goals and interests should be considered as the program is created or expanded. Establish good relationships with management early on to promote good feelings about the investment in volunteerism.”*

*“Baby steps, don't try to push a volunteer on a supervisor that is resistant. Build on your successes, and always look for new ways to approach departments or supervisors that don't see the benefits of volunteers.”*

*“Have a solid plan and get support from the City Council and management.”*

### **Create Meaningful Roles for Volunteers**

*“Develop the use of volunteers as a core strategic function whose resources/talents are focused on purposeful needs.”*

*“...Make sure your volunteer opportunities are rewarding for both parties.”*

### **Create Policies & Structure for your Volunteer Program**

*“Develop strong policies related to safety and liability.”*

*“Work hard to have effective policies and procedures in place so you can be most effective.”*

### **Engage Local Businesses**

*“Work with local chambers of commerce, collaborate with your own city's businesses as they often allow their employees to do team building opportunities.”*

### **Be Patient and Start Slowly**

*“Start slowly and build on your success. Pick one or two programs to develop and place candidates who will succeed in those positions. Those candidates should be identified through an interview or talent assessment.”*

*“Give it a try! Try one volunteer- get them moving and then try one more! Before you know it, you've got a whole team of volunteers.”*

Thank you to Bush Foundation for funding this initiative on city volunteer engagement.