



CTFS Gather Conference 2026

Peer Connect Session:

Volunteer Practices



From recruitment to retention, agency partners across the network show creative and effective ways to keep volunteers engaged and connected to their missions. These efforts help grow their volunteer base while fostering long-term commitment and involvement. Let's take a look at some of their success stories!

Communication and Appreciation: Love and Serve Food Pantry

Keeping volunteers connected starts with consistent communication.

Love& Serve Food Pantry does that by:

- Maintaining an up-to-date list of active volunteers.
- Sharing volunteer opportunities and schedules through a dedicated WhatsApp channel.
- Creating a welcoming environment with beverages and snacks during food distribution days.
- Providing volunteer shirts and hoodies to foster a sense of belonging.
- Celebrating volunteer birthdays twice each month.
- Hosting an annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner to recognize contributions.



Getting Feedback from Volunteers: Seymour Oxford Food Bank

The best way to understand what volunteers need is to ask them. Seymour Oxford Food Bank gathered valuable feedback through a volunteer survey. As a result, they established a Volunteer Committee with representatives from each area of the food bank. This committee:

- Holds monthly committee meetings to discuss challenges and opportunities.
- Collects volunteer suggestions to improve processes and workflows.
- Develops ideas to enhance the overall volunteer experience.



Training Volunteers: Caring for Bethlehem

Every February, Caring for Bethlehem Food Bank celebrates Volunteer Appreciation Month by hosting a potluck dinner for its volunteers to foster connection and community. During this event they:

- Share organizational updates and important news with volunteers.
- Provide trainings on topics such as civil rights and food safety.
- Recognize volunteer contributions and impact throughout the year.
- Conclude the event with awards, prizes, and volunteer recognition.



On-Site Partner Support Program

Need help improving volunteer practices or other workflows?

Our AmeriCorps VISTAs provide customized, in-person support to help agency partners strengthen operations and better serve their communities.

Support may include (but is not limited to):

- Using social media to raise awareness, increase donations, and recruit volunteers
- Guidance on starting a small herb or vegetable garden and/or improving fresh food production
- Brainstorming and planning action steps to put your ideas into practice

 **Scan the QR code to schedule a consultation.**



What about you?

What volunteer practices-related challenges is your organization facing?

What volunteer best practices can your organization adopt to recruit, engage, and retain volunteers?

