

HandsOn Network: Volunteer Tracking

Volunteer Data Tracking Strategies

There are a number of ways to collect volunteer data. These will vary depending on whether you are collecting data on a particular volunteer project, or on an ongoing volunteer program.

Volunteer Project Data Tracking

Pre-Survey Registration:

If you require participants to register for a project in advance, you have a unique opportunity to identify the make-up of your volunteers, review demographics, identify dietary needs, and track attendance of persons with disabilities in order to address any accommodations that may be required.

This type of information indicates the amount of people interested in serving their communities, as well as interest in the project.

Project Site Sign-in and Sign-out Sheets:

Whether you have pre-registration requirements or not, it is extremely important to ensure volunteers sign in at the project site. You can use this information to track the number of participants and their demographics. You can also compare the number of persons who showed up the day of the project compared to the number of people who registered in advance.

Encouraging volunteers to sign out when they leave the project will allow you to track the number of volunteer hours that were served. This will allow you to calculate the monetary value of their service.

Volunteer Program Data Tracking

Paper-based systems

Benefits include lower costs, lower skill level needed to maintain, and less intimidating to users. Disadvantages include no 'back up' and risk of data loss, not manageable for high volume, and difficulty in summarizing and totaling data for reporting.

Spreadsheets

Benefits include ease of calculating and aggregating data, ability to track separate projects, and the need for only basic IT skills. Disadvantages include no automatic reporting mechanism and less manageable with high volumes.

Databases

Benefits include reporting functions, ability to store high volumes of data, ability to easily cross-tabulate information, and the ability to customize fields. Disadvantages include higher IT skill levels required and necessary training and support.

Source: IVR Monitoring Volunteer Data Handbook