


## Applying Strategies For Engaging Shorter Term Volunteers

MAVA Conference 2018

Presented by:  
Mary Quirk

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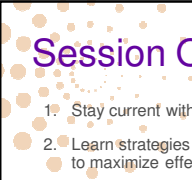
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## Session Objectives

1. Stay current with shorter term volunteerism trend.
2. Learn strategies for when to engage short term volunteers and how to maximize effectiveness.
3. Leave with an action plan on how your organization can effectively respond to it.



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## Activity

Share with a neighbor:

- A time you involved a volunteer for less than three months that **work well**.
- A time you involved a volunteer for less than three months that **did not work out**.
- **Why** one worked out well and the other did not.

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# MAVA Research Shorter-Term Volunteer Commitments



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## Why address the trend?

Top trend the MAVA 2018 Volunteer Trends Survey

47% reported seeing increased interest in shorter term volunteering in the past year



*"People want one time or short term options."*

*"One time volunteer experience doesn't match our greatest need."*

*"It takes more work on our part for each volunteer hour when we have lots of short term people to onboard rather than longer term volunteers."*

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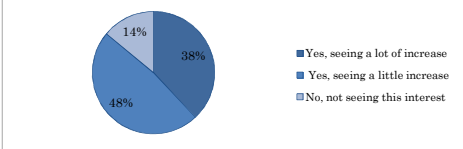
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### MAVA 2015 Survey on Shorter Term Volunteerism


**Most organizations are seeing volunteers making shorter time commitments, but for the majority, this is only a moderate trend**

Have you seen an increase in volunteers wanting to make shorter term commitments over the past three years?



Response	Percentage
Yes, seeing a lot of increase	48%
Yes, seeing a little increase	38%
No, not seeing this interest	14%

MAVA Shorter Term Volunteer Commitments Survey 2015



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### A surprising proportion of organizations indicated the one time and the shorter term volunteers were essential to meeting their organizations mission

How essential to your organization are volunteers who volunteer more than once, but less than four months?

- 47% Could not meet mission without them
- 37% Nice, but not necessary to mission
- 16% Do not contribute to mission

 MATA Shorter Term Volunteer Commitments Survey 2015

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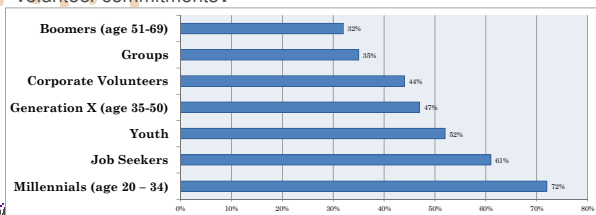
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### Volunteers making short term commitments tend to be Millennials, job seekers, youth and Gen X

Which categories of volunteers have you seen making shorter term volunteer commitments?



 MATA Shorter Term Volunteer Commitments Survey 2015

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### Time is the main limiting factor in addressing the trend

What factors limit your ability to engage volunteers in roles that would take less than a four-month time commitment?

- 62% Staff time to train volunteers
- 53% Staff time to screen and onboard volunteers
- 52% Staff time to manage volunteers
- 49% Staff time to recruit volunteers
- 39% The work we have to be done does not fit with short-time commitments
- 32% Staff being willing to work with shorter-term volunteers
- 32% Financial costs such as background checks
- 27% Too hard to manage volunteer expectations to have meaningful experience

 MATA Shorter Term Volunteer Commitments Survey 2015

- 13% Do not have barriers

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**The top reason for involving volunteers for commitments of less than four months is a hope these volunteers will return**

When you do involve volunteers for commitments of less than four months, what is your motivation?

- 74% Hope that volunteers will return for longer commitments
- 69% Work that needs to get done
- 58% Want community to view organization as a place where everyone is welcome
- 61% Serves as a means to connect organization to the community
- 51% Bring skills to the organization that we need
- 42% Hope for a fundraising benefit



MAVA Shorter Term Volunteer Commitments Survey 2015

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**80% expect the shorter term volunteer trend to grow, at least a little**

Three years from now, what change do you expect in how many volunteers who commit for four months or less compared to now?

- 34% Expect it to grow a lot
- 46% Expect it to grow a little
- 19% Do not expect it to change
- 1% Expect it to reduce

*"All our long term volunteers are becoming frail seniors. New volunteers do not feel compelled to "give back" or their lives are very full."*



MAVA Shorter Term Volunteer Commitments Survey 2015

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**80% of organizations are planning to make changes to address this trend in the future**

*"Hope to do a significant investment in staff time to create and manage short term volunteer opportunities and volunteer turnover."*



MAVA Shorter Term Volunteer Commitments Survey 2015

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## Organizations are making changes

MAVA 2018 Trends  
Volunteerism Trend Survey

42% added **volunteer positions designed specifically for shorter term volunteers**

*"Changing our scheduling needs to meet the needs of episodic volunteers versus volunteers available on a weekly basis."*

*"Restructuring to meet short term volunteer interests."*

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## Strategies for Success With Shorter Term Volunteers

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## Assessment

What portion of your volunteer roles are currently designed for people to **volunteer three months or less**?

What portion of your **volunteer roles are for one time volunteers**?

What reasons might you want to change this?

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## Assessment

Where do you want to end up?

<i>No shorter term</i>	<i>About half and half</i>	<i>All shorter term</i>
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Define "shorter term" as volunteer position designed for three months or less




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## Readiness Assessment



See **Attachment A** for a Readiness Assessment for Engaging Shorter Term Volunteers




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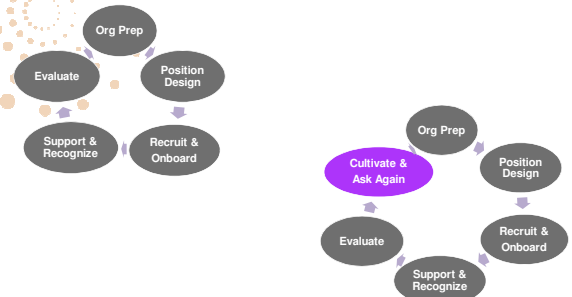

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## Same Cycle, New Twist


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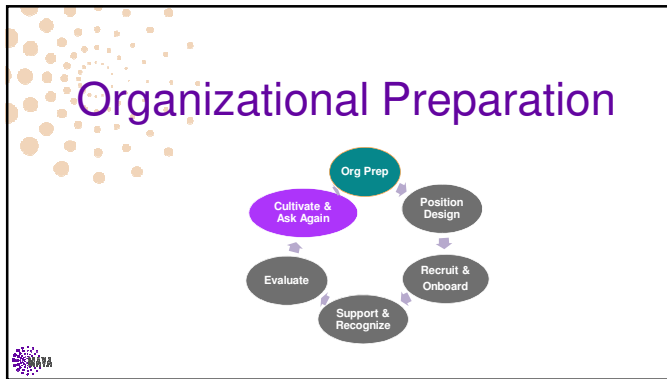
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1

**Gain buy-in of key leaders for why shorter term volunteer positions will help achieve mission**

Do:

- Identify who's buy in is needed
- Develop case statement

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## Include in Case Statement

- Opening that engages
- Why change is needed
- Connection of need for change and mission
- Data
- Plan
- Next steps

See **Attachment B** for Sample Case Statement

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2

Train and support staff for working with shorter term volunteers

Org Prep

Do:

- Offer training for staff
  - Inspire value of shorter term volunteers
- Offer strategies



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Sample Staff Training Agenda

Org Prep

1. Opening Activity – What changes are you seeing in volunteer time commitment?
2. Data
3. Discussion – What ways are one time and shorter term volunteers currently contributing to our mission?
4. Brainstorm – What new roles could we design specifically for shorter term volunteers?
5. Tips for success with shorter term volunteers

See **Attachment C** for Sample Staff Training



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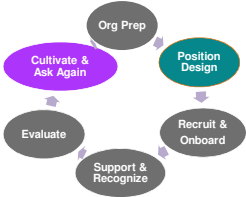
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Volunteer Position Design





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## Tips from the Field

*"Designing positions that specifically accommodate for a time limited commitment. By doing this, the volunteer expects to come in for a one-time basis and we expect the same from there which allows both parties to achieve what they are looking for out of the experience."*

*"Having specific beginning and end time of commitment makes a big difference in being successful in recruitment of short term volunteers."*



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## 3 Design high functioning volunteer roles for positions that are three months or less. Assess ROI before implementing positions.

Do:

- Design positions specifically for shorter term volunteers
- Design positions in way easy to ask back



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## Criteria for Positions

- **Time invest** into involving the volunteer is **in proportion** to how long the volunteer will be staying
- What the volunteer accomplishes helps organization **meet its mission**
- **Interesting and meaningful** for the volunteer
- Has clear **ending point**



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## Hold Brainstorming Sessions

- What **new volunteer roles** - that are for three months or less- could we add that would contribute to mission?
- How could some of our current volunteer roles be **divided** into segments, or shared by volunteers, to allot work to get done by shorter term commitments?
- What could we have **volunteers drop in to do in an evening** that would contribute to mission?




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## Six strategies to restructure positions

1. **Substitution** – develop positions for substitutes
2. **Job sharing** – two volunteers for same opportunity
3. **Rotation** – takes turns filling assignment
4. **Segmentation** – break down into more manageable
5. **Team volunteering** – multiple volunteers assigned to same client
6. **Telecommuting** – to offer more flexibility

From "Creating Boomer-friendly Volunteer Opportunities: Restructuring Existing Opportunities" by D. Scott Martin




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## Examples of Positions Designed

<b>Skilled Positions</b>	<b>Other Positions</b>
Research projects	Sorting In-kind Donations
Survey development	Bagging groceries
Leading a workshop	Phone bank
Fundraising event project manager	Helping at day of event
Rotating cycles of nursing students as friendly visitors	Greeter at museum paired with longer term volunteer
Focus Group Facilitator	Pool of volunteers to help at nursing home events
Website audit	Seasonal project (i.e. painting, raking, etc.)
Graphic Design	




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Position Design


## Assess ROI

Before implementing new volunteer roles, assess the return on investment using **time** as your currency.

Set an expectation of what return on investment is needed for a role to be viable.

Consider the direct return on investment, as well as other benefits that might be received from volunteers involved in this role.

See **Attachment E** for ROI Calculator




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Position Design


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## Write position descriptions with a simplicity that reflects this is a shorter term position.

Do:

- Make time commitment clear
- Describe duties
- Convey impact
- Keep it to ¾ of a page or less

See **Attachment F** for Sample Position Description




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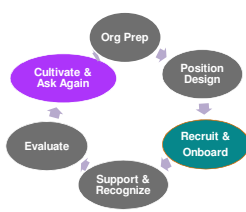
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## Recruitment and On-Boarding



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    OrgPrep([Org Prep]) --> PosDesign([Position Design])
    PosDesign --> RecruitOnboard([Recruit & Onboard])
    RecruitOnboard --> SupportRecognize([Support & Recognize])
    SupportRecognize --> Evaluate([Evaluate])
    Evaluate --> CultivateAskAgain([Cultivate & Ask Again])
    CultivateAskAgain --> OrgPrep
    
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Recruit & Onboard

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## Simplify application process, assignment, and scheduling.

Do:

- Develop a flow chart of current onboarding
- Consider simpler track for short term position
- Do not skip on background checks
- Use online tools for scheduling volunteers




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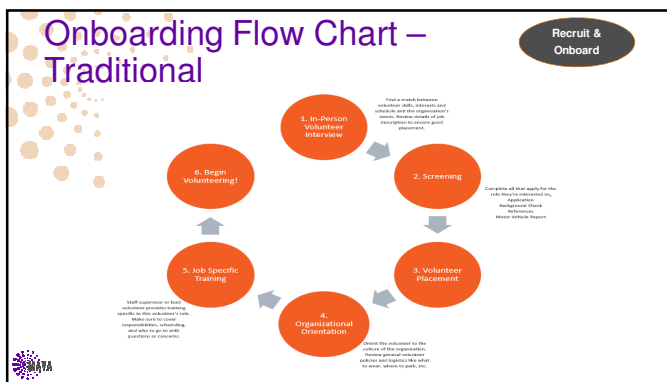
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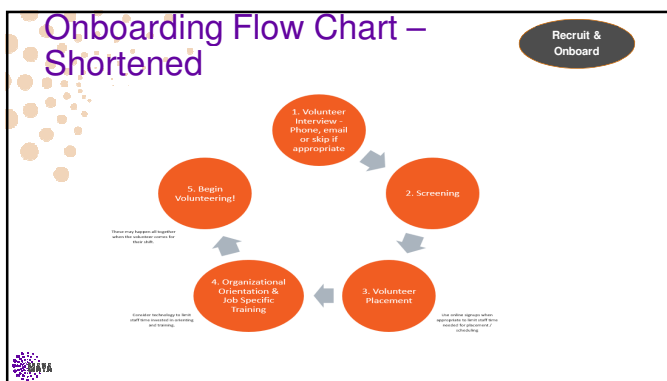
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Recruit & Onboard

## Tips from the Field

*"Simplified application and registration processes so short term volunteers are more easily accepted at our field sites."*

*"I've started to use VolunteerSpot for short term scheduling of volunteers. It is user friendly and easy for the volunteer to schedule as well as the program manager to track changes to the volunteer schedule."*




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Recruit & Onboard

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## Build a pipeline to bring volunteers to your organization

Do:

- Build partnerships, especially schools
- Recruit a pool of volunteers
- Ask current volunteers to recruit
- Use online recruitment
- For groups, prioritize key partners




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Recruit & Onboard

## Tips from the Field

*"We work closely with the local universities and colleges to design positions that meet the needs of their students as well as meeting the needs of our staff."*

*"Recruit more volunteers knowing that many will not stay."*

*"We recruit from the same sources, but are able to get different people who sign up, broadening our pool of volunteers."*




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Recruit & Onboard

7

## Identify efficiencies in orienting and training volunteers

Do:

- Systematize how you prepare for orientation
- Include a video and/or online component
- Plant the seed that they are welcome to come back and volunteer again
- Involve current volunteers in training




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Recruit & Onboard

## Tips from the Field

*"Pair longer term and shorter term volunteers to work together."*

*"Give volunteers a post card at orientation on how they can continue to engage after their first volunteering."*




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Recruit & Onboard

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## Convey the impact of the volunteer position

Do:

- Show how and why their work matters
  - In orientation
  - When they come in to volunteer
- For groups, recap impact when they wrap up
- Create ambassadors for your organization




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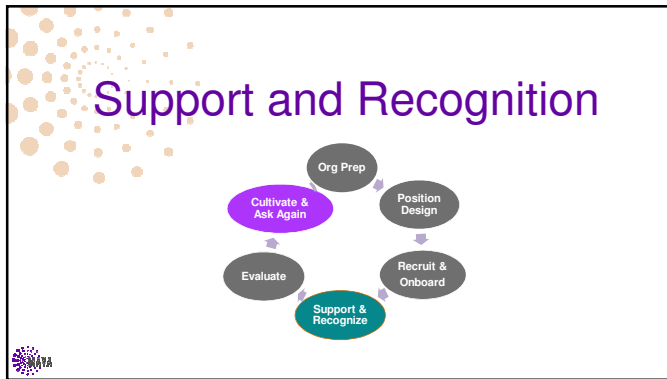
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Support & Recognize

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### Develop quick ways to build personal relationships with volunteers.

Do:

- Create opportunity to build a relationship
- Invite input or feedback
- Speak to their specific work and its impact

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Support & Recognize

## How to Create Personal Connection

- Foster one to one communication with a staff or volunteer
- Make the volunteer feel part of the team
- Convey the feeling of being valued
- Create moments of fun
- Take a photo

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Support & Recognize

10

### Simplify recognition to be appropriate for the scale of time volunteered, but still meaningful to the volunteer.

Do:

- Send a timely thank you email after volunteering
- Include shorter term volunteers in invitation to volunteer recognition events
- Include in annual survey to show you value their input

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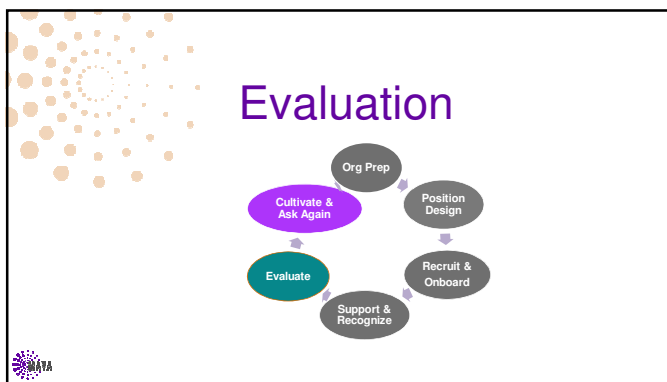
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Evaluate

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### Keep key data to evaluate effectiveness of shorter term volunteers.

Do:

- Identify the goal(s) you are trying to accomplish through shorter term volunteers and develop a way to measure that.
- Measure of mission critical work that is accomplished by shorter term volunteers
- Develop a measure to compare volunteer data year to year
- Periodically, assess if shorter term volunteers are retained
- Track if group volunteers lead to other benefits

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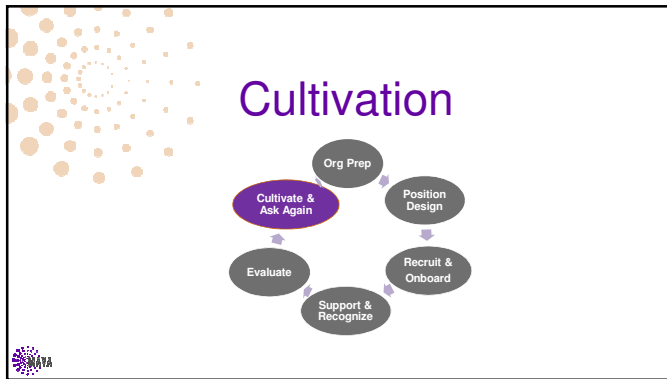
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Cultivate & Ask Again

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**Develop systematic ways to ask volunteers to help again.**

Do:

- Create an expectation they will volunteer again
- Develop a systematic way to invite to volunteer again at least quarterly
- Mix the modes of communication

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Cultivate & Ask Again

**Activity – Cultivate Volunteers to Return to Volunteer Again**

At your table:

- Make list of ways to cultivate short term volunteers to be likely to come back again.
- Report out one idea

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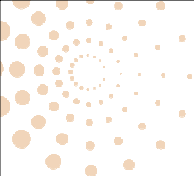
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## Action Plan




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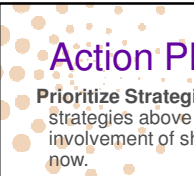
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## Action Plan

**Prioritize Strategies** - Circle the three to five of these strategies above that are most critical to advance involvement of shorter term volunteers in your organization now.

**This week I will:**

**Over next three months I will:**




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## Resources

MAVA report on shorter term volunteerisms and other resources on this topic at:

[http://www.mavanetwork.org/content.aspx?page\\_id=22&club\\_id=286912&module\\_id=201963](http://www.mavanetwork.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=286912&module_id=201963)




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## Thank you!

- MAVA Task Forces on Shorter Term Volunteerism
- MAVA members who responded to surveys and participated in focus groups
- F. R. Bigelow Foundation for funding the initiative

Mary Quirk, [Mary.H.Quirk@gmail.com](mailto:Mary.H.Quirk@gmail.com)



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