

United Soccer Alliance of Indiana Volunteers are the Best! Aka "The Top Ten Ways to Ask a Volunteer to Help You."

A volunteer recruitment check list for USA OF INDIANA Board of Directors and Board Committee members including Team Managers, Commissioners, & Coordinators & Administrators. . Revised 7/24/13

1) Know Your Needs One of the best ways to drive volunteerism is to be very specific about your needs. A simple "We need volunteers" may seem like enough when you are already very busy with your USA OF INDIANA work. However, to those not already involved at USA OF INDIANA, volunteering very well may seem daunting. Be specific, ask yourself these questions before you ask someone to help you. "What is the time commitment? What skills are required? What is the reporting structure? "What resources are available to help your person to learn to work the position?" What is the job title and description?" (Call me and together we can easily come up with a job title and simple description; two things proven to help line up volunteers.) Define these goals and guidelines first, and then ask someone to help you.

2) Keep an Open Mind When we are working at full speed, knocking out yet another season, it's very easy to get caught in "that's the way we do things" trap. Have an open mind. Invite new people to help you and invite their new ideas. It's critical we each encourage new member participation. Consider a different skill set, a different outlook. If USA OF INDIANA asks for suggestions and feedback from parents, players, and coaches, it will find increased volunteer participation and the Club will further improve. (Travel just completed the Club's first detailed customer survey with nearly 100 u9-u14 families participating.)

3) Look for Volunteers in Unexpected Places

Many active volunteers are active in several organizations – USA of Indiana, their children's school, Parent-Teacher organization, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, baseball, football, Little League, basketball, lacrosse, etc. *Let's reach out to the network of volunteers that invisibly includes us all.* Look for volunteer possibilities through your school, church, work, social service organizations, retiree/senior citizens programs, student unions and more. Keep your eyes open to the possibilities. One ten year volunteer became involved with USA of Indiana because he wandered by Northwestway Park, near his home, and a Board member 'invited him in.'

4) Find the Resources You Need in Your Own Backyard USA of Indiana has a great number of human resources – accountants, attorneys, writers, graphic artists, strategic planners, field & facility maintenance providers. When we have a need, let's first look to our own membership. It very well may also be a great opportunity to get someone new involved, who may be hesitant to volunteer because they felt lacking in "soccer" knowledge. (In addition, USA of Indiana must first always look to volunteer labor and then to trading for resources.)

5) Devise a Plan While you may have a special pair of field lining tennis shoes and could line a field in ten minutes, something as "easy" as lining a field may be intimidating to someone who has never done it before. Set a time in advance to introduce volunteers to their specific tasks or create an orientation checklist with basic information on how to run the concession stand, work a field liner, or serve as a field marshal. Let's train confident volunteers right from the start.

6) Organize Group Volunteer Opportunities There is safety in numbers, people enjoy working with others they know, and it can help to build team camaraderie and USA of Indiana spirit. Look for

opportunities to allow teams or groups to work together or in the same shift and we will see volunteerism rise.

7) Ask Nicely “Please and thank you” are a must. There occasionally arises among your fellow USA OF INDIANA leaders, a feeling that we may need to mandate volunteer time because of falling or failing volunteerism. Let’s try asking folks directly (not via email). Let’s explain the reasons why you need volunteers. Let’s try to make the parent feel needed and important. First: it’s the truth!, they are needed and important. And, secondly, it’s more difficult for parents to say “no” to volunteering if you ask face-to-face.

8) Be Flexible There are a lots of ways to structure volunteer opportunities. Let’s keep shifts shorter. Let’s offer a range of time shifts. Let’s look for ways members can volunteer in little chunks before, during, or after their child’s training session or game. No one wants to be stuck in the concession stand while their child is scoring a goal, but they surely will be open to working the shift right before or after the game. Let’s think of ways to use volunteers who need to work from home or those with small children in tow. Let’s be creative!

9) Be Organized & Inclusive Give volunteers plenty of lead time, reminder calls and emails. Once you secure volunteers, keep them in the loop. Make sure they’ve access to their schedule and their up line contact. Include volunteers in the communication and decision making process. Invite them to Committee meetings. Make them feel worthwhile about what they’re doing (again it’s the truth!) and give them the tools to succeed. Make sure they know their effort is essential, important, and appreciated by the thousands of USA of Indiana and Travel players.

10) Be Thankful & Show It Don’t let your volunteer burn out. Look for little ways to show appreciation. Let’s be sure to recognize volunteers in the USA of Indiana Newsletter and on the website. Let’s take a volunteer to lunch. Ask a Board Member or me to call to thank / recognize them for their time and effort. Let’s trust volunteers with greater responsibility and look for signs they need more help. Let’s send a thank you card. Let’s give them a USA of Indiana or Travel logo spirit wear item. Let’s highlight the most dedicated volunteers as hometown heroes and a role model for USA of Indiana and community service.