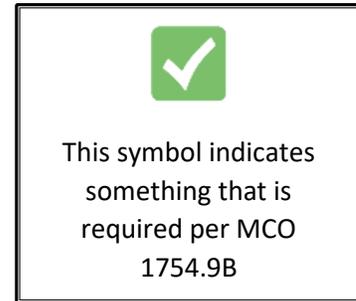


### **Unit Volunteers**

Volunteers play a significant role in the overall success of the UPFRP. Not only can they serve as a voice for their specific demographic within the unit, their insight to the needs of the families can provide the Commander and the Command Team with valuable feedback.

#### **In This Document...**

- Determine Need
- Create Positions
- Develop Creative Position Descriptions
- Market Volunteer Opportunities
- Direct Recruitment
- Screen Potential Volunteers
- Volunteer Selection and On-boarding
- Train Volunteers
- Volunteer Retention and Recognition



### **Determine Need**

Determining the number of volunteers needed to support the different aspects of the UPFRP is the first step to establishing and managing a successful volunteer program. Many DRC/URCs make the mistake of recruiting a large number of volunteers and then are unable to properly utilize them. Yes, having a large number of volunteers may give the appearance of successful program, however, the number will quickly dwindle if the volunteers are not engaged in a way that meets their expectations. Ask yourself:

1. Do we need 17 additional members, such as Advisors, on the Command Team, or will five provide the insight we need from the family member perspective?
2. Are 8 UPFRP assistants needed to help in the office or can the work be even distributed among 4 without any one volunteer feeling overwhelmed or underwhelmed with the amount of tasks they are entrusted with?
3. To execute a successful event, will 15 volunteers suffice, or do we need 45?

Remember, having too many volunteers can be just as detrimental as having too few.

### **Create Positions**

Consider the different areas volunteers can be utilized within the program. Is there an area that needs more attention such as routine outreach? Do you need help organizing records? Would an Event Committee help ease the burden of planning unit events? Are family members requesting support or initiatives such as providing meals for families in need? Often you will find members of the unit, active duty and family members alike, that will offer their services by doing something they enjoy like cooking or knitting blankets for newborns. The opportunities are endless. Initiate a discussion with the



Command Team on how volunteers can be best utilized within the unit. You may also want to solicit ideas directly from the families and the service members in the unit to get an ideas of what they may benefit from or how they would enjoy contributing. Make a list of ideas and start creating positions to fit the needs of the unit.

### **Develop Creative Position Descriptions**

Volunteer [position descriptions](#) should be thoughtfully created. When drafting unit specific positions, consider the overall relevance and correlation to the Commander's vision and the unit's mission. You want to create positions that not only attract talented volunteers but also gives them a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment, as well as personal and professional growth. It may be helpful for the finished product to include the information such as:

1. Job Title
2. Purpose
3. Benefits of position to occupant
4. Qualifications for positions
5. Time requirements
6. Job site/location
7. Proposed starting date (include ending date if applicable)
8. Responsibilities and activities
9. Reporting relationships and supervision

**\*\*Note, appointed volunteers (UPFRP Assistants and Advisors) already have an established official PD.\*\***

### **Market Volunteer Opportunities**

There are many different ways to get the message out about volunteer opportunities within the unit. You can post opportunities in the unit's newsletter, social media site, and in the DRC/URC or CO welcome letter to the families and service members. [Flyers](#) around the building will help to ensure the message is always visible to those in the area. Some DRC/URCs even have a blurb about volunteering in the signature block of their emails. Be sure to provide information on where potential volunteers can find information pertaining to what opportunities are currently available. Don't forget to plug in volunteer opportunities when you have a chance to speak with a family member face-to-face. Many volunteers are acquired when they are asked for their help **DIRECTLY**.

### **Direct Recruitment**

Passive recruitment, such as standard or reoccurring newsletter messaging or social media posts, may not always be enough to bring in the talent. If sending out messages is the most convenient way for you to recruit volunteers, ensure you are creative with your marketing. Perhaps you may consider highlighting a different volunteer opportunity weekly. You can also consider sending a message/email that exclusively promotes volunteer opportunities will gain the attention of potential volunteers.



Holding a recruitment event, such as a “Command Team Meet and Greet” has proven to be an excellent way to attract interest. Not only will the families be able to come in and get acquainted with the members of the command team, they can also get a feel for the culture of the unit and the vision of the Commander. It is a great way for the family members to see, firsthand, how important volunteers are to the command. If needed, UPFRP funds can be used to support this event with light refreshments.

### **Screen Potential Volunteers**

Ultimately, the Commander is responsible for everything that occurs within the unit. For this reason, it is crucial that volunteers are screened to ensure they are the best fit not just for the position but, for the support of the unit and Commander’s vision and intent as well.

There are several ways to screen a potential volunteer. Requiring an application which includes open-ended questions for the volunteer to answer such as how much time can they devote weekly/monthly, information about the volunteer’s interests, prior training or experience, and individual expectations can prove to be helpful. An in-person interview can also be a great help in selecting the right volunteers for the unit. Questions may include the following:

- Tell me a little about yourself.
- Why are you interested in volunteering with the unit?
- Have you been a volunteer before? Tell me about those experiences.
- What are you hoping to get out of this volunteer experience?
- What is your availability?
- What types of events or tasks would you prefer to be involved in?
- How would you prefer for me to communicate with you?

**Note: The idea of an “interview” may be very intimidating for a potential volunteer, making the meeting as informal and comfortable as possible can ease the nervousness of the candidate.**

Volunteers that are helping out on a temporary basis, such as those helping with the set-up or tear-down of an event, do not need to be formally screened or appointed. Also, remember that your local Volunteer Coordinator may be able to assist you with recruiting volunteers to help with unit events!

\*\*\*Notes on interviewing: There are several different types of interviewing techniques and formats you can use. For the purpose of the UPFRP, the below may be useful.

1. An in-person, mentioned above, can be conducted to get more information and an initial impression of the potential volunteer.
2. A selection interview requires a bit more in-depth questions to evaluate the “qualifications” of the volunteers.
3. A behavioral interview, also known as a STAR (situation, task, action, and results) can provide some insight to the potential volunteer’s behavior, personality, and character.
4. A group/panel interview consists of multiple people asking questions in order to evaluate a potential volunteer from different aspects/points of view.



### **Volunteer Selection and On-boarding**

It is important that you notify a volunteer if they have not been selected to fill a position at a specific time. Follow-up with those volunteers and provide some information to “close the loop”. Ensure they understand that although they were not selected for a specific role/position, they are encouraged to apply to other positions or reapply once a specific position reopens.

For the volunteers that were selected, on-boarding is important in establishing the professional partnership. There is no specific or required method for on-boarding volunteers. The below is an example of what the onboarding experience *could* entail.

- 1) Prepare volunteer binders to give to volunteers. Examples of items you could include in the binder are:



- a. Commander’s UPFRP vision/policy letter
- b. Organizational UPFRP structure
- c. Bios of Command Team members
- d. Contact information for the Command Team and other volunteers (if permitted)
- e. Command calendar of events
- f. Signed Job/Position description
- g. Copy of Signed DD2793
- h. [Appointment Letter](#)
- i. [Volunteer hour log sheet](#)
- j. Blank paper for note taking

- 2) Host an orientation. During orientation, the volunteers can:

- a. Receive an overview of the command and its mission.
- b. Sign required paperwork if it has not been already been done.
- c. Meet the command team if possible.
- d. Tour the building and be introduced to some of the leadership and service members if appropriate.
- e. Ask questions or address concerns with the DRC/URC.
- f. Establish an initial schedule (this can be adjusted to meet the needs of the volunteer and unit as necessary).
- g. Receive or develop initial goals/tasks.

### **Train the Volunteers**

Appointed volunteers have required training they must complete. Refer to the current UPFRP Marine Corps Order (MCO) to determine required training. Aside from required training per UPFRP MCO, volunteers may require instruction on how to complete their particular assignments. For example, if they will be helping in the office, the DRC/URC should train the volunteer to effectively do the tasks that will be assigned to them; this may include instruction on how to properly file documents/records, answer and document phone calls, initiate phone calls, etc. The DRC/URC can also use training time to emphasize the program intent and mission, goals, events, duty time and expectations.

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### **Volunteer Retention and Recognition**

Now that you have trained volunteers, you must ensure you are able to keep them interested in remaining a unit volunteer. Below are some strategies to implement to help retain volunteers:

- 1) Meet with your volunteers regularly, both one-on-one and as a group.
- 2) Find ways to motivate the volunteers.
  - a. Emphasize their impact to the unit's service members and families.
  - b. Give them fun challenging tasks.
- 3) Ensure they are enjoying their tasks and roles. Ask to see if they:
  - a. Are over-tasked/overburdened.
  - b. Have the enough support to accomplish tasks and goals.
  - c. Need to adjust their schedule.
  - d. Feel their expectations are being met.
- 4) **SHOW APPRECIATION!**
  - a. Host an appreciation event and present volunteers with a Certificate of Appreciation.
  - b. Reimburse for any incurred expenses such as the cost of babysitters if the option is approved by the CO.
  - c. Send birthday and holiday cards from the Command Team leadership/members.
  - d. Send/give "thank you" letters and notes.
  - e. Create and reward milestones (i.e. 50 hrs completed...100 hrs completed). Use can use a [tracker](#) to calculate the hours.
  - f. Nominate as "Volunteer of the Month."
  - g. Post volunteer pictures within the unit.
  - h. Give praise both privately and publicly
  - i. Encourage service members to stop by and say "hi" and thank volunteers when they are in the building.
  - j. Ask for their opinion when planning events.
  - k. Assign a designated volunteer parking place.

