



## Tips for Recruiting Volunteers and Members with Disabilities

Recruiting and engaging Illinoisans with disabilities in service is fundamental to our goal to provide service opportunities for individuals of all ages and backgrounds. Persons with disabilities contribute a wide range of talents to our communities and are looking for opportunities to serve in significant ways. As many national service programs and organizations have begun recruiting new members and volunteers for the upcoming year, here are some tips on recruiting individuals with disabilities.

- **Spell it Out.** When developing your program's recruitment materials and applications it is important to include a statement regarding your organizations commitment to inclusion. For example: "Our national service program/organization is an equal opportunity employer and encourages qualified applicants with and without disabilities to apply. Individuals with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations. Materials in alternative formats are available upon request."
- **Share experiences.** Often the best way to recruit potential members with disabilities is to have current and former service members and volunteers share their service experience. Encourage them to tell about the capacity in which they served, how and why they got involved, and the impact of service on their communities and in terms of their professional and personal development. Showing pictures of members in service with and without disabilities also shows the public that you encourage people of all abilities to serve.
- **Reach out.** Whenever possible it is a good strategy contact disability organizations when recruiting qualified members and volunteers with disabilities. You all received a guide to service agencies in Illinois in your inclusion packets at the meeting last month.
- **Do your homework.** The following articles can help you get started:  
"[How Do I Recruit People with Disabilities to my Program](http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/index.php?page=recruitment)"  
<http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/index.php?page=recruitment> and  
"[Including People with Disabilities when Recruiting for National Service.](http://nationalservicerresources.org/practices/17237)"  
<http://nationalservicerresources.org/practices/17237>
- Contact your Illinois Disability Outreach Coordinator if you have questions or concerns:

Lois Barnhart

500 Anchor Road, Dixon, IL 61021

815-288-6691 ext 282 [barnhartl@kreiderservices.org](mailto:barnhartl@kreiderservices.org)