

## **So You want to start a Volunteer Center?**

Time needed to do these tasks will vary from 9 months to 3 years depending on commitment and time given by the start up group and if paid staff is on board to facilitate activities and tasks immediately. Structure of being an independent Volunteer Center vs. a program of a parent organization may alter some of these steps.

### **Does our community Need a Volunteer Center?**

- Complete a Community Needs Assessment – Before your Volunteer Center can meet your community's needs you need to know what they are. Decide on questions, determine how data will be collected, assign roles to each member, develop timeline for the process, compile and analyze data.
- Complete a Feasibility Study involve key players from broad cross-section
- Compile data from the Assessment and Study to decide how the Volunteer Center can meet community needs

### **How Will We Communicate the idea of the Volunteer Center to the community?**

- Recruit a leadership team/ committee
- Identify key community stakeholders and partners
- Share results of the Community Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study with the community
- Prepare promotional materials about the Volunteer Center's purpose and impact

### **What needs to be done?**

- Develop a Case Statement for the new Volunteer Center
- Discuss potential organizational structure and programmatic services - Independent 501 C 3, internal to another organization, etc.
- Plan fund development – Grants, Sponsorship/ Special Events, Fee for Service,
- Discuss Board development, recruitment, training and planning
- Develop Business Plan – This plan is a tool for the startup team to begin to create a focus for the work of the new Volunteer Center. This plan can be used as an operating guide as well as a financial proposal. This will take several months. The plan can include Executive Summary, Goals, Market Niche, Marketing Plan, Operating Plan, Evaluation Plan, Financial Plan
- Set up office for day to day operations
- Hire paid staff
- Develop and begin to implement program and services of the Center
- Evaluate and survey customers, volunteers, agencies, donors to see if you are on the right track.
- Be flexible and be able to change directions quickly
- Attend local, state and national conferences
- Attend and participate in your state association for Volunteer Centers

**Activity**

**Date Completed**

Contact the Points of Light Foundation for information packet.

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Create list of potential Start-Up/Advisory Team Members

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Send letters / make calls to potential Team Members

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Plan first meeting of Start-Up Team

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Identify a Project Leader

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Identify strategies for “seed” funding

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Create plan and timeline for Community Needs Assessment

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Conduct Community Needs Assessment

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Compile and review results

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Plan / Conduct Feasibility Study

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Compile results from Community Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study into a report to share with media, Potential Board Members and potential funders

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Research potential funders

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Develop recruitment plan and job descriptions for Board of Directors

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Target Board Members – Send invitations

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Develop Business Plan (3 years is ideal – 1 year is practical)

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Develop transition from Start up members to Board members.  
Some start up members may be elected to Board

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Board of Directors Welcome event / Set meetings for the next year

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Filing of official 501 C 3 status, Filing Articles of Incorporation  
Adopting By-Laws

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Fund Development is underway – Multi year funding is the focus

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Board of Directors create job description for Executive Director and outlines staffing structure

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Secure 50% of the first year budget

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Confirm site and location of the Volunteer Center

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Hire Volunteer Center Director

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Implement programs and procedures as outlined in the Strategic / Business Plan

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Plan for grand opening, marketing, opening date and process for handling volunteers  
(Make sure you have volunteer opportunities before you have Volunteers/ customers)

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Grand opening happens as scheduled

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Executive Director is involved in local, state and national associations

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Board of Directors are meeting regularly

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Full funding for current year is in place

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Funding for the next year is aggressively sought

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Program evaluations are developed

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Programs and services are re-evaluated/ modify if needed

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