

Stop Volunteers from Running Away: How the National Runaway Switchboard Recruits and Maintains a Strong Volunteer Core

National Runaway Switchboard Volunteer Program Overview

Michelle Vos
Volunteer Coordinator

National Runaway Switchboard
3080 N Lincoln Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60657

773-289-1726

mvos@1800RUNAWAY.org

Nicole Sutton
Public Ally

773-289-1731

nsutton@1800RUNAWAY.org

The National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) has relied on a strong core of volunteers since 1974. A majority of volunteers serve as “liners” who answer crisis calls on 1-800-RUNAWAY from youth and families in need nation wide. The call center consistently answers over 100,000 calls annually and in 2007 we handled 175,000 calls.

NRS volunteers come from a diverse background ranging in age, education level and reason for volunteering which includes high school students to professionals, homemakers to retired, completing work study to assisting a meaningful cause. If a volunteer wants to answer crisis calls, offer pro bono services, join our street team or sit on a committee NRS is willing to work with a volunteer to find the best fit. There is a process each volunteer must complete in order to become a liner which will prepare them to be effective and comfortable taking crisis calls. After training the liner is asked for a commitment of 2-4 hours a week for at least one year.

Objectives of presentation:

- Share techniques that can help a nonprofit recruit volunteers using a variety of mediums.
- Prepare nonprofits to set up effective means to screen potential volunteers and ways to best utilize their assets.
- Identify tools that are useful in volunteer management such as retention, motivation, guidance and progress tracking
- Learn how different recognition activities play a role in a sustainable and strong volunteer core.