

Operations: Empowering Volunteers to Work on Initiatives

Leading a patient-centered organization can be a lot of work but oh so rewarding. Knowing how to empower your community to drive your cause forward is a learned skill. This worksheet will help you pinpoint your values and match them to your volunteers' skillsets.

1. Take inventory of your advocates -- survey them to understand not only what brought them to the cause, but what skill sets they bring as well. [Here is an example of a survey I AM ALS conducted in 2020.](#)
2. Now list the different areas your organization focuses on, be it education, awareness, advocacy, patient care, etc.



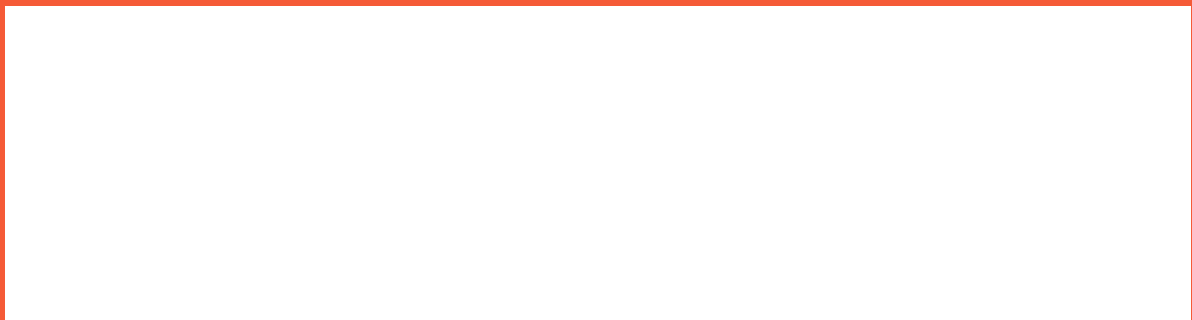
3. Holding people accountable is hard by itself. And might be more difficult if they are volunteers. Think about it this way: You're not holding them accountable but showing an interest in them and the work they're doing. List different approaches of how you can hold your advocates accountable to fulfill certain responsibilities on the next page. For example, having a notetaker ends all notes with a list of action items, who said they would do those items and when they would finish them by. Then check in the next meeting to see if they were accomplished. Or establish quarterly team goals and check in on those goals and the progress on those goals during meetings.



4. What is the culture that you'd like your volunteers to uphold? Write down some key values and begin to draft them into the environment you would like to see within the organization and throughout your volunteers. Here is an example of the job descriptions for I AM ALS co-chairs and team members to spark your thoughts.



5. What tools or measurements can you put in place to get a pulse on how the initiative and responsibilities are going? Work closely with the advocates to shape this and agree on how often you should check into these. Here is an example of how I AM ALS' Legislative Affairs Team tracks their progress.



6. What process would need to be in place for review?



7. Phew. This work is rewarding, but also draining. What ways can you work to avoid burnout? How can you celebrate the big and little wins? How can you show appreciation?



Understand that when you are a patient-driven community, you'll have to let go of some control. It's ok to fail and try again. The above lists help inform you of the culture you would like to create and the values you will uphold for your organization and your volunteers. Work directly with your volunteers on ways to implement these values, measure success and celebrate the minutiae to keep driving momentum forward.