

Request Builder: Turning Needs into Actionable Requests

Objective

This tool helps you transform a well-defined ministry need into a clear, structured request that will connect you with virtual volunteers on Switchboard. By following this step-by-step process, you'll ensure your request is easy to understand, actionable, and optimized for the best possible match.

Step 1: Define Your Need Clearly

A well-crafted request begins with a clear understanding of what you need. Answer these questions:

- **What specific task or skill do you need help with?** (e.g., "Graphic design for social media posts" or "Help organizing volunteer schedules")
- **What goal will meeting this need achieve?** (e.g., "Having a structured volunteer schedule will allow us to coordinate outreach efforts more effectively and ensure no key activities are overlooked.")
- **Is this a one-time consultation or an ongoing role?**
 - **One-time:** A short-term project or expert advice session.
 - **Ongoing:** A recurring role that supports your ministry over time.

Example:

"We need a volunteer with experience scheduling and coordinating volunteers to serve two to four hours per week, which will allow us to coordinate outreach efforts more effectively and ensure no key activities are overlooked."

Action: Write a one-sentence summary of your need.

Step 2: Define Specific Tasks & Responsibilities

Once you've identified your need, break it down into clear, actionable tasks. This will help potential volunteers understand what's expected and whether they're a good fit for the role.

For a One-Time Consultation:

- What specific questions do you need answered?
- Are you looking for strategic advice, technical guidance, or a problem-solving session?
- What resources or background information should the volunteer review beforehand?

For an Ongoing Role:

- What recurring tasks will the volunteer be responsible for?
- What skills or experience are needed to complete these tasks effectively?
- Are there any tools or platforms they will need to use?

Action: List two to five specific tasks or responsibilities that will help the volunteer understand his or her role.

Step 3: Set Expectations for Time & Commitment

Volunteers are more likely to respond when they know what's expected. Define:

- **Time requirement:** How many hours per week or month?
- **Project duration:** Is this a short-term or long-term need?
- **Flexibility:** Can the volunteer set his or her own schedule, or are there specific time constraints?

Action: Be realistic and specific about the time commitment when drafting your request.

Step 4: Craft Your Request Using This Formula

To ensure clarity, use this simple request format:

"We need [specific skill or task (Step 1)] to help with [ministry goal (Step 1)] . This role requires [time commitment (Step 3; if on-going)] , and we're looking for someone who can [specific contributions (Step 2)] ."

Examples:

"We need a social media strategist to help with developing an outreach strategy for our ministry. We're looking for someone who can provide insights on platform selection, audience engagement, and content planning to maximize our engagement and reach over a one-hour consultation."

"We need help organizing volunteer schedules for our weekly outreach program. This role requires two to three hours per week, and we're looking for someone who can maintain and update the schedule while communicating with our local team."

Action: Fill in the formula with your specific details and review it for clarity.

Step 5: Security & Sensitivity Check

Before finalizing your request, review it for any sensitive or security-related information:

- Could this request compromise ministry work in a restricted-access area?
- Does it include names, locations, or sensitive details that should be generalized?
- Does your organization have security protocols you should follow?

Action: Adjust your wording if necessary to protect sensitive information.

Final Step: Post & Share Your Request

Once your request is finalized:

- **Post it on Switchboard** and let the platform match you with the best candidate.
- Use the **Comprehensive Communication Guide** to share your request with your personal network for additional outreach.



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