

Tips to start your own VOLUNTEER BAKING NETWORK

PEOPLE TO BAKE

First and foremost, a volunteer baking network needs volunteer bakers! Recruitment can be a snowballing effort: once you get the ball rolling with a steady corps of volunteers, you'll find that word of mouth will draw in new volunteers on a regular basis. (That is, if you have good partners to bake for and a coordinated system...so keep reading!) Some ideas to try to get the word out:

- Fliers on local community boards
- Facebook groups for bakers and/or do-gooders in your area
- Local religious organizations
- High school/college service organizations
- Local media (once you're ready!)
- Friends and family!

PEOPLE TO
BAKE FOR

Begin with a clear sense of mission, and identify strong partners to reach out to. As with the recruitment of bakers, this aspect of your network will snowball with time: as word of mouth spreads, and if you demonstrate that your bakers are reliable, then new requests will come in (from individuals and organizations) without you having to make the introduction. In the meantime, just send out emails to let people know about your network!

A COORDINATED SYSTEM

Don't shortchange this aspect of your network.

It takes a lot of time, preparation, organization, vigilance and communication to coordinate this kind of initiative. We rely on the following tools and habits to keep things running:

1. A listserv to communicate with your bakers (we use [Mailchimp](#))
2. A website where bakers can sign up for the listserv (we built ours with [Wix.com](#))
3. An online request form for baked goods (we use a form created by [POWR](#) through Wix, which gets directed to our Gmail inbox that is specifically for requests)
4. An online calendar for events/volunteer sign-ups (we use [SignUpGenius](#))
5. A synchronized steering committee (we rely on [Google Drive](#) and occasionally [Asana](#))

When a request comes in, our steering committee vets it for mission alignment and our current capacity. If we approve, we let the requesting person/organization know and then we add it to our SignUpGenius calendar. (We assign volunteer slots based on the head count of the event, with 1 baker for every 25-30 people expected.) We send out listserv emails to our bakers every 1-2 weeks to summarize any news and upcoming events that need volunteers. Finally, we keep an eye out to make sure nothing goes unclaimed! It is vital that we are reliable in fulfilling our commitments, so we stay in touch with our bakers and partners.

Other things to think about...

- **Insurance:** Your bakers may be exposed to risk in terms of food preparation and/or delivery.
- **Fiscal sponsorship:** If you can find a local non-profit to serve as your fiscal sponsor, you may be able to accept tax-deductible donations, apply for grants, etc.
- **Events:** Baking parties can be a great way to bring people together and build connections across your network.
- **Supplies / Reimbursement:** It can be a hassle to coordinate a supply network, but providing supplies or reimbursements may make it possible for more people to get involved as bakers.
- **A name!** The name and logo associated with the InKind Baking Project are unique to our project in Philadelphia (please don't use them), so have fun brainstorming your own unique identity!