

Young Professionals in the American Red Cross

Quick-Start Guide

learn first aid and CPR
volunteer play a round of golf for flood victims relief
school connections raise money to save a child from measles change a life
high new money to save a child from measles change a life
mentor a make from measles change a life
help build successful corporate partnerships
meet a diverse group of new people
build the skills you need to become a better leader
team visit a veteran
concert join a disaster relief team
build relationships share your talents
get certified in something new to you
work with other young professionals in your area
attend a lunchtime speaker series



Acknowledgments

This guide is brought to you by the American Red Cross National Youth Council Alumni Board. Members of the Alumni Board represent young professional volunteers aged 21-35 and work to engage their peers in the humanitarian mission of the American Red Cross.

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We would like to thank the following employees and volunteers from chapters and the Office of the National Chair of Volunteers at national headquarters for their contributions.

Darren Foster	Office of the National Chair of Volunteers, National headquarters
Allison Koenigbauer	American Red Cross of Southeastern Michigan
Courtney Manuel	American Red Cross of Greater Chicago
Amelia Marian	Office of the National Chair of Volunteers, National headquarters
Shruti Mathur	National Youth Council
Corinne McManus	American Red Cross of Greater Columbus
Heather Pritchett	Arlington County Chapter

Design: Justin Lam



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Guide for Young Professionals

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The Case for Club Red.

What is Club Red? Why is it important?

Club Red is a commitment to targeting and incorporating an important segment of the population—21- to 35-year-olds—in all aspects of the American Red Cross. This key demographic, hereon referred to as young professionals or Club Red members, may overlap in age with young adult volunteers, but are defined by their status as members of the working world, recent college graduates, and graduate students.

Club Red is just one option for the name of your young professionals group. Other examples include GenRed and ARC Young Professionals Committee. It's up to you!

Club Red is an assembly of dedicated volunteers who support the Red Cross mission, generally through event-based fundraising activities. They build awareness for the Red Cross among young, civic-minded philanthropists, promoting fundraising opportunities as well as service delivery, like disaster relief and preparedness education. People from all industries and backgrounds and with differing levels of Red Cross experience join Club Red because of a common interest in the mission of the American Red Cross.

A great draw of Club Red is the opportunity to network with other young professionals. Young professionals may be living in a new city and looking for social activities to connect with their peers. Club Red capitalizes on this need. Many large corporations encourage their employees to volunteer and give money, often matching their financial contributions and encouraging philanthropic endeavors in the workplace. This unique mix of social and career opportunities makes Club Red an attractive experience for young professionals across the country.

You may be wondering why the young professional demographic warrants a separate program, with different recruitment methods and activities. By understanding and catering to the needs of different segments of the population, like young professionals, you will help your volunteers and donors have a more meaningful experience with the Red Cross. Club Red presents the opportunity to involve groups of talented and generous young people on their terms, and encourages them to support the Red Cross throughout their lives.

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Incorporating a Club Red commitment at your unit can serve as a worthy tool for the retention and recognition of an already loyal volunteer base.

What can Club Red do for my unit?

Young professionals can bring a number of things to your Red Cross unit, including diversity, expertise in new areas, and additional fundraising prospects.

Develop career paths for your young volunteers

The Red Cross has developed solid and recognizable programs for young people age 24 and younger, and, as a result, thousands of youth and young adults volunteer for the American Red Cross through high school or college programs. Upon graduating, entering into a new phase of life, or transitioning to a new city, these young people may lose their connection to the organization. Incorporating a Club Red commitment at your unit can serve as a worthy tool for the retention and recognition of an already loyal volunteer base.

Utilize the unique skills and resources of young professionals

Young professionals can bring many skills and assets to your unit. Potential members include employees at local businesses who may help you tap into corporate networks for funds and in-kind gifts or to organize a blood drive partnership. At the same time, young professionals have new disposable income which they may choose to donate to the Red Cross. By building a strong network of young professional volunteers, you will gain access to local businesses and new potential donors.

Club Red members can also contribute valuable technical skills to your unit. During the week, young professionals hold a variety of paid positions at local organizations. As volunteers, they can bring those valuable services to your unit. Young professionals are likely to be technologically savvy and can help you integrate advanced technology into your operations. They could help you build a web site or use social media to promote the Red Cross. As members of the professional workforce, Club Red members will possess a refined set of skills.



Club Red members can also help you mobilize the college and high school students in your area. As young professionals, they help bridge the gap between young and old. Club Red members can serve as advisors to Red Cross school clubs or they can help your unit recruit additional youth and young adult volunteers. A commitment to Club Red will give your young volunteers a strong set of mentors and show students how they can remain involved with the Red Cross when they enter the workforce.

Ensure future leadership for your unit

Club Red will also help ensure strong future leadership for the American Red Cross. Many outstanding young volunteers find few volunteer opportunities targeted toward them once they become young professionals. Club Red will give young professionals the social networking and professional development opportunities required to get or keep them involved with the American Red Cross. And by recruiting and retaining volunteers during this stage of life, the American Red Cross will be guaranteed strong leadership now and in the future.

There are no set boundaries for age or for the scope of activities associated with the young professional market. Together with your Club Red leaders, you can organize outreach based on the interests and needs of your community. This guide provides basic information, assistance on getting started, and examples of Club Red groups already up and running at units across the country.

Sounds great. Where do we start?

If Club Red sounds like a good fit for your unit and your community, this guide will help you organize a successful program. In order to thrive, a program for young professionals must be run by young professionals themselves. If you don't already have a few young professional leaders in mind, start out by recruiting from groups already supported by your unit. You could hold a recognition event for graduating seniors from Red Cross college clubs in your area.

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While you're thanking them for their contributions, you can also find out who would like to keep volunteering as young professionals.

You may also want to approach local large- and medium-size companies with advertising materials for your Club Red. And don't forget to recruit from professional schools, like local law schools, medical schools and business schools. These students are often looking for easy ways to stay involved with community service. Your current board members may also have ideas for how to reach young professionals, and may have connections at local companies or universities.

When a few young professionals offer their time to organize a Club Red, use the info sheet in the appendix of this guide to gauge their interest. If they are on board, follow the steps on the info sheet and use specific advice in the following section to set up the program. Together you can discuss the goals and structure of the program, potential activities, and set up your first recruitment event.

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Getting Started.

Structure

You may choose to set up your Club Red as a membership-based group, where volunteers give a tax-deductible gift to your unit to become an official Club Red member. Consider offering different levels of membership with different perks associated with each level. For example, the Arlington County Chapter in Arlington, Virginia offers memberships at the bronze level for \$35, silver level for \$50, gold level for \$200, and platinum level for \$500. Offer perks only you can provide, like access to your high-level board members or a behind-the-scenes look at Red Cross disaster operations. These funds can then be used as a base for your program's budget, enabling the group to plan service projects and events with its own funding.

Club Red can be a major fundraising force at your unit.

Alternatively, your Club Red can put on events like fundraisers and days of service throughout the year, without a formal membership structure. Either way, your Club Red should have a leadership structure, like a leadership committee, that provides opportunities for young professionals to take ownership of the program and thus be more engaged in the Red Cross mission and gain useful leadership skills.

Programming

Once you have a structure in place, start thinking about potential activities. Plan opportunities for young professionals to fundraise, volunteer, and network with one another.

Fundraising

Club Red can be a major fundraising force at your unit. Many young professionals work at high-profile companies and can help bring in major gifts, establish corporate partnerships and multiply the value of their individual gifts through matching programs at work. Asking young

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professionals to make personal contributions, even in small amounts, also sets the stage for major giving later in life.

Social networking events, like happy hours, at local bars and restaurants are often the perfect mix of socializing and philanthropy that young professionals are looking for. And since many companies are interested in marketing to young professionals with new disposable income, they are likely to sponsor your Club Red events. Developing relationships with beverage vendors and event venues will bring in members as well as resources. Check out the best practices section at the end of this guide to see how happy hour fundraisers have worked for other units.

If happy hours aren't your thing, or if you'd like to diversify your event calendar, look at these fundraising ideas and think about what might work at your unit. Take note of other profitable fundraisers in your community and try to replicate their success.

- Fashion show, partnering with local designers/design schools
- Date auction
- Wine tasting
- Concert
- Speaker series with networking reception
- Leadership training seminar
- International Humanitarian Law training
- Silent auction
- Golf tournament
- Midnight cruise
- Celebrity chefs (pancakes, steaks, anything in between)
- Oscar night
- Masquerade ball
- Speed networking/dating
- Comedy night
- Sporting event

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Board of Directors and this could open the door to other roles at the state, regional or national levels. Take a look at the committees and leadership positions at your unit and make sure that young professionals are represented. The opportunity to move upward in the Red Cross organization is one of our best built-in marketing tools.

Recruitment

Getting the word out to your target audience is crucial to the success of your Club Red. Look through these ideas and figure out what will work best for your community.

Word of mouth

Inviting your friends and coworkers is an easy way to grow your Club Red. Explain what your group does, be enthusiastic and ask them to join the effort. If they can make it, they will check out at least one event. Start by asking at least five people to bring a few extra friends with them to the next event. If you get a chain of people recruiting before the event, you will be very happy with the turnout.

Asking young employees at your unit to invite their friends can also be a great way to get started. If there are other networks for young professionals in your area, invite them to use your board room for a meeting. This way, they'll learn more about the Red Cross and you'll have a potential partner organization. Check with the Chamber of Commerce, mayor's office, and local cultural and religious organizations, as well as young alumni groups of fraternities and sororities.

Online

You may also advertise your Club Red online and via e-mail. Your methods may vary depending on your budget and your technical expertise. Consider creating a listing for your Red Cross unit on VolunteerMatch.org that specifically requests young professional volunteers. That way, young professionals will know there are service opportunities tailored to their needs.

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Print

Distributing flyers and posters in public areas is another way to tell people about Club Red. Depending on your location, the people you target and the resources at your disposal, challenge yourself to think of other interesting ways to catch eyes. Bulletin boards, chalk writing on sidewalks, t-shirts, billboards, stickers...if you think it'll work, try it!

Don't be afraid to get creative! Put your efforts into what will be most effective for your area.

Final Steps

Set aside time in your Club Red planning to consider your measures and outcomes. Did you achieve the goals you established at the beginning? Would you like to focus on a different aspect of the program going forward? Find an evaluation method that works for you and use what you learn to make your program better.

Also, don't forget to promote your work! This kind of marketing will advocate for the Red Cross in your community and make Club Red members proud of their accomplishments. Tell your story to local newspapers and newsletters, blogs, radio stations, TV stations and local cable TV shows. Feature your Club Red on the home page of your unit's web site.

Ask Club Red members to include short stories about their fundraising and volunteer work in their workplace publications. Nominate Club Red members for awards given by their companies or local community organizations.

Share your successes and challenges with other Red Cross units. Promote your work at regional Red Cross meetings. And keep the National Youth Council Alumni Board in the loop so others may benefit from your experience. The Alumni Board is here to spread the word about Club Red, share best practices, and connect you with other programs for young professionals. Keep in touch with Mahati Acharya, Alumni Board Chair, at AcharyaM@usa.redcross.org.

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Best Practice | Los Angeles, CA

The young professional volunteers at the American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles serve as youth advisors to nearby Red Cross school clubs. They coordinate communication between the clubs and the chapter and also attend major club events and meetings. The use of young professionals has been particularly beneficial because there is a small age gap. Many of the Club Red members previously started Red Cross clubs at their high schools and colleges and therefore have a lot of practical experience to pass along.

Best Practice | Austin, TX

When the American Red Cross of Central Texas started its Club Red, staff wanted to be sure there was enough interest in the community. They began by conducting market research, bringing in groups of recent graduates and older young professionals to talk about potential goals for the program. With these opinions, the chapter launched a Club Red that integrated young professionals from all backgrounds into existing chapter activities.

Mentorship

School Club Mentors

Club Red members can mentor youth and young adult volunteers in your Red Cross school clubs. As young professionals, Club Red members can relay valuable information about the college admissions process, potential careers and future volunteer opportunities with the American Red Cross. You could even create a more personalized big brothers/big sisters program to match individual students with Club Red members who share similar interests.

Diversity

Youth and young adult volunteers are the most diverse segment of the American Red Cross volunteer base. Similarly, young professionals come from all walks of life and work in various fields. Use your unit's statistics from the Volunteer Satisfaction Survey to analyze your volunteer demographics before and after recruiting more young volunteers.

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Units with Club Red.

The following units currently offer programs for young professionals. Often, but not always, these programs are known as Club Red.

Local Chapter	City	Program Name	Web
Arlington County	Arlington, VA	Club Red	http://www.arlingtonredcross.org/clubred/
Central Ohio	Columbus, OH	Friends of the Red Cross	http://columbus.redcross.org/friends/Friends%20Home.htm
Central Texas	Austin, TX	Club Red	http://www.centex.redcross.org/index.php?pr=Club_Red
Cincinnati Area	Cincinnati, OH	Club Red	http://cr.clubredcincinnati.org/
Dallas Area	Dallas, TX	Club Red	http://www.redcrossdallas.org/site/PageServer?pagename=dac_clubred
Greater Chicago	Chicago, IL	Auxiliary Board	http://www.chicagoredcross.org/general.asp?SN=315&OP=376&SUOP=379&IDCapitulo=VF223FBDFD
Greater Miami & the Keys	Miami, FL	Young Professionals of Red Cross	http://www.miamiredcross.org/general.asp?SN=200&OP=2409&IDCapitulo=yhxm8np9t8
Greater New York	New York, NY	Young Professionals Committee	http://www.nyredcross.org/page.php/prmID/453
Greater Palm Beach	Palm Beach, FL	Paint the Town Red	http://www.pttr.org/
King and Kitsap Counties	Seattle, WA	Professionals in Action	http://www.seattlredcross.org/show.aspx?mi=4348
Southeastern Michigan	Detroit, MI	Club Red	http://www.semredcross.org/index.php?section=110
Susquehanna Valley	Harrisburg, PA	Club Red	http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=85170755

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 concert join a disaster action team give discover your passion attend a luncheon speaker series
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Make it your Red Cross experience.

(The info sheet for young professionals.)

This info sheet is brought to you by the Alumni Board of the American Red Cross National Youth Council. We strive to represent young professional volunteers between the ages of 21 and 35 and work to engage our peers in the humanitarian mission of the American Red Cross. We invite you to use us and this guide as resources to make a difference in your community.

Young professionals have no shortage of talent and energy to give to the Red Cross. We can provide relief to victims of disasters, organize fundraisers, mentor high school and college volunteers, teach lifesaving training courses and serve on boards of directors. And in exchange, this Red Cross experience offers us valuable networking and skill-building opportunities, opening doors to new people and leadership positions.

As a young professional volunteer with the American Red Cross, you can also:

- Initiate meaningful corporate partnerships
- Contribute your talents and technical skills to community projects
- Earn certifications in Disaster Services courses, First Aid, CPR and leadership
- Gain respect in your workplace by promoting volunteer activities

If you're interested in establishing more Red Cross opportunities for young professionals in your area, you can use these 5 simple steps to get something started:

1. Visit your local chapter

Set up a meeting with staff at your local Red Cross chapter. Introduce yourself and talk about your ideas. Ask questions! Find out what you need to know about how the Red Cross serves your community.

Spend some time assessing the chapter's current programs and needs. Think about how young professionals could add the most value by contributing time and resources to the Red Cross. Compile a list of local colleges, corporate partners and any young professionals who are already Red Cross volunteers to get your recruitment started. Think about what you can bring to the table,



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who your contacts are at work, school and in your social life.

To find your local chapter, visit redcross.org and type in your zip code.

2. Create an action plan

Recruit one or two other volunteers to brainstorm goals with you. Talk about what you'd like to focus on—such as one major fundraiser and a mentoring program or a community service project.

Establish your leadership structure and decide who will serve as your point of contact at the Red Cross chapter. Discuss marketing strategies to recruit more young professionals from a variety of fields. Pick a name for your group. Many Red Cross groups for young professionals call themselves Club Red. Others choose GenRed, Friends of the Red Cross or Red Cross Young Professionals. It's up to you.

Contact other young professional networks or junior boards in your area for ideas about starting your group. There may even be an association of young professional networks in your city!

3. Recruit your core leadership board

Carry out your marketing plan. Encourage your friends and co-workers to join your group. Try recruiting on local college campuses, targeting seniors who are about to join the working world. Focus on companies with large numbers of young employees. Launch your online marketing on Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn or a page on the Red Cross web site.

4. Hold board meetings

Assemble a leadership board with 5-10 core members. Hold planning meetings to discuss and improve upon your original action plan. Establish bylaws to determine how the group will function. Provide incentives for people to attend board meetings, like snacks and interesting meeting places.

To oversee your projects, assign committee chairs to lead initiatives such as corporate partnerships, a speakers bureau, disaster relief, and fundraising. Create a timeline with your activities and deadlines for the next six months to one year.

5. Host your first event

Plan an exciting kickoff gathering to spark interest in your program. Find a fun place to

host the event, a place young professionals enjoy going anyway. Local restaurants, bars or lounges may be willing to give you a discount on drinks and appetizers.

Have each core member recruit at least 5 people to attend. Post the event online and invite your friends. Distribute invitations via e-mail or at companies with young employees. Post and give out flyers at places such as local gyms and apartment complexes.

Once you've established your program, the sky's the limit! A variety of meaningful activities like fundraisers, community service projects and social events will keep your members engaged and effective at making a difference.

This info sheet is part of the Young Professionals in the American Red Cross Quick-Start Guide. It includes information on establishing and recruiting for your program for young professionals as well as best practices from around the country. Ask your local chapter about this resource or download it at redcrossyouth.org/about/youngprofessionals.

For more information on Club Red, and to share your successes and challenges, please contact the National Youth Council Alumni Board at AcharyaM@usa.redcross.org.



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