Relay For Life Event Lead Training Resources
Overview
This guide is intended to assist Relay For Life Event Leads in building their team for the Relay season. Within this guidebook, you will helpful tools and resources that you can use to guide your Event Leadership Team, and to make your Relay season a true success.

The Relay For Life movement is a community-owned, volunteer-driven event, so feel free to work with your fellow volunteer leaders and staff partner to see how you can adapt the information and tools shared to best fit your community.

Quick Links
These websites will help you access everything you need in your volunteer role.

- Relay Nation is the event’s global online community. Here, you can access resources and tools, join discussion groups, and talk with other Relay For Life participants nationwide.
  - Plan, Grow, Go
  - Relay For Life Event Leads Group
  - Resource Library
- Brand Toolkit is the American Cancer Society’s single repository for all branded materials, guidelines, and messaging tools, such as logos, photos, fact sheets, brochures, posters, print and web advertisements, videos, and more! For tips on how to set up your account, click here.
- Relay For Life Facebook Page
- The Volunteer Learning Center is a training resource designed exclusively for Society volunteers. Use it to access trainings that will help you prepare for volunteer roles.

Volunteer – Staff Partnership
The volunteer-staff partnership is built on trust, accountability, and follow-through. Both parts are mutually responsible for holding each other accountable for their roles. Staff pledge to respect their volunteers, ask for their input, empower them, support them, grow their skills, and value their time. Check out this video for an overview of the volunteer staff partnership.
Event Lead Position Description

Lead role: Serves as the face and voice of the American Cancer Society and Relay For Life event within the community, demonstrating leadership by empowering the Relay For Life Event Leadership Team.

Individuals in this role possess strong leadership and interpersonal skills, are outgoing, and are knowledgeable about the American Cancer Society and Relay For Life event (mission, history, accomplishments, format, and purpose). Primary responsibilities for individuals in this role are to mentor and guide the Event Leadership Team in fulfilling their responsibilities and achieving goals for the Relay For Life event within their community.

Specific tasks can include:

- Work with the Relay For Life community manager to ensure that training of roles and resources takes place.
- Communicate regularly with the People Lead, Experience Lead, Fund the Cure Lead, as well as the Relay For Life community manager.
- Work with People Lead, Experience Lead, and Fund the Cure Lead to ensure partnership agreements are completed for all positions.
- Mentor and lead income and non-income planning and goal-setting initiatives in partnership with Relay For Life community manager and Event Leadership Team.
- Meet monthly or bi-monthly with the Relay For Life community manager, Experience Lead, People Lead, and Fund the Cure Lead to discuss benchmark goals and progress.
- Lead and manage Event Leadership Team workshops, meetings, and other sub-leadership team meetings as needed.
- In partnership with the Relay For Life community manager, recruit a full Event Leadership Team and ensure all Event Leadership Team leads and members understand and fulfill their commitments to develop the Relay For Life event in their community.
- In partnership with the Relay for Life community manager, ensure coordination, preparation, and implementation of regularly scheduled Event Leadership Team meetings.
- In partnership with the Relay For Life community manager, review and discuss fundraising goals, expenses, and progress on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.
Forming Your Event Leadership Team

Having a strong Event Leadership Team is one of the biggest keys to building a successful event. When looking for Event Leadership Team members, here are some things to consider:

- Don’t limit the Event Leadership Team to just your friends or those who have been on the team in the past. Diversity is necessary for bringing up new ideas.
- Make sure the people you choose for the Event Leadership Team are passionate, excited, and energetic about the cause and the event.
- Recruit people from across your campus or community to ensure a vibrant team with plenty of ideas. This is a great opportunity to perform a campus/community mapping exercise to take advantage of the diversity that exists within your campus or community. Consider different organizations, religious groups, athletic associations, business groups, residential communities, or anything that makes your area unique. Reach out to people with leadership potential from many of these groups when building leadership for your Event Leadership Team.
- Look to supporting and feeder events such as Bark For Life and Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walks, as those volunteers are already committed to saving lives.
- Make sure to ask about their other time commitments and obligations. An Event Leadership Team member who is over-involved may not be able to carry their share of the work.
- Be sure to recruit those who are motivated to improve the lives of others.

Event Leadership Team Recruitment Resources

- Identifying Leadership Gaps: SWOT Analysis
- Recruitment Action Plan Template
- RFL Multicultural Engagement Resources
- Characteristics of Successful Volunteer Leadership
- RFL Event Leadership Team Recruitment Flyer
- Working the Track at Relay For Life
- RFL Recruiting For Success Toolkit
ELT Training Resources

- **Event Leadership Team Structure** – This document can allow you to customize names and positions within your team to demonstrate which areas of focus certain positions fall under, and how they work together.
- **Relay For Life Program Role-specific Volunteer eGuidebooks** – This is a volunteer’s one-stop shop for everything they need to be successful in their volunteer role! Each eGuidebook contains volunteer information for before, during, and after a Relay For Life event. The eGuidebooks include all resources, role specifics, best practices, and strategies for a fabulous and successful event.
- **American Cancer Society Volunteer Orientation Video** – This awesome video provides volunteers with a quick, concise overview of the American Cancer Society mission, history, and volunteer opportunities. Check it out!
- **Relay For Life Movement Impact Video: Where the Money Goes** – This short video helps answer the question, “Where does the money I raise at a Relay For Life event go?” It demonstrates what the Relay movement is all about and how participation helps the American Cancer Society save lives.
- **Relay For Life Program Online Website Training and Materials** – Browse our selection of recorded webinars that focus on event site management, how to use social media, how to send great emails to participants and manage reports, and how to customize your online webpage.
- **RFL EPIC Implementation Guide** – This guide is intended to assist Relay For Life Event Leadership Teams in building their team for the Relay season. Within the guide, you will find everything you need to know and need to prepare for to make your Relay season a true success. This Event Leadership Team EPIC Experience is designed to walk your team through planning out your Relay season in an EPIC way. EPIC is an acronym for Educate, Plan, Implement, and Celebrate.

American Cancer Society Trainings

Want even more great learning tools and resources? Check these out on the Volunteer Learning Center!

- **The Volunteer/Staff Partnership Series**
- **Selling the ACS Story**
- **Talking about ACS: Our Value Proposition**
- **The Community I Serve**
- **Research 101**
- **American Cancer Society National Cancer Information Center**
Inspirational Videos
Check out and share these motivating Relay For Life event videos:

- The Impact of Fundraising
- The Relay For Life Story
- Relay For Life Event Development
- Relay For Life Team Development
- Relay For Life Team Ambassador Recruitment
- Relay For Life – Paint Your World Purple
- Relay For Life Survivor Speaker – James Gardner

Event Leadership Team Tools
These resources can help empower your Event Leadership Team members to use in their roles:

- **General**
  - RFL Event Leadership Team Timelines Toolkit
  - Volunteer Tools and Resources Flyer
  - RFL Social Media Toolkit
  - RFL Newsletter Templates

- **Bring the People**
  - Team Recruitment Playbook
  - RFL Team Recruitment Scripts
  - Team Retention Playbook
  - RFL Survivor and Caregiver Toolkit
  - RFL Survivor and Caregiver Playbook
  - RFL Caregiver Engagement Guidebook
  - RFL Kickoff Planning Guide
  - RFL Community Champion Guidebook

- **Build the Fun**
  - RFL Ceremonies Toolkit
  - RFL Build the Fun Toolkit
  - 100 Event Activity Ideas

- **Fund the Mission**
  - RFL Community Sponsorship Pitch Kit
  - RFL Local Sponsorship Video
  - Be sure to also check out Brand Toolkit for monthly mission toolkits!
Succession Planning

- **Core Four Succession Planning**
  - The event leads or Core Four (Event Lead, People Lead, Build the Fun Lead and Fund the Mission Lead) positions also require special attention with recruitment. Have a discussion with your staff partner to determine the leadership and volunteer commitment needs for your event not only in terms of strengths to look for in a potential chair, but also the time commitment that works best for your event. Invite past or outgoing event leads to make volunteer recommendations for the position, as they know the role and responsibilities best and can identify people who possess traits that are most advantageous for the position.
  - One example of staff and volunteers working together to develop a succession plan specific to their event is found at the Relay For Life of Billings, Montana.
    - Their event has a strong succession plan which includes identifying their event chairs three years in advance. Their first year, they serve on a steering committee of subcommittee chairs and current Event Leadership Team chairs to get a good understanding of the behind the scenes work necessary to make your event successful. During the second year, they continue as a member of the steering committee and work with the sponsorship subcommittee to help bring more support to their event. Finally, in the third year, they serve as event chair. While this may not be possible for all events, a two-year commitment may be more reasonable and allow incoming chairs a year to observe the current chairs and work with them to fully understand the roles and responsibilities. This transition year is a flexible position where they can help the current chairs with their tasks, as well as help other subcommittees who need extra hands at various times throughout the year.

- **Event Leadership Team Succession Planning**
  - Remember to continually think about succession planning for next year’s Relay For Life season to ensure you are setting your event up for success in the coming years. Reference the Event Leadership Team Succession Planning Guide for more information and work with your staff partner to develop a plan that works best for your event.
  - Most successful Relay For Life events have a detailed succession plan for the transition of their leadership positions. While we must continually evaluate and tweak the structures of our Event Leadership Teams to ensure that they are meeting the needs of our ever-changing events and organizations, we don’t need to reinvent every aspect of the Event Leadership Team at the beginning of every year. Succession plans help us to keep the momentum of previous seasons while moving into future events.
Answering Common Questions

Think back to when you first started as a volunteer with the American Cancer Society and the questions you had in your first weeks, months, or even year. Many new Event Leadership Team members may have questions about the Relay For Life program that experienced Relay volunteers take for granted.

When training new members, be sure to include some Relay For Life FAQs such as the ones found in this document. This can also be used for team captains later in the year. Be sure to reference the Making a Difference infographic (use the national option and find your state based data) or the RFL Donations Make a Difference document to share how donations allow the Society to make an impact. You can also share this video on the Relay For Life impact.

Remember, you don’t have to know everything about the Society or Relay For Life program to be a volunteer, but here are a few resources to help you learn more and find answers to your questions.

- The official website of the American Cancer Society: cancer.org
- RelayNation, the website for sharing of all things Relay For Life related! From documents to forums and everything in between: relaynation.org
- The official website for all Relay For Life events: RelayForLife.org
- The go-to resource for American Cancer Society and Relay For Life related branding, pictures, and corporate sponsored resources. Create your free account today: brandtoolkit.cancer.org
- Access to 150+ e-learning resources and training modules for many of the Society’s programs and services, including Relay For Life: volunteerlearning.cancer.org