Bloodworks Northwest

Using Shiftboard, Bloodworks Northwest coordinates 3,000 active volunteers across 12 regions

Summary

Bloodworks Northwest (BWNW) supplies blood and lab services for three states. Their dispersed operation involves scheduling a scattered and diverse volunteer base for positions requiring a variety of skills and certifications across a wide geographical area. Once blood is collected, it must be tested and distributed within a matter of hours to area hospitals.

Manual organization methods and out-of-the-box scheduling software both proved inadequate. BWNW chose Shiftboard for its highly customizable, mobile volunteer management system, which has helped them significantly streamline operations and reduce management time by up to 70%.

3,000	**130+**	**12**	**900**	**90**
volunteers	teams	regional clinics	blood units daily	hospitals

Challenge

Bloodworks Northwest collects, tests, and distributes 900 units of blood each day to 90 hospitals across Washington, Oregon, and Alaska. They operate 12 physical locations, maintain a network of mobile donation units, manage an ongoing roster of 250,000 registered donors, and coordinate 3,000 volunteers who fill vital roles like greeting donors, assisting registration, driving, monitoring donors, scheduling appointments, and helping with myriad administrative tasks.

The mobile units alternate among 3,000 different locations, requiring 130+ local volunteer teams. In a typical day, BWNW manages 100 unpaid people across 30 different locations—all of whom can change the next week. Confirming volunteer qualifications and maintaining compliance across so many locations is daunting.

Results

- Optimized a volunteer-driven supplychain of regulated, time-sensitive blood products across three states

- Reduced time spent managing remote teams spread across a large region by up to 70%

- Ensured regulatory compliance

- Increased capacity and expanded operations to better fulfill their mission statement

Blood platelets only have a 5-day shelf life, so once the blood is collected, all donations must reach a lab within 5-8 hours for immediate, comprehensive testing and distribution.

Scheduling such a widely dispersed and diverse network of staff and volunteers is a huge task. As BWNW's operation grew, organizing all of this effectively by hand became impossible.

Solution

Bloodworks Northwest tried out-of-the-box scheduling software, but found it limited their productivity. It lacked quick, real-time reporting, which they needed for providing up-to-date insights into scheduling and staff data. They required a flexible, customizable system that would adapt to their unique operational structure. Also, with a constant stream of unpaid workers and no time to train them, BWNW needed their scheduling software to be intuitive and easy to use for managers and volunteers.

BWNW turned to Shiftboard, and, after a quick data import, they were able to organize all 3,000 volunteers by territories and teams. Managers and teams now operate autonomously with access to reports detailing the volunteers and data they need to succeed.

"Shiftboard has been indispensable for our volunteer program," explained Jeremy Vollman, BWNW Volunteer Coordinator. "It gives us a lot of overall control, and empowers us to more efficiently engage our volunteers." BWNW has cut coordination time by anywhere from 50-70 percent, leaving them more time to focus on growing their organization. Plus, 24/7 real-time access to personnel data has given them the agility to manage their volunteer network from anywhere, at any time.

Compliance BWNW must comply with numerous state and federal regulations. Shiftboard enabled them to verify certifications, qualifications, and other credentials, and ensure on-site compliance at any location.

Localization Shiftboard made it easy for BWNW to organize and assign people by geographic area, which helps reduce travel time and increase participation.

Instant communication People get sick and plans change, so the ability to troubleshoot the unexpected is critical. Shiftboard's deep profile data combined with Instant communication tools make it easy for managers to identify and contact qualified subs at the last minute.

Retention Shiftboard's profile and communication tools help track performance and engage top volunteers to recognize their efforts and support retaining your best workers.

Ease-of-Use All the functionality in the world doesn't do any good if your volunteers can't use it. Shiftboard works on everything from the latest smartphone to a desktop browser, and requires no training. It's easy to use, even for rural retirees, so a lack a tech savvy isn't a barrier for BWNW to recruit and schedule people. "I tell volunteers that if you can write an email, you can use the software," said Vollman.

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For more information, please visit shiftboard.com.