Finding Volunteers and Repeater Sites

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The practical limit on any mesh network's coverage is the number and location of repeaters. Growing a community mesh means finding both people willing to host hardware and locations with good RF exposure.

Identifying Good Repeater Sites

The best repeater sites share these characteristics:

- **Elevation:** Hilltops, building rooftops, water towers - any location that has line-of-sight to a wide area
- **Permanent power:** AC power or solar with battery backup means no maintenance visits for power
- **Internet connectivity:** Enables MQTT gateway functionality and remote management
- **Willing host:** Someone at the location who can assist with initial install and occasional physical access

Where to Find Volunteers

- **Amateur radio clubs:** Many hams are already interested in digital modes and emergency communications; LoRa mesh is a natural extension
- **Community preparedness groups:** CERT, neighborhood emergency response teams, and ARES/RACES members often see immediate value in mesh
- **Tech and maker communities:** Hackerspaces, makerspaces, and local tech meetups
- **Community maps:** Public maps such as meshmap.net (Meshtastic, opt-in MQTT-reporting nodes only) and map.meshcore.io (MeshCore) can help you spot existing operators nearby — though they show only nodes that uplink, so they undercount private

networks

- **Existing mesh Discord servers:** The official MeshCore Discord at meshcore.gg, RegionMesh's community channels, and other communities often have "looking for volunteers in [state]" discussions

The Repeater Volunteer Pitch

The cost and effort for a volunteer are minimal. Emphasize:

- Hardware cost: ~$32 for a single Heltec V3 (less in multipacks); a basic repeater build with antenna and enclosure runs somewhat more (as of June 2026)
- Power draw: under 1 watt continuous (negligible electricity cost)
- Maintenance: essentially zero once installed and configured
- Contribution: one well-placed rooftop repeater can meaningfully extend neighborhood coverage, depending on terrain, antenna height, and line of sight

Coordinating Through the Community

If you are deploying as part of a regional MeshCore network like RegionMesh, coordinate through the official MeshCore Discord at meshcore.gg and the regionmesh.com community resources. There is no single official "5-step RegionMesh process"; practices vary by community and are set by local consensus. Sharing your repeater's location and settings with nearby operators helps the broader community find and route through it.

Tracking Your Network

As you grow, keep a simple inventory of deployed nodes: location, hardware, firmware version, radio settings, and host contact. This becomes critical for maintenance, upgrades, and troubleshooting.

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