



VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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The key areas of volunteer management

Why do people volunteer?

There are many reasons why people volunteer. They are as varied as the people themselves.

Here are some overall themes:

- Want to help others
- An obligation to give back
- Religious convictions
- Want to make a difference in the world
- Believe in a cause

There are also more personal reasons why people want to give their time to a cause:

- Gain work experience and learn new skills
- Interested in meeting new people, making friends
- Gives a sense of purpose or being needed
- Opportunity to explore new lifestyles or cultures
- Able to be involved in something different from their regular job

Who volunteers?

The people who decide to commit their time to volunteering come from all backgrounds, skill levels and areas of interest. There are eight different groups of volunteers:

- (1) *Workplace or Corporate*
- (2) *Retiree*
- (3) *Alternative sentencing*
- (4) *Professional*
- (5) *Episodic*
- (6) *Transitional*
- (7) *Unemployed*
- (8) *Stipended or paid volunteers*

Volunteer Development Cycle

The cycle can be broken down into six key steps:

1. Planning and Assessment
2. Recruitment and Marketing
3. Interviewing and Screening
4. Training and Orientation
5. Supervision and Evaluation
6. Recognition and Retention

Step 1: Planning and Assessment

What does your group need and want?

- Involve those in your group who will be working with volunteers
- Set goals and identify what roles volunteers will be fulfilling
- Identify what skills, talents or abilities will be needed to get the job done
- Develop a detailed job description outlining roles, qualifications and benefits
- Look at the risk involved, develop appropriate screening procedures
- Document expectations, example policies and procedures
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Step 2: Recruitment and Marketing

What type of people do you want?

- Identify if you need to recruit to the general public, specific groups or both
- Create a recruitment and marketing plan – this includes website development, print and television ads, external listings, timeline for when you want volunteers in place
- Identify different areas where you would like to advertise for the ideal volunteer, example community centres or schools
- Develop a recruitment package – this includes background of group, information on volunteer opportunities, benefits of volunteering, application forms and intake procedures
- Be creative with recruitment – offer an open house for potential volunteers to meet your group and learn about what you do
- Promote your opportunities through presentations at schools, work fairs etc.
- Work with what resources you have

Step 3: Interviewing and Screening

What is the purpose of interviewing and screening?

- To ensure a good fit
- Explore volunteer's interests and group needs
- To protect potential volunteer and service group
- Provide job description and role expectations
- Examine the commitment of the role
- Opportunity for volunteer to make an informed decision

Checklist for interviewing:

- Decide on a format, individual or group interview
- Ensure you have all materials needed to complete the interview: job description, volunteer agreement or contract, information on the organization, screening checks etc.
- Explain that the interview is a preliminary step, acceptance as a volunteer depends on completion of orientation, screening etc.
- Involve more than one staff in an interview, this gives a balanced opinion on the applicant
- Encourage applicant to ask questions

Step 4: Training

Appropriate training is key to making good volunteers great! Helpful checklist:

- What type of training needs to be provided
- What information is needed to complete the role
- Formal or casual training
- Be realistic, if a position requires more training to do the job it is important to provide that for the volunteer
- Don't shoulder the responsibility on your own – involve other staff or even volunteers to help plan or facilitate the session
- Make it fun! Presentations can include discussions, field trips, videos, demonstrations, role-playing and other methods.
- Have volunteers evaluate training session, feedback is essential for future planning
- Training should be ongoing in some form, this will keep volunteers on track and supported

Step 5: Supervision and Evaluation

“As a manager, the important thing is not what happens when you are there, but what happens when you are not there.” *(Kenneth Blanchard and Robert Lorber)*

The job of a volunteer manager is to empower volunteers to do their best.

Why do we need to supervise and evaluate volunteers?

- To give volunteers support and feedback
- To provide direction
- Ensure expectations are being met
- Keep communication link open
- To voice any concerns or challenges with volunteer role

What type of evaluations can be provided?

- Individual and group evaluations can be used
- One to one meetings can be arranged
- Surveys can be sent out
- When providing feedback to a volunteer on their performance, it should be constructive
- If a volunteer is not benefiting from their role consider the three R's: re-train, re-design, re-assign

Step 6: Recognition and Retention

- For volunteers to complete a job well, they must remain motivated and feel a sense of appreciation for this contribution
- Without this sense of appreciation volunteers can become unmotivated, frustrated and eventually they will not be able to be retained

There are many different ways to recognize volunteers. Some examples of formal and informal recognition:

- Formal recognition event, e.g. annual party
- Presenting awards to volunteers for a job well done
- Highlighting their contribution in a publication
- Including them in program development
- Providing specialized training
- Simply saying “thank you”
- Remembering their birthday with cake and a card
- Invitations to outside events
- Learning about who they are
- Creating volunteer t-shirts or hats
- Providing reference letters
- Paying for certain expenses e.g. mileage
- The list is endless!

Retaining volunteers can be very challenging. Their interest level must always be present for them to remain enthusiastic about their involvement. Here are some tips:

- Ensure both the organization and volunteer are realistic about their responsibilities
- Pay close attention to how a volunteer is fitting in and enjoying their work
- The first 6 months for a volunteer is crucial
- Re-evaluation during anniversaries is key e.g. 1 year
- Provide new opportunities, a volunteer who has done the same job for years may want a change
- Support volunteers in using their strengths
- Have fellow staff treat volunteers as equals
- The goal is to empower volunteers to fulfill their personal interests as well as benefit the organization

Resources

• *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing all the Resources of the Community* (Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch)

• www.energizeinc.com

• www.avaintl.org

• www.kidscancercare.ab.ca

Activities related to the various steps.

Activity 1: Planning and Assessment

- What are the top five things your group or organization needs volunteers to do?
- Identify three ways in the next 6 months that will help you fulfill these needs?

Activity 2: Recruitment and Marketing

- What positions for volunteers in your organization or group need to be filled?
- What are the skills, experience and/or personality needed to do these jobs?
- Based on this need, where can you find these people?

Activity 3: Interviewing and Screening

- List three questions that you think are important to ask potential volunteers
- What screening methods do you use in your group or organization when processing volunteers?

Activity 4: Training and Orientation

- What type of training do you provide volunteers with now?
- What type of ideas would you like to include?
- What do you think is the most important part of training?

Activity 5: Supervision and Evaluation

- What is your supervision style when it comes to volunteers?
- What feedback have volunteers given about how they are supported?
- What evaluation tools does your group or organization use?

Activity 6: Recognition and Retention

- List a few examples of how you can recognize volunteers creatively
- What are the main challenges you face when it comes to retention?
- What ideas do you have to solve these challenges?