

Investing in Volunteers

Tools for Orientation and Training



Build Relationships with Volunteers

- Recruitment
- Orientation
- Training
- Ongoing communication and supervision
- Recognition

What Motivates Volunteers?

- **Achievers**

- Tangible accomplishments
- Want to see results
- Need to see clear outcomes of efforts

- **Affiliators**

- Social interaction
- Like to be with people
- Need to belong to a group

- **Empowerers**

- Like to influence decisions
- Motivated by status and position
- Enjoy debating
- Like to be with important people and be in charge

Source: McCurley, Steve and Rick Lynch. *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing all the Resources of the Community*. Downers Grove, IL: Heritage Arts Publishing, 1996.

WHY make the investment?

volunteers

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adequate orientation and training

high returns that benefit everyone involved



High Returns on Orientation and Training

1. Enhances quality of service

- Builds knowledge and skills about program and assigned tasks

2. Minimizes risk

- High quality of service reduces intentional or unintentional harm to care recipients and volunteers
- Helps ensure good public image

3. Increases retention

- Effective volunteers are committed volunteers
- It's cheaper to keep them than to recruit new ones

4. Maximizes efficiency of other staff

- Volunteers gain tools and knowledge to solve problems

Orientation verses Training

What' s the difference?

Orientation

Purpose

To learn the mission/philosophy of the organization and program and to determine if the program is a good “fit” for the volunteer.

Possible Topics

- Program/organization overview
- Brief overview of volunteer opportunities and population served
- General expectations

Formats

- Interview
- One-on-one
- Phone call
- Group meeting at congregation, place of business, or schools
- Shadowing with other volunteers

Orientation verses Training

What' s the difference?

Training

Purpose

To increase knowledge, develop skills and increase awareness of proper attitudes needed to perform volunteer assignment.

Possible Topics

- Policies and guidelines
- Clear expectations of volunteers
- Guidelines on specific volunteer opportunities
- Assertive communication
- Listening skills
- Additional information on population being served



4 Steps to Identifying Training Needs

1. Review volunteer job/position descriptions.
2. Identify all knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to perform tasks outlined on job/position description.
3. Assess volunteers' current knowledge, skills, and attitudes and develop training based on that assessment.
4. Build training around the gaps in knowledge and skill levels.

Source: McCurley, Steve and Rick Lynch. *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing all the Resources of the Community*. Downers Grove, IL: Heritage Arts Publishing, 1996.

Training Content

- **Increase knowledge**

- **Purpose**

- Provide information to increase awareness or understanding of issues, concerns, and situations the volunteer may face
- Help establish clear communication and understanding between volunteers and the organization

- **Methods**

- Lecture
- Demonstration of completing reports/forms
- Handouts

- **Topics**

- Reporting a crisis
- Practicing general safety
- Handling offers of gifts/money
- Tracking volunteer hours

Training Content

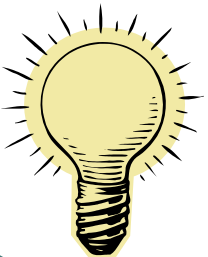
- **Develop skills**
 - **Purpose**
 - Teach or enhance skills needed in order to successfully perform volunteer assignment.
 - **Method**
 - Role-play
 - Demonstration
 - Case studies
 - **Topics**
 - Effective listening
 - Assertive communication
 - Sensitivity test
 - Additional skills specific to population served (HIV/AIDS, Dementia) or volunteer assignment (transportation, shopping)

Training Content

- **Increase awareness of attitude**
 - **Purpose**
 - To share your program's mission and philosophies
 - Volunteer attitudes should reflect the values and philosophy of the program and sensitivity to the population served by the program.
 - **Methods**
 - Role-playing
 - Group discussion
 - Panel discussion: use experienced volunteers/care recipients
 - Case studies
 - **Topics**
 - Population being served (culture, faiths, chronic illness, age)
 - Need for service – community profile and statistics
 - Various faiths principles and beliefs
 - History and philosophy of the program

Training Structure

- **When and how often to host initial training?**
 - **Monthly or Quarterly**
 - Pros: Larger group; easier to publicize a regular schedule in newsletter
 - Cons: Harder to tailor
 - **As needed**
 - Pros: Smaller groups more often; start volunteering sooner; minimizes risk of losing a volunteer to another agency or opportunity; demonstrates program's commitment to and priority for volunteers; allows flexibility for working volunteers
 - Cons: Staff time



Tip: Increase volunteer commitment and retention by training volunteers soon after interest is indicated.

Train the Trainer Tips

3 Principles for Trainers

1. **Kinetic Energy** – Passion for your program's mission and excitement about the role the volunteers play in achieving the mission
2. **Knowledge** – Know the material and your audience
 - Learning Styles and Tools, Learning Adaptations
3. **Creativity** – Creative delivery of material
 - Training Techniques

Training Evaluation Tools

- **Purpose**

- To assess effectiveness of information delivered in preparing the volunteers for their assignment.

- **Design tips**

- Focus on content and presentation, not trainer personality
- Use simple but clear word choice
- Keep it short – Yes/No, Likert scale, Multiple choice
- Always leave space for additional comments

- **Follow-up**

- Review evaluations promptly
- Use advice and feedback to improve future trainings
- Consider a training content assessment after 30- 60 days to obtain a more accurate idea of training effectiveness

Post-training

- Match volunteers as soon as possible (Preferably within two weeks of completing training)
- Consider allowing volunteers to shadow other experienced volunteers if there are no care recipients identified
- Encourage volunteers to immediately utilize knowledge and skills learned during training
- Maintain ongoing communication for effective volunteer management and supervision

Ongoing or In-service Training

Purpose

- To provide additional information on specific topics
- To obtain ongoing feedback from volunteers
- To stay in touch with volunteers after initial training and placement
- To encourage volunteers to connect and share their ideas and experiences with each other

Suggestions on topics

- State Highway Patrolman present on defensive driving
- American Red Cross representative present on Disaster Relief
- Area Agency on Aging present on Aging Sensitivity; safe and easy transfers from car to wheelchair

Ongoing or In-service Training

Suggested Topics

- Information on diverse faiths from local clergy, rabbi, etc.
- Caregiver/Volunteer fatigue – Caring for yourself
- Bereavement and Loss
- How to talk to the doctor or pharmacist – advice for patients and caregivers
- Other nonprofit services for referral
- Depression – early indicators and strategies for caregivers
- Current trends/new information on population served
- Dementia/Alzheimer's- what you should know
- Time management skills
- CPR or basic first aid
- AARP driver's safety

A WISE investment with high returns for your program is training your volunteers to succeed!