

Chapter Six: Volunteer Management



“Management is nothing more than motivating other people.”
- Lee Iacocca

6. Volunteer Management

Keys to successful management of volunteers are knowing how to delegate tasks to volunteers, knowing how to build trust in volunteer abilities, and encouraging other staff to do the same.

In an essay entitled *The Mythical Team Leader* posted on the web site www.serviceleader.org, Russ Finney describes a manager as “The person who understands the ultimate project objectives, each step of the way, and who guides the rest of the team down this path through clear vision setting and effective communication.”

He goes on to say a manager has several roles when managing paid or volunteer staff. These roles include:

- Creating a vision.
- Determining task assignments.
- Making decisions.
- Monitoring progress.
- Maintaining open communication channels.
- Deflecting unnecessary distractions.
- Enforcing quality standards.
- Supporting a career development atmosphere.
- Managing issues and problems.
- Dealing with Murphy’s Law.



A 1998 Volunteer Survey by the UPS Foundation, www.community.ups.com, indicated that good volunteer management can reduce volunteer turnover. The survey found the main reason for no longer volunteering was “other demands on time” which is beyond the control of most volunteer managers. However, two out of five volunteers stopped volunteering for one or more of these reasons:

- Not good use of time.
- Poor use of talents.
- Tasks not clearly defined.
- Not thanked.

The best way to maintain volunteers is to be wise consumers of a volunteer’s time.

6.1 Interviewing and Screening

Volunteer management begins at screening. Set up an in-person interview with the applicant as soon as possible. This communicates to potential volunteers that you need them, you appreciate their interest, and that you’re organized and efficient. First impressions are lasting ones, so treat every potential volunteer as though they’ll be your best. If for some reason you are unable to meet with a potential volunteer right away, contact them and explain the reason you cannot meet. Then, schedule an interview at your earliest availability.

Effective interviewing of volunteers is one of the most important tasks of a volunteer manager. Good interviewing skills are essential to match a potential volunteer with a task and working environment they will enjoy.

Unlike when hiring a person for a particular job vacancy, volunteer interviewing does not so much consist of examining an applicant’s suitability for one job as it does evaluating the ability and desire of that applicant to fit productively in some position within the agency.

6.1.1 Purpose of Volunteer Interviews

Two basic purposes of a volunteer interview are to:

- Identify “fit” to include determining the interests and abilities of the potential volunteer and assessing they will fit within your organization.



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- Recruit - which includes answering questions or concerns the potential volunteer may have and “selling” the volunteer on their ability to make a contribution to your agency, its clientele, or to derive personal satisfaction from helping.

6.1.2 Interview Location

Where you choose to do your volunteer interview is important as it requires an exploration of personal characteristics. Three attributes are critical:

- Accessibility.
- Friendly atmosphere.
- Privacy.

Remember the old adage: “You never get a second chance to make a first impression.” What the potential volunteer sees and feels during the interview may shape their attitude toward the agency.

6.1.3 Pre-Interview Preparation

Gather the following items before the interview:

- A list of possible jobs with descriptions of required work and qualifications.
- A list of questions related to each job.
- A completed application form by the volunteer with background information.
- A set of open-ended questions to explore the motivations of the volunteer.
- Information and materials on the agency and its programs.

6.1.4 Opening the Interview

Make potential volunteers comfortable when you first meet for an interview.

Greet them in the lobby. Talk casually with them as you escort them to your office. Offer them something to drink.

The beginning of the interview should focus on:

- Making the applicant feel welcome.



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- Building rapport. Explain what you would like to accomplish. Let them know their determination of whether volunteering would be suitable is the intent of the discussion.
- Giving them background about the agency. Ask them what questions they have about the agency and its purpose and programs.

6.1.5 Conducting the Interview

The major portion of the interview should be devoted to the following:

- Exploration of the applicant's interests, abilities, experience and situation.
- Determine why the applicant is considering volunteering and what types of work environment they prefer.
- Discussion of various job possibilities. Explain the purpose and setting of jobs and let the applicant consider them. Use this as an opportunity to let the applicant discuss how they would approach various jobs, which will tell you more about their intentions and level of interest.
- Discuss agency requirements including time commitments, training requirements, paperwork, confidentiality rules, etc. Let the volunteer know what will be expected of them.
- Remember that you are still recruiting the volunteer at this stage, so do not forget to explain why each job is important to the interests of the agency and the clientele.
- Look for personality indicators that will help you in match this person to a position and a supervisor that will make them happy.

6.1.6 Closing the Interview

The interview should be concluded by:

- Making an offer of a possible position to the volunteer, or politely explaining that you have no suitable openings for them at this time. If this is the case make a referral to another organization that may be able to use this potential volunteer's talents.
- Explaining what happens next including making background or reference checks, scheduling a second interview with staff, scheduling a training session, etc. Explain the process, the time frame, and the role of the volunteer in each stage.



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If unsure whether or not this person will make an effective volunteer in your organization, tell him/her you will review the application with your supervisor and provide a date when you will get back in touch. If you believe you've found a match, have the person complete required paperwork for new volunteers.

6.1.7 Documenting the Interview

Be sure to write up a synopsis of your interview. Two sample formats follow:



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Interview Documentation Form sample 1 from the U.S. Army Volunteer Leader Handbook.

Volunteer Interview Record	
Interviewer _____	Date _____
Name of Volunteer _____	Phone _____
I. REVIEW OF ENROLLMENT FORM: Clarify information on Volunteer Enrollment Form. Correct information on form and place other comments below _____	
II. NON-DIRECTIVE QUESTIONS:	
1. What attracted you to our agency? Is there any aspect of our work that most motivates you to seek to volunteer here? _____	
2. What would you like to get out of volunteering here? What would make you feel like you've been successful? _____	
3. What have you enjoyed most about your previous volunteer work? About your paid jobs? _____	
4. Describe your ideal supervisor. What sort of supervisory style do you prefer? _____	
5. Would you rather work on your own, with a group, or with a partner? Why? _____	
6. What skills do you feel you have to contribute? _____	
7. What can I tell you about our agency? _____	
III. MATCH WITH VOLUNTEER POSITIONS: Discuss potential volunteer positions and check match of interests, qualifications, and availability.	
Position: _____	Comments: _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Volunteer Interview Record

To be completed after interview.

IV. INTERVIEWER ASSESSMENT APPEARANCE:

Poised, neat Unkempt Acceptable

PHYSICAL RESTRICTIONS:

1. _____ 2. _____

REACTIONS TO QUESTIONS:

- Helpful, interested, volunteers information
- Answers questions
- Evasive
- Confused

DISPOSITION:

- Outgoing, pleasant, confident
- Reserved
- Withdrawn, moody
- Suspicious, antagonistic

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:

- Adept at dealing with others
- Relatively at ease with others
- Uncomfortable

V. RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Consider for following positions:

1. _____ 2. _____

- Schedule for second interview
- Hold in reserve for position of:

1. _____ 2. _____

- Investigate further
- Refer to:
- Not suitable for agency at this time

V. NOTIFICATION

Volunteer notified of agency:

Date and method:



Interview Documentation Form sample 2.

Volunteer Interview Summary

Volunteer's name and phone number: _____

Date: _____

Name of interviewer: _____

Volunteer application reviewed. _____

How did the potential volunteer hear about our agency? _____

Why do they want to volunteer? _____

What type of work would they like to do? _____

What have they enjoyed about previous volunteer experiences?

What have they not enjoyed about previous volunteer experiences?

Do they want to work on or off-site? _____

What time commitment can they give? _____

What actions resulted from this interview? _____



6.2 Managing Volunteers

After a volunteer is recruited, screened and placed in a position, daily management is required. Someone needs to:

- Delegate tasks.
- Prioritize tasks.
- Ensure the tasks are completed on time.
- Ensure quality products and services are provided.
- Appreciate accomplishments.
- Intervene in problems.
- Provide information and guidance.

At small agencies the volunteer manager may do this, but in larger agencies, or if the volunteer is doing highly specialized work, another family support program manager or another experienced volunteer may provide daily guidance and direction.

Volunteer supervisors who are inexperienced at managing others would likely benefit from reading books or articles on the art of supervision or attending an in-service training on supervision basics. A short list of easy to read books about supervision is included in Chapter 8: Program Evaluation.

Busy volunteers who are doing interesting work are happy people who are easier to manage. However, in the survey of military volunteer program managers used to create this guide, “lack of interesting or challenging volunteer opportunities” was the most frequent challenge listed. This is a challenge your agency can master.

6.2.1 Create Interesting Jobs

There are ways of “improving” volunteer jobs to make them more interesting and involving. The challenge for family support staff is often they do not want to give up the “good” parts of their job. They want the volunteer to do the “grunt work” or daily drudgery and then complain when they can’t retain volunteers.

It might be helpful for a staff member to see him or herself as a trainer, coach or mentor rather than a supervisor. It’s sometimes more palatable to “train”



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someone else who can also do the job, rather than “give up” an aspect of a job they enjoy.

Highlighting the “What’s in it for me” for volunteer supervisors is also a good strategy to develop more rewarding positions for volunteers. Staff supervisors gain:

- More supervisory experience.
- More opportunities to learn from volunteers.
- Fresh ideas and ways of doing business.
- Recognition from management and other staff.
- The ability to provide more and possibly different services.
- Flexibility in staffing.

In developing jobs for volunteers (other than for one-shot volunteers whom you don’t expect to retain) you should avoid setting performance standards too low. If the expectations are too easy to meet, people will not feel special about their participation. Volunteers should not have lower standards than paid staff.

6.2.2 Get New Volunteers to Work

Since volunteers are coming to the organization because they want to help, it is essential that you do everything you can to give volunteers work to do as soon as possible. Try to find ways for them to assist while they are getting oriented. Under-utilization creates serious retention problems because motivated volunteers who are trying to be of assistance will feel useless if they are not actually involved in doing something. They will also lose any sense of relationship with the organization over long periods of non-involvement.

In an ideal volunteer opportunity your agency will give volunteers what they want but don’t have. The volunteer is encouraged to identify elements of a possible volunteer job that would meet motivational needs not currently being met in their life and particularly not being met in their paid work. It would then become important to make sure that the volunteer job provided this perceived need.

6.2.3 Make them Feel “at Home”

A rewarding job is one in which working facilities are satisfactory and social relationships are positive. Many organizations have limited space and equip-



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ment, but it's essential to find some small spot volunteers can call their own. They need a place to put their coat or purse, to make a telephone call, to store their lunch. They also need a staff "mentor" or "sponsor" or "friend", someone other than their direct supervisor, to guide them through the daily procedures.

If you work at a site where access to the installation LAN is not available to volunteers make other arrangements for access to the Internet, word processing and data files or clearly explain the reason you cannot. Avoid making volunteers feel as though they are not equal to paid staff.

6.2.4 Create a Shared Vision

The Volunteer Program Manager should work with staff to make sure that there is a common purpose or goal for the team. Nothing is as fundamental to a team's effectiveness as a common sense of what they are trying to achieve. Both staff and volunteers should see themselves as equal partners in pursuing this goal.

6.2.5 Treat Volunteers as Equals

The Volunteer Program Manager should insure that staff and volunteers are treated equally. Be on the lookout for inadvertent behavior that makes volunteers feel excluded. A common example is that volunteers are not invited to staff meetings, not because they are deliberately excluded but because no one thought to give them the option to attend. Such a situation can make volunteers feel like second-class citizens.

6.2.6 Make Volunteering Fun

This is not quite as strange a notion as it might seem. One way to view volunteering is as a "leisure" activity - something which is done freely without expectation of monetary benefit. Volunteering and leisure have similar expected benefits. People want to do something interesting, to achieve something, meet people, have fun, learn new things, be refreshed, and relax. All of these factors might be examined as aspects of volunteer jobs that could be strengthened.

Focus on four areas to take advantage of this relationship between leisure and volunteering:

- Self-interest and recreational expectations of volunteers might make volunteering more appealing to people.
- Providing volunteer opportunities that will be perceived as worthy leisure.



- Highlight recreational aspects of volunteering as a technique for recruitment.
- Matching a person's leisure expectations to potential outcomes associated with a volunteer experience.

6.2.7 Managing Off-site Volunteers

Virtual volunteering should not be looked at as a replacement for face-to-face volunteering; instead, it is an expansion of your volunteer resources, an augmentation of your organization's activities, and another way for someone to help support your organization and give back to the community. For some people, it will be a preferred avenue of volunteering, but for many people, it will be an additional avenue of volunteering.

Managing offsite volunteers is not vastly different from managing people on-site. It involves basic management skills such as setting and communicating goals, assessing progress and giving regular feedback. You probably don't see onsite volunteers every moment at your organization, so it won't be altogether foreign territory to work with volunteers virtually.

Managing online volunteers even affords managers several benefits, such as having an automatic, extensive written record of volunteer activities via e-mail.

Still, in a virtual environment, some adjustments in styles and approaches to volunteer management must be made to ensure success. For instance, volunteers working via home or computers can feel isolated or undervalued, and gradually become uninspired about the work your organization is doing.

In the traditional office, much of the communication with and inspiration of volunteers occurs informally. Opportunities for information exchange are very different in the virtual office. Managers must give special consideration to how this communication process can take place virtually as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Management via the Internet comes naturally to some people; for others, there is a significant learning curve.

Learning to communicate primarily via written text can be a challenge for volunteer and manager alike. Sometimes, a volunteer manager will have to interpret people's communication and assist them to be clear and effective online.

Serviceleader.org offers the following information about communicating with volunteers on line:



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- Some write e-mails exactly as they talk, using punctuation and “smileys” to show emotion or expression.
- Some write formally.
- Some write short and to the point.
- Some write often.
- Some interpret silence as approval, others as disapproval.
- Some will e-mail you and then call, as they aren’t absolutely certain of technology and need the approving voice.
- Some write e-mails littered with punctuation, spelling and sentence structure errors, but are very articulate on the telephone and quite respected in their professional field.
- Some are “documenters” and some “snippers”: Some feel it is necessary to keep the full reply even if it is the 6th message passed. Others like to respond in a concise manner, so much so that it can be hard to figure out what they are responding or referring to (this may not be a culture difference, as much as a difference in e-mail systems or the person’s technical know-how).

6.2.8 Strategies for Managing Young Volunteers

Most of your volunteers will fall between the ages of 20 and 50; however, younger people can also play a valuable role. While most people can agree that are useful as volunteers, it is a different matter to put it into practice. The Volunteer Center of San Francisco, CA, <http://www.vcsf.org>, offers these tips for working with young volunteers:

- Be sure salaried staff members participate in the planning process. Be alert to expressed and unexpressed reservations and deal with them early on.
- Do not forget that adult volunteers will also be affected; enlist their aid in generating ideas for implementing youth volunteer projects.
- The first way you might want to involve youth is as advisors to you. Talk with them and get their opinions and ideas about ways youth could become volunteers in your program.



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- Beware of the myth that youth will do anything “because they’re young.” The best jobs are the ones the kids want to do.
- Ask yourself, “What will the young person get from this volunteer assignment?” Develop jobs that build on motivations such as learning something new, feeling important and being of real help.
- At the same time, your desire to provide a “good experience” for young volunteers should not overshadow your responsibilities to your clients. So also ask yourself, “Does this job meet a real need?” This must be the bottom-line question.
- Write a job description for every assignment, even if the job is very simple. The job description is a tool for you to pinpoint exactly what you want to have happen.
- To recruit your volunteers, ask yourself where youth can be found, and don’t stop after answering “at school!” Other sources that can be tapped include church and synagogue groups, after-school recreation programs, community centers, camps, sports leagues and video game arcades.
- The most important thing in recruitment is to find some personal way of asking each young person to become involved. Kids will respond most positively to a direct, face-to-face appeal.
- Success in working with young people relies more on an innate “sixth sense” than on hard-and-fast rules. Certainly you should have policies and procedures, but be open to the unexpected. Remember that one of the main reasons you recruited young people is to benefit from their fresh approach and creativity, so don’t squelch the potential.
- Adult supervisors will find themselves acting as “teachers” when supervising young volunteers. This is natural and positive. Youth need to have their work placed into the broader context, which is usually new to them.
- Youth can be given substantial independent responsibility once they are trained and accustomed to their assignments. They should know who is in charge if a question arises, but constant supervision should not be necessary.
- Give tangible, immediate rewards for work accomplished. Also, consider ways to recognize each young person publicly within peer group settings and via school and community newspapers, church or synagogue bulletins, etc. Parties are a good forum for recognizing the contribution of your young volunteers.



6.2.9 Strategies for Managing Gen X Volunteers

Since many volunteer managers are from the “Baby Boom” generation they often have difficulty knowing how to effectively manage the group of individuals referred to as “Generation X”, those younger volunteers born after 1961 and before 1980. Following are suggestions for how you can better manage “Generation X” volunteers and maximize their productivity and contributions to your organization. (Adapted from www.volunteerpowers.com)

- Establish project-driven relationships, not “huggy-feely” relationships with them.
- Recruit younger volunteers to work on teams with dynamic leaders who will act as mentors, care about them, and demand high performance.
- Stay in touch, offering constant very specific feedback.
- Never micromanage.
- Let them be creative and do things their way.
- Listen to them as they express their opinion.
- Value their new ideas.
- Be specific about the end results of the project they are working on. Be sure they understand that you are depending on them to meet the deadlines. Establish certain checkpoints during the course of the project.
- Empower Gen Xers to work at their pace, making their own day-to-day decisions, mistakes and creative solutions. Let them know that you are holding them responsible for the end result.
- Encourage questions and be generous in sharing information about the organization and the project.
- Train Gen Xers on skills and competencies that not only help your organization but also are something that interest them. They love win/win contractual relationships. They love to win and be rewarded for the effort that they put in.



6.2.10 Tips for Managing Older Volunteers

Older volunteers are a tremendous asset and potential talent pool. First, recognize that today’s “senior” needs to be approached by level of activity, not just date of birth:

- Young seniors are often very active and fully capable of helping in any volunteer role. In fact, they can apply all sorts of formerly job-connected skills and devote lots of time to your organization.
- Middle seniors may still be very competent, but may also have health, sight or hearing problems. They may limit their driving. They may also be resistant to things like electronic technology (though don’t assume this—many seniors love the Internet).
- Older seniors are the fastest growing age category in our society. Everyone ages differently, but many of these volunteers may have limited physical capacity.

A related, but sometimes more problematic category, is the volunteer who is “aging in place.” This is someone who joined you when s/he was younger and fit, but has grown older and now has diminished capacity. The quandary, of course, is that you feel loyalty to a volunteer who has contributed many hours of devoted service and it is awkward to have to confront the changes in ability that age may bring. But for the sake of your service recipients and the volunteer personally, you must find ways to balance the best interests of everyone.

Supervision tips:

- Know the volunteer’s sight and hearing limits and give written material or oral instructions with this in mind.
- Pay attention to physical fatigue and talk with the volunteer about his/her strength and endurance.
- When possible, buddy them up with younger volunteers. This technique is especially good for volunteers “aging in place,” who know the job but could benefit from some support and perhaps oversight.
- Insist on a rotation policy for everyone so that no volunteer becomes so entrenched in one assignment that it’s impossible to make a change. Offer an “aging in place” volunteer an alternate assignment that makes use of long-time service, such as helping with new volunteer orientation—but only if s/he would be good at it!



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- Don't ignore a deteriorating situation. Sometimes starting a concerned (but caring) conversation gives the volunteer the opening to admit to feeling insecure and less able to do the work s/he formerly considered a breeze.
- Only when appropriate, consider involving the volunteer's grown children in approaching their parent about changing abilities, or even the family physician.

6.2.11 Managing Volunteers during a Crisis

A man made or natural disaster can occur at any time. When a major crisis occurs on or near your installation you may be called upon to assist. The need for volunteers is often critical during a crisis. It's wise to "plan for" crises by having a core of trusted volunteers in which you can rely. As volunteer coordinator you may be required to:

- Train another staff member or volunteer to serve as volunteer coordinator as you can't be available twenty-four hours per day.
- Receives requests for volunteers from the lead agency managing a crisis situation.
- Assign volunteers who are offering their services to help in the crisis and refers them to the appropriate by using key leadership spouses, active duty personnel, qualified retirees, and other trained volunteers.
- The types of services volunteers may be called up to do during a crisis include:
 - Staff phones.
 - Operate check-in desk.
 - Assist crisis victims.
 - Staff childcare areas.
 - Assist with food/comfort services.
 - Act as "runner" or "recorder."
 - Assist as greeters.
- Ensure volunteers complete an application.
- Ensure all volunteers are thoroughly briefed before they assume their duties and are debriefed at the conclusion of the crisis.



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- Ensure volunteers are aware that crisis debrief counseling assistance is available after the crisis is concluded.
- Promulgate a watchbill should the event be prolonged, with each watch not exceeding six to eight hours in duration.
- Keep a current list of donated items and inform management of what has been offered.
- To draft thank you letters following the crisis.

6.2.11.1 Crisis Contact Log

During a crisis your agency may be flooded with offers to volunteer labor and materials. It's important to document these offers because as a crisis unfolds you may need offers you originally didn't think would be useful. A form used to document offers of support from Hampton Roads, VA FFSCs follows:



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is too shy to ask questions. When problems arise address them immediately. The Volunteer Resource Program at the Family Support Center on Randolph Air Force Base, Texas suggests that in dealing with a volunteer in which performance problems persist, it is recommended you:

- Clearly identify the problem.
- Understand the volunteer's view point.
- Explore all alternatives.
- Formulate and implement a solution.
- Set a probationary period.
- Follow-up with an evaluation.
- Contact the Volunteer Resource Program office if necessary.

Remember that volunteer placements are not permanent. A volunteer who cannot perform his/her assignment satisfactorily should not remain in that assignment. If you encounter such a problem, the next step is to remove the volunteer.

6.3.1 Solution Focused Counseling/Coaching

A counseling, coaching, or problem-solving model that is commonly used throughout the DOD and in the civilian community is called Solution-Focused Counseling. It is based on concepts developed by Milton Erickson, Steve deShazer and Insoo Kim Berg (Brief Family Therapy Institute in Milwaukee) developed in the mid 1980's. Solution-Focused Counseling, as its name implies, focuses on success. Focus is on your volunteers' strengths and abilities rather than their weaknesses. Solutions are derived by volunteers themselves.

Counseling and coaching sessions are:

- Short-term.
- Goal-oriented.
- Task-centered.
- Positive.
- Encouraging.



6.3.2 Eight Steps to a Successful Individual Coaching Session

The eight steps to a successful session with a client are:

1. Prepare.
2. Build a relationship.
3. Gather data.
4. Prioritize.
5. Explore options.
6. Make a plan.
7. Implement the plan.
8. Follow-up.

6.3.3 Prepare

Before meeting with your volunteer:

- Get organized.
- Review any information you already know about your about your volunteer.
- Start your session on time.
- Avoid interruptions while talking with your volunteer.

6.3.4 Build a Relationship

Whether you have a long standing relationship with your volunteer or your volunteer is relatively new:

- Put them at ease. Greet them with a smile. Engage in small talk.
- Offer a cup of coffee or glass of water.
- Thank them for volunteering with you agency.
- State the issue that needs to be discussed.
- Be friendly, responsive and non-threatening.



- Treat them with respect.
- Give them full attention.
- Actively listen.
- Use reflective listening skills, clarification questions, open-ended questions and summarizing statements.

6.3.5 Gather Data

Try to help your volunteer feel comfortable enough so that the data-gathering process flows like a two way conversation.

- Get your volunteer's assessment of the current situation.
- Ask what aspects of their position are going well.
- Ask what areas they're finding more challenging.
- If they agree there is a problem, ask what steps have they already taken to try to correct the situation.
- If they are unaware there is a problem, state what the problem is and brainstorm solutions.

6.3.6 Prioritize

There may be several issues impacting your volunteer. Try to identify the most pressing. Volunteers may disclose personal issues of a serious nature. If your volunteer discloses personal problems are impacting their volunteer work, make appropriate referrals to get them the help they need. There are times when your volunteer gives you information or times that you observe a behavior that cannot be kept confidential. If a volunteer indicates they are suicidal or homicidal, that must be reported. If you're made aware that a client or volunteer is abusing or neglecting their child or children, that must be reported as well. Since you provided training on the topic of confidentiality during volunteer orientation the reporting requirement won't come as a surprise. In fact, they may very well be disclosing to you because they feel safe in knowing you will assist them in getting the help they need. Obtain guidance from a supervisor, clinical counselor or director on how to handle these situations when they do occur. Ask your volunteer to remain in your office while you seek assistance.

If there are no personal concerns work together to develop a plan to resolve the volunteer performance problem.



6.3.7 Explore Options

Once the problem has been clearly defined, depending on the problem some of the following options might help:

- Change the volunteer's work assignments.
- Change work hours.
- Provide additional training.
- Explain policy.
- Reduce or increase the volunteer's workload.
- Switch supervisors.

6.3.8 Make a Plan

Once you and your volunteer have clearly defined the problem and have enough information to make a decision, the next step is to develop a plan of action.

Perhaps your volunteer has been frequently late or absent from his or her volunteer assignments. During your discussion you learn he or she is bored with the assignment, but hasn't asked for more challenging responsibilities.

After educating your volunteer that he or she should always bring concerns like this to your attention, discuss possible alternate placements. Review:

- Current interests.
- Review position descriptions and requirements.
- Ask the volunteer to decide what other position they would like to do.
- Make arrangements to interview the staff supervisor of new position.

6.3.9 Implement Plan

Once a plan has been developed it must be implemented.

- Agree on what steps will be taken.
- Be clear on who will do each task.
- Define time frame.
- Be sure to do any task you agreed to do.



There may be interim steps to implementing a plan. For example: if a volunteer was having difficulty communicating with his or her supervisor, you might provide the volunteer with an article about communication tips and do a role plays with the volunteer on how to approach and communicate concerns before scheduling a meeting to talk with the volunteer's supervisor.

6.3.10 Follow-up

Monitoring and follow-up with volunteers who are underperforming is critical. It indicates to your volunteers that you care about them and want them to succeed. You can follow up in person with a phone call or e-mail. Ask:

- The status of the plan.
- The usefulness of any referrals or materials provided.
- If there are any new or still unresolved issues.
- If any additional assistance is needed.

Be sure follow up with any staff supervisors involved if necessary.

6.4 Manage Conflict

Conflict is a natural part of the work world and does not necessarily need to be avoided. In your role as volunteer coordinator it may be necessary for you to manage conflict. Characteristics of conflict include:

- There must be at least two parties.
- There must be some kind of struggle or threat either real or suspected. Conflict doesn't exist until both parties are aware there is a problem.
- There must be some interaction or interference. A conflict arises when we feel that someone is interfering in our business.
- The transaction may be emotional.

6.4.1 Ten Tips for Resolving Conflict

1. Talk directly to the parties involved. Direct conversation is much more effective than getting information from everyone else.
2. Plan to talk to the other person at the right time and allow enough time for a thorough discussion.



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3. Consider what you want to say ahead of time. State clearly what the problem is and how it affects those involved.
4. Don't blame the other person for everything or begin the conversation with your opinion of what should be done.
5. Give factual information. Attack the problem, not each other. Keep in mind that you both are responsible for solving the problem. It is not just your problem.
6. Listen. Give the other party a chance to tell his or her side of the conflict completely.
7. Talk it through. Get all of the issues and feelings out in the open. Don't leave out the part that seems too "difficult" to discuss or too insignificant to be important. The solution will work best if all issues are discussed thoroughly.
8. Brainstorm for solutions. Consider a variety of ideas to help solve the problem. Don't judge the ideas as right or wrong, or good or bad. Two or more people cooperating produce lasting solutions more effectively than one person telling another to change.
9. Look for win-win solutions. Try to settle differences in a manner that meets everyone's needs. Focus on what is needed and not what is desired.
10. Follow through. Agree to check with each other at specific times to make sure the agreement is still working and do it.

6.5 Check List for Volunteer Supervision

- Does your agency have a *volunteer handbook* or similar handout that contains all of the policies that apply to volunteers?
- Does your center have a *grievance policy/procedure* or other strategy for addressing complaints received from volunteers?
- Do you require that each volunteer *sign an acknowledgment* stating that they have read and agree to abide by agency policies?
- Are volunteers *subject to discipline*, up to and including removal, for failing to follow agency policies?
- Are disciplinary procedures concerning volunteers *applied consistently*?



- Are supervisors of volunteers *trained in performance counseling* so they can help a volunteer address performance weakness?
- Are volunteer records kept in *locked or password-protected files*, accessible only by those with administrative rights?

6.6 Performance Reviews

Formal performance reviews or evaluations are done on a regular basis in some volunteer programs. If regular feedback is provided to your volunteers, this may seem redundant. If you choose to use a formal evaluation program there are some basic guidelines to follow:

- Ask for input from the volunteer.
- Schedule a time to meet with the volunteer in a private place and review their evaluation.
- Begin and end in a positive way.
- Focus on the volunteer's strengths.
- Provide specific examples of both behaviors you want to maintain, plus behaviors you want to change.
- Ask the volunteer what he/she believes he/she does well and what areas need improvement or further training.
- Ask the volunteer for input about the structure of your program.
- Plan for the volunteer's future with the program.
- Both you and the volunteer sign the evaluation.
- Provide a copy to the volunteer and put one in the personnel file.

While evaluations are a good way to document performance over a period of time, the most effective feedback is provided as soon as the behavior occurs. Thanking someone for a great job or being critical of an action they did six months ago, loses its significance.

6.6.1 Performance Review Forms

Several sample volunteer evaluation forms follow:



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Performance Review sample 1.

Volunteer Semi-Annual Evaluation

Volunteer Name: _____

Position Title: _____

Rating Categories for volunteer:

Outstanding 4 Highly Satisfactory 3 Satisfactory 2 Less than Satisfactory 1

Category: Rating

- 1. Appearance
2. Communication
3. Ability to follow directions
4. Understanding of role
5. Punctual
6. Cooperation.....
7. Willingness to learn
8. Work Habits
Dependability Organized
Takes Initiative Efficiency
Accuracy of Work Neatness

9. Has volunteer received any new training since volunteering with your office?

No _____ Yes_____ please specify what training: _____

10. Any Additional Comments? _____

Average number of Monthly Volunteer Hours Performed _____
Number of Months in Volunteer Service with your office _____

Evaluator _____ Date of Evaluation _____



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Performance Review sample 2.

Volunteer Assignment Worksheet

(One form to be completed for each assignment)

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____

Position Assignment Information

Job Title: _____ From: ___/___/___ To: ___/___/___
(Above dates must be within FY)

Crisis Response Watch
 Bill Assignment _____

Agency Receiving Service _____

Is the Agency the FFSC? Yes No

Work Location _____

Supervisor's Last Name _____

Supervisor's Title..... _____

Volunteer Contribution This FY

Hourly Salary Level Equivalent For Performing this Task			Total Hours Worked		Total Contribution
1 st Quarter.....	_____	x	_____	=	_____
2 nd Quarter	_____	x	_____	=	_____
3 rd Quarter	_____	x	_____	=	_____
4 th Quarter	_____	x	_____	=	_____



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Date of Evaluation: ____ / ____ / ____

- Rating Values -
- Outstanding
 - Exceeds Fully Successful
 - Fully Successful
 - Minimally Successful
 - Unacceptable
 - Not Observed
 - Not Applicable

Factor	Performance Rating
Dependability	_____
Meeting/Training Attendance	_____
Follows Procedures	_____
Record Keeping	_____
Degree of Supervision Required	_____
Initiative.....	_____
Creativity.....	_____
Problem Solving Ability	_____
Teamwork/Cooperation.....	_____
Relations with FFSC Customers	_____
Leadership Abilities.....	_____
Relations with Others (Staff/Vol).....	_____
Professional Behavior & Appearance.....	_____
Overall Quality of Work.....	_____

Most Significant Achievements:

Recommendations:

Name: _____

Date: _____



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Performance Review sample 3.

Volunteer Performance Review

Instructions: Use if you choose to do annual or bi-annual formal evaluations with your volunteers.

Volunteer Name: _____ Date: _____

Position: _____ Evaluation Period: _____ to _____

I. Job Performance and Productivity:

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement	Unsatis- factory
1. Assigned shift availability	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Effective service to victims	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Written documentation	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Equipment return	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments: _____

II. Work Habits:

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement	Unsatis- factory
1. Communication skills	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Follows established guidelines	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Works well without supervision	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Teamwork/Cooperation	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Accountability	_____	_____	_____	_____



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III. Goals/Objectives for upcoming reporting period:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

IV. Volunteers Comments:

I concur _____ I do not concur _____ with this evaluation.

Volunteer _____ Date: _____

Victim Advocate: _____ Date: _____

Copy of Performance Review MUST be provided to the volunteer. Volunteer should sign below.

I have received a copy of this Performance Review

Volunteer Signature: _____



6.7 Volunteer Termination

There are times when a volunteer commits an egregious act that must not be excused. It's not always easy to define what a volunteer might do that would cause immediate dismissal, but certainly inappropriate sexual advances, failure to follow orders given by the program supervisor, theft, or deliberately putting themselves or others in danger, severe breaches of client confidentiality, etc. would be examples. The following information regarding terminating a volunteer was adapted from a handbook for volunteer supervisors created at Tyndall Air Force Base.

Terminating a volunteer needs the same consideration and caution that terminating a regular employee calls for. There are four basic reasons that justify the removal of a volunteer:

- The volunteer has violated an agency or program policy that they were informed of prior to this incident.
- The volunteer has failed to maintain confidentiality about his/her work. Violating confidentiality is grounds for immediate dismissal. It is important for all volunteers to receive adequate training about the topic of confidentiality.
- The volunteer does not fit with your staff and has refused to be transferred.
- The volunteer cannot do the assigned work.

Some important points to remember when terminating a volunteer:

- Hear the volunteer's side of the story. Hearing all sides of an issue will help you research a satisfactory agreement for all concerned.
- Highlight the strengths of the volunteers.
- Keep an open mind. There may be a good reason for the volunteer's action.
- Be sure to be tactful in handling the termination of a volunteer.
- Be sure the volunteer knew about the policy or rule that was violated.
- Make sure the duties the volunteer failed to do were listed in the job description for his/her position.



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Build periodic reviews of performance into your volunteer program. By conducting periodic reviews, surprises concerning performance are avoided. Do not wait for the periodic review if you witness a volunteer in the process of making a mistake. Re-direction should be immediate and specific.

Reviews are most effective when discussion is paired with a written form or narrative. Begin the session on a positive note by highlighting strong points. If the need to comment on substandard skills arises, focus on the behaviors and not the individual.

You should also give the volunteer the opportunity to discuss his/her reactions to the volunteer assignment. Do they have all the tools necessary to do the job? Is the work environment pleasant? Is the amount and type of supervision effective? Keep in mind that the volunteer also has needs.

It may be necessary to terminate a volunteer based on the fact your, or the volunteer's needs, are not being met. Tact is the key to accomplishing this task. The volunteer that does not fit well into your work environment may be perfect in another. Keep your supervisor informed and work closely with them for guidance and assistance in terminating a volunteer.

It's hoped that with good screening, orientation and daily management you'll never have the experience of having to terminate a volunteer.

“Managing is like holding a dove in your hand. Squeeze too hard and you kill it, not hard enough and it flies away.”

- Tommy Lasorda



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