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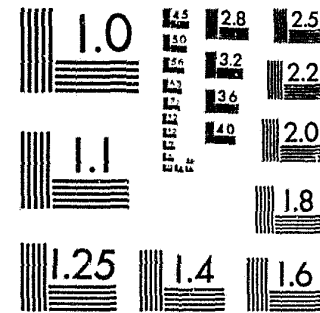
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Juvenile Justice Project
CENTER FOR
COMMUNITY CHANGE

VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Juvenile Justice Project

Center for Community Change

April, 1981

This is one of a series of publications prepared by the Juvenile Justice Project, Center for Community Change, for use by community-based organizations which serve or represent youth. These booklets are intended to supplement the training and consultative services of the Juvenile Justice Project. The purpose of this series is to increase the capacity of local citizen groups to provide alternative youth services and to advocate for change in the institutions which affect youth. Booklets in the series include:

- Volunteers

- State and Local Budgets

- The Juvenile Justice System

- Resource Development for Neighborhood-Based Organizations

- Changing Juvenile Justice: Services and Advocacy

PREFACE

Most community based organizations rely extensively on volunteers to carry out their work, though they may use different terminology to describe how they do it. Organizations which operate social programs talk about recruiting, training and supervising volunteer staff. Organizations primarily involved in community organizing speak of recruitment and retaining members as active participants. When it comes to finding and using volunteers effectively, many of the same principles apply to both types of organizations.

This booklet includes four items on volunteer and community involvement. Developing and Sustaining Volunteer and Community Involvement, developed by Bonnie Wood at the Center for Community Change, is generally applicable to all organizations using volunteers in any capacity. Urban Life Associates' How to Recruit, Retain and Reward Members covers some of the same principles, but is geared more specifically to action groups involved in community organizing. Benjamin Broox McIntyre's Training of Volunteers addresses in more detail one aspect of volunteer management which is especially critical to an effective volunteer program. A bibliography is included as a guide to further resource materials.

This booklet is dedicated to all who volunteer their time and energy to organizations working to improve their communities.

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DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING

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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Bonnie Wood
Center for Community Change

INTRODUCTION

This material is intended to provide a framework for the planning and implementation of a volunteer component to a community based organization, given that there is the involvement of paid staff in that organization. It does not address the issue of community control of the organization (Board of Directors), but does address issues of involving citizens in the overall scope of work of the organization.

The information here is not intended to be exhaustive. Instead, it should be used to stimulate discussion of some of the critical issues involved in volunteer management and as a tool to organize your thoughts as you move toward citizen involvement in your activities.

Before an organization can effectively recruit and use community volunteers, it is helpful to take the time to fully plan the volunteer/community involvement program.

The success of recruitment efforts and the ability to keep the community involved in important activities largely depends on now clearly the need for volunteers is conveyed, and how well organized the mechanisms for volunteer management are.

Issues that are important to address in planning for the program would include the following:

The level of Commitment in the Organization to Community Involvement.

- Can community volunteers contribute meaningfully to the organization's purpose and goals? Can they offer an aspect to the organization that paid staff cannot?

- Is it realistic to think of community volunteers assuming primary responsibility for important organizational activites? Why or why not?

- Is the organization committed to providing a needed service to the community or to enabling the community to identify and address its own needs? Is there a commitment to both of these intentions? How does the involvement of community members fit into this perspective?

- Is there a desire to involve community members in organizational activities because funds for staff are limited and additional person-power is necessary?

- If sufficient funds existed, would there be an attempt to involve the community in the conduct of organizational activities?

The Involvement of Organizational Staff with Volunteers.

- Will staff retain responsibility for most program activities and use volunteers to assist them?

- Will staff transfer program responsibilities to volunteers and see themselves as trainers or supervisors?

- How will work done by volunteers be integrated into the overall workplans for the organization? Will one person be given the responsibility for developing program workplans and to reflect volunteer involvement?

- Will these responsibilities be spread out among several staff members?

- Will one person maintain all of the responsibility? Will that person be able to use other staff members as resources? Will that person have programmatic duties beyond the management of the volunteer program?

This manual takes the perspective that volunteers are essential to the purpose of an organization, that the organization will consist of paid and non-paid personnel and both are important in meeting the goals of the organization. If this is a valid perspective, then, the development of mechanisms for managing volunteer resources is as important as that for managing paid-staff resources.

In short, personnel management in an organization will necessarily refer to volunteers as well as paid staff. While it is desirable to create a high level of autonomy among volunteers, so that program activities may be carried out with minimal staff involvement, it is also necessary to coordinate these activities.

The necessity for assigning responsibility for the management of the volunteer program may become more apparent if we look at the five functions of a manager:

- Planning is determining what has to be done.

- Organizing is determining how the job will be done.

- Staffing is determining who is going to do the job.

- Directing is enabling people to accomplish the task assigned to them.

- Controlling is the process of evaluation which is essential if the manager is to determine whether goals and objectives are being met.

Each of these functions are relevant and necessary if a volunteer/community involvement program is going to serve the community successfully. Needless to say, the allocation of organizational time to the effective management of this program would be a critical factor in ensuring its success.

As you gain more experience with volunteers and as you gather information from those initially coming into the program, you will begin to see where greater flexibility or greater structure is needed. You will become more adept at breaking the work to be done into discrete units which can be assigned to individuals and you will find it easier to define the qualifications that are necessary.

As this happens, you may want to formally define job descriptions for volunteers. These will assist you in managing the work to be done and in spelling out your expectations to volunteers. Job descriptions should only be viewed as tools to assist you and should be reviewed and rewritten periodically as needed.

Recruitment

Strategies for recruiting volunteers will be determined by the nature of the activities to be conducted.

The necessity of defining volunteer roles and qualifications before recruiting any volunteers is to guide you in obtaining maximum benefit from your recruitment efforts.

For example, if you know that you can only use volunteers to answer phones or handle correspondence, it would be a waste of your time to design a recruitment strategy that may yield a number of professional people who would be dissatisfied with a role involving so little responsibility.

The relationship between defining volunteer involvement and recruiting volunteers is emphasized by a description of two basic methods of recruitment:

Focused Recruitment

Focused or goal-oriented recruitment refers to contacting particular individuals or groups about specific jobs. After identifying work that needs to be done; and, identifying the personal qualities and/or skills needed to accomplish these tasks; look for people who have the necessary skills and talents.

Generalized Recruitment

Generalized or shotgun recruitment refers to general appeals for volunteers aimed at broad public audiences. Such efforts typically utilize the mass media and rely on public relations techniques. A generalized recruitment presentation might emphasize:

- Is the selection and placement of volunteers as important as the selection and assignment of paid staff? Why or why not?

- Will staff within the organization expect a certain level of performance from volunteers? Why or why not?

Obviously, these are not easy questions to address and individuals within your organization may answer them differently.

However, it is important to recognize that the answers to these questions will determine the overall design and the implementation of the volunteer/community involvement program. An organization's philosophy toward community involvement will determine the roles and responsibilities given to volunteers, will determine the emphasis to be placed on volunteer training, and will dictate the relationships of paid staff to volunteers.

A suggestion would be to involve organizational personnel in a thorough discussion of the questions above, <u>before</u> a volunteer/community involvement program is started or expanded. Encourage staff and board members to examine their thoughts and perceptions of volunteers and to examine the role of community volunteers in the efforts to institutionalize program activities.

Even though there may be differences among individuals, the discussion should produce some agreement on the direction to take in designing the program.

It is also important to repeat these discussions periodically. People sometimes change their attitudes as a result of experience and you may find that individuals develop different perceptions of volunteers as a result of interacting with them. By often assessing the perceptions you can continually improve your volunteer/community involvement program.

The Final Question

Proceeding on the assumption that your organization has made a decision that volunteer/community involvement is desirable and that you have begun to address the question of how important such involvement will be in carrying out the activities of the organization, there is one more critical question to be confronted <u>before</u> the program can get off the ground.

Who Will be Responsible for the Management of Volunteers?

- How much time will be necessary for the recruitment, screening, coordinating, supervision, training and evaluation of volunteers?

- Will these responsibilities be spread out among several staff members?

- Will one person maintain all of the responsibility? Will that person be able to use other staff members as resources? Will that person have programmatic duties beyond the management of the volunteer program?

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Designing Volunteer Roles

Effective recruitment of volunteers, and, ultimately, the success of those volunteers in meeting goals and objectives will depend upon the careful design of _what_ the volunteer will be doing.

The key to a successful volunteer program is to assign meaningful work to volunteers so that they, in turn may see how their efforts contribute to the accomplishment of overall program results. As a manager you must be clear about what activities need to be carried out and you must be able to use available resources to maximum benefit.

The challenge of designing volunteer roles is to remain flexible enough to accomodate varied interests and skills, to allow for varying schedules and time commitments and to provide enough structure to ensure that critical activities are being conducted.

Many volunteer programs fail to use volunteers effectively because they allow volunteers to design their own roles, to determine when they will be available and how much time they will commit. This often produces gaps in the program or duplication of effort by several people.

In contrast, other programs fail because roles are defined so rigidly that volunteers with unique interests or skills are overlooked or given roles they are ill suited for.

The ideal is to find the balance between these two extremes. This demands making initial decisions about roles that must be filled and the qualifications and commitment necessary, but remaining open to the _consideration_ of other roles.

A worthwhile approach to this aspect of planning your volunteer/ community involvement program may be to establish a set of key volunteer roles which contribute directly to program goals and objectives. Identify the necessary activities (responsibilities) associated with each of these roles, and make a determination of what is necessary to effectively implement that role (what information or skill must the volunteer possess, how much time they should be prepared to contribute). Then, use this information to recruit a core set of volunteers, and to select those that most appropriately fit the role.

This set of volunteers then becomes a resource to you in reassessing the roles and responsibilities. They can offer input into the design of additional roles for volunteers.

As you gain more experience with volunteers and as you gather information from those initially coming into the program, you will begin to see where greater flexibility or greater structure is needed. You will become more adept at breaking the work to be done into discrete units which can be assigned to individuals and you will find it easier to define the qualifications that are necessary.

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- Contributions volunteers can make through working with your program

- The range of available volunteer opportunities

- Incentives and resources available to participating volunteers

Since generalized recruitment is not based upon recruiting people with specific qualifications to fill specific jobs, it does not serve as an effective screening device. Rather, it is through the general entrance interviews that you learn of the specific skills potential volunteers have and that they learn of the specific jobs available.

Generalized recruitment increases the burden of other personnel management activities and, thus, is not a desirable approach unless you need large numbers of volunteers and/or have a wide range of volunteer job opportunities. Recruiting volunteers and then finding things for them to do based upon their skills is a case of being managed by resources rather than managing resources. Generalized recruitment can place you in the position of having to turn down or reject large numbers of volunteer applicants.

Other points that may be helpful in designing a recruitment strategy would include:

- Encourage prospective volunteers to discuss their needs, interests, and expectations. Give them time to think over if, how, and when they might best serve.

- Do not over-recruit. Having long waiting lists or turning down prospective volunteers you have recruited is bad public relations.

- Show enthusiasm about the project and the role prospective volunteers can play.

- Recruit within one month of the time you are ready to put someone to work. If there is a longer lag, they are likely to feel they weren't really needed and to lose interest and enthusiasm.

- Develop a systematic plan of rewarding participants and communicate to prospective volunteers how they can benefit from their involvement in the project.

- If possible, indicate your willingness to reimburse volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses like parking fees, postage, and perhaps baby-sitting costs. If such reimbursements are not possible, indicate that mileage, parking fees, and some other expenses are tax deductible.

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The most important point to remember is that this is not your program. Volunteers are not being asked to contribute their time and energy to assist you but to improve the community.

After thinking about recruitment in general terms, and thinking about the needs of the program, it is time to design a recruitment strategy. Elements of this design will include:

- Collecting information on volunteerism in your community

- Identifying potential sources of volunteers

- Selecting appropriate recruitment techniques

- Building incentives (rewards) for volunteers into the program and conveying this information.

Developing A Community Volunteerism Profile

The most important step in designing an effective recruitment strategy is to gain as much information as possible about your community.

The answers to the following questions should guide you in making decisions about where to go in the community for volunteers and in selecting techniques for encouraging participation.

1. Is there a history of volunteerism?

2. Are there sources of volunteers which have been historically overutilized?

3. Are there potential sources of volunteers that other organizations have overlooked?

4. Is there intense competition for volunteers?

5. Where are you most likely to find individuals with the skills necessary?

6. What segments of the community have more time with which to volunteer?

7. What do people in the community do with their free time? What benefits do they derive from this? Can this be associated with benefits that could be derived from involvement in the program?

8. What other programs in the community have successfully used volunteers? What can you learn from them to enhance your efforts?

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9. What programs have failed in attempting to use volunteers? Why? Can you gain insight into what to avoid in your own efforts?

10. What do people in the community define as significant problems or needs? Does your program adequately reflect these?

Potential sources of volunteers

Organized groups:

- Civic associations, tenants groups, neighborhood associations
- Religious groups and their affiliates. Church leaders are often excellent sources of information and entry to memberships
- Community service organizations
- Business and professional associations
- Corporations and businesses
- Colleges, universities
- High schools - classes and clubs
- Adult education classes
- Associations of retired persons
- Other agencies
- Voluntary Action Center or Volunteer Bureau

The local Chamber of Commerce usually maintains directories of organizations for various communities.

The most overlooked source of volunteers are those individuals that are not affiliated with some organization. These may include:

- Individuals new to the community
- Individuals that don't work or work part-time
- Handicapped people
- Ex-offenders

Techniques for recruiting:

Recruitment should be an on-going activity and should be linked to any public relations activities.

- Speaking engagements -

  Contact leaders of community groups and invite yourself to a regular meeting.

- Newspapers -

  Feature and news stories, ads, volunteer opportunity column, volunteer recognition, article, pictures. Don't forget small newspapers or local newsletters.

- Radio and TV -

  Public service spots, interviews or talk shows, news stories

- Posters, billboards, bumper stickers

- Brochures, newsletters

- Displays at community fairs, shopping centers, business or company lobbies.

- Community bulletin boards at laundromats, grocery stores, community and youth centers, employment offices.

- Personalized appeals - letters or phone calls.

The most effective technique for recruitment is WORD OF MOUTH.

Current volunteers should be encouraged to participate in the recruitment effort as much as possible.

They usually make the most effective spokespeople for the program.

Volunteers will talk to their friends about their experiences. A meaningful role for a volunteer, with clearly identifiable benefits is the single most effective technique for developing community involvement.

A word about recruitment approach:

Remember that people will volunteer for a recruiter as much as for a program.

In all recruitment efforts the recruiter must show enthusiasm. Commitment to and excitment about the program must be apparent. Benefits of the total program should be emphasized.

Design your appeal to the audience you are addressing. People will be interested in different things.

Motivation:

Why do people volunteer?

- Desire to help others

- Desire for recognition or status

- To feel needed, useful

- To gain new knowledge, develop new skills

- To explore career possibilities

- Desire to utilize special skills and knowledge

- Need to be part of activities that have neighborhood importance

- To gain visibility and skills that will help advancement in employment

- Belief in the program and its mission

- Desire to help create social change

- To meet new people, make new friends

- To reduce boredom or loneliness

Encourage potential volunteers to discuss their needs and motivation and be clear about the likely benefits they can expect.

It is not enough any more to say, "Here's your chance to become involved in something worthwhile." Your program must provide concrete incentives for people to become involved.

These may include:

- Academic credit

- Tax benefits (volunteer expenses are deductible)

- Work credit (the Federal Office of Personnel Managment and many states credit volunteer experience on job applications).

- Enabling funds (babysitting fees, gas allowances, meal allowances)

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- Work references

- Training, education

- Formal recognition

- Being able to see a change in the community - be sure to stress the program track record

A final word about recruitment.

Recruitment of volunteers will necessarily be an on-going activity. The average length of commitment from a volunteer is about eight months, and in many communities this will be shorter. Don't expend energy being frustrated by this. Accept high turnover as a given and plan for it.

Screening and Selection

The type of intensity of screening of volunteers demands critical attention in designing a program that will legitimately serve the community. The mechanism for screening and selecting volunteers will be determined by the volunteer roles to be filled and the qualifications needed to handle the attendant responsibilities.

In some instances, the necessity for screening will be minimal. As we discussed in the section on designing volunteer roles, a prospective volunteer may not be suited to perform certain functions, but will likely have something to contribute and can be useful in some manner. If a person who wants to be a part of the program doesn't fit any of your job descriptions, consider developing a job to fit the person. Such flexibility is particularly desirable in the case of persons possessing unique qualifications or coming from one of the nontraditional sources of volunteers (e.g., poor, ex-offenders, etc.) Often, all that will be necessary to effectively utilize the special expertise of such persons is to break out and regroup some of the tasks included in a volunteer role or to establish a special advisory role.

Extensive screening is also inappropriate when attempting to secure the services of persons with particular skills to perform specialized tasks. In such cases, the selective recruitment effort might better be described as a 'talent search', and the personal interview may be characterized more appropriately as a personal plea for help.

Yet screening is an important function, particularly where a great deal of responsibility is a part of an identified role. Rather than resenting it, many prospective volunteers react favorably to intensive screening. Careful and rigorous screening indicates that the work is considered important and that attempts are being made to avoid placing volunteers in inappropriate positions. Thus, for many new volunteers, screening can reduce the anxiety and fear of being assigned to threatening jobs.

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In most instances, screening will mean gathering enough information about the potential volunteer so that you can make a deliberate decision about where that person can be used most effectively. You do not serve the program or the volunteer by placing that person in a role just because it is open and the person is available. Unless there is some attempt to match the person's interests and skills to work within the program, there is the risk that the role will not be carried out effectively, and that the volunteer will become frustrated or disinterested and drop out of the program.

Keep in mind that individuals want different things from the volunteer experience, as well as having different things to offer. There will be some volunteers who will want a role with minimal responsibilities and others who want and are qualified to be involved in roles with a great deal of decision-making responsibility. Therefore, you should be attempting to "match" not only people's skill areas with the work that needs to be done, but attempting to match people's needs with the rewards of the program. It is important to remember that an initial assignment to a volunteer need not be the only role that volunteer can assume while in the program. You may find that after several weeks the assignment should be reevaluated and the volunteer given increased responsibilities. Screening is only a mechanism to help you to select the most appropriate volunteers for your program. A system which provides for the growth and development of these volunteers can and should be built into the program.

Since focused recruitment is the technique of going after only those people who possess information and skills necessary to carry out certain roles, when this technique is practiced minimal screening is necessary.

Another important screening technique is the personal interview. The purpose of the interview is for you to become familiar with the person and for him/her to collect all of the information that you need to give the person ample opportunity to ask questions. Don't hesitate to check the compatibility of the person's ideas with the philosophy and intent of the program - this can have as much of an impact on how well the person will support the program as the skills he/she possesses.

Also don't be afraid to ask someone else to participate in the interview or to talk to the person afterward. It is helpful to get others' perceptions of how to best use the person.

Before leaving the topic of screening, it is important to note that the screening process often does not end with the interview and the acceptance of the volunteer into the program. The orientation and training of the volunteer also provides an opportunity to get to know that person better and to make final decisions about placement.

In addition, volunteer self-screening is important and should be encouraged.

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Self-screening implies that prospective volunteers are given adequate information about the jobs available and their requisite skills and commitments. Such information should be provided during recruitment, interviewing, and orientation training; each of these stages provides the opportunity for "honorable exits" by prospective volunteers.

Orientation and Training

One of the most critical tasks confronting you in your attempts to continue or expand your organization's activities is to transfer the skills, information and resources currently held by paid staff to the community residents that have chosen to become involved in the work of the organization.

Your goal is to enable these community volunteers to successfully carry out the activities and tasks, with minimal support from paid staff.

This distinction between a classical volunteer program in which community volunteers enhance the work of paid staff, and efforts in which community residents will be assuming primary programmatic responsibility is a critical point in the design of orientation and training. To be successful, true capacity building means more than the development of skills; the opportunity to develop autonomy is also a critical aspect.

Orientation usually is the first step in familiarizing the volunteer with the program and with the organizations. It encompases the recruitment approach, the initial interview and, perhaps, a short meeting after a volunteer has been accepted into the program.

In designing the orientation, be sure to ask yourself:

- What does the volunteer know already?

- What does the volunteer need to know?

Both of these questions are important and often ignored. Volunteers often have some information about the program or the organization or the concept of volunteerism and the information needs to be checked for accuracy. Also, giving the person the chance to tell you what he/she knows will make the orientation more meaningful, participatory and remove you from the role of teacher. This is an especially useful technique when orientation takes place in a meeting of several volunteers.

In designing orientation, ask yourself what the volunteers need to know to effectively begin carrying out their roles. This will of course include the expectations that you have of how they will conduct their work, how their work will be scheduled and coordinated, and what expectations they should have of you.

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But orientation should also include information on:

- The program and the organization

- The juvenile justice system

- Juvenile crime in the community

- Nature of juvenile justice advocacy and alternative service programs

- The impact of your program

Orientation is a critical step in the effective integration of a volunteer. However, it is important to remember that people may be easily overwhelmed by too much information too soon. The best approach is to set priorities as to what information is most critical to have right away, and then continue to give information to the volunteers as they begin to work.

It also helps to vary the technique used to orient new volunteers. Include written documents, verbal explanations from you and other staff and the opportunity to learn from others, especially experienced volunteers.

Training is the activity that goes beyond preparing a volunteer to assume a role in the program. It is intended to develop the capability of that individual to successfully carry out the role.

The most important step in designing effective training is to be realistic. Taking a critical look at the resources you have available (staff, administrative time, money for materials, space, volunteer time) and determining how much you can accomplish in the development of volunteers' information and skills is perhaps the most difficult task.

However, being realistic about your training capability will be important in determining what volunteers you will look for and accept into the program. If you need volunteers to plan activities for the upcoming year, and determine that you do not have the time to teach those volunteers how to plan effectively, then you know that you need to recruit and select volunteers who already have some knowledge of planning.

It should be apparent that the training component of your program will be affected by the design of the entire program. True capacity building cannot take place if staff see themselves as the experts and volunteer roles are designed with little autonomy and responsibility. Further, the success of training will be affected by how willing staff is to share the knowledge and skills they have.

Of course, some activities, because of legal or ethical considerations or because of the amount of time they require, cannot be assigned to volunteers, and should remain the responsibility of paid staff.

However, the training component represents the extent of the organization's commitment to capacity building and genuine community involvement.

Providing Incentives and Support

It is obvious that people volunteer their time and energy for reasons other than monetary reward. As we discussed recruitment, we listed many of the reasons often cited (page 12).

Understanding the motivations of volunteers is important in designing recruitment strategies and in placing volunteers in appropriate roles, but it is even more important as you look for ways to keep volunteers involved in the program. Even though the typical volunteer will make a commitment of only a few months, it is not unusual for programs to experience turnover every few weeks. This is usually because little attention is paid to ensuring job satisfaction for the volunteer once she/he has made a commitment.

Turnover is a reflection of how well you understand the motivation/needs of the volunteers and the extent to which you can meet them.

To provide job satisfaction you should first determine what benefits each volunteer seeks from his/her involvement with the program. This is, in part, the purpose of interviewing prospective volunteers before assigning them particular roles and responsibilities. Don't mislead prospective volunteers by promising more rewards than they are likely to find in their assigned work. Such discrepancies are a major cause of job dissatisfaction, low productivity, and decisions to withdraw from voluntary involvements. Variables related to job satisfaction are the work itself and the opportunities for achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, and growth.

If the motivation for using community volunteers is truly to increase the capability of the community to meet its own needs, then recognition of these volunteers is a day-to-day practice. This motivation inspires careful recruitment, purposeful orientation and training and well-conceived, meaningful assignments.

The volunteer will know from the work he/she is given, the way it is presented and from the interactions with others in the program whether the work is useful or not and therefore whether he/she is valued.

Some typical techniques for providing support and recognition to volunteers include:

- Provide feedback to the volunteers on their performance and how it is contributing to the impact of the program.

- Provide the opportunity for volunteers to comment on the program, offer criticism, suggestions, recommendations.

- Respect them, make reasonable demands, voice expectations.

- Let them know that they are _important_, _valuable_ and _trusted_.

- Involve the volunteers in decisions affecting the program and their roles within the program.

- Keep them informed of developments as they occur.

- Publicly thank every person who makes a contribution to the project.

- Present certificates of appreciation and achievement at meetings. Consider humorous awards, also.

- Share the limelight at every possible opportunity.

- Send thank-you letters and make thank-you calls to volunteers who complete a job or do something spectacular. Send carbon copies to employers, teachers, parents.

- List volunteers in news releases so that their names will appear in local newspapers.

- Make new volunteers feel welcome by including them in social get-togethers.

- Have teas, lunches, dinners, etc., in honor of volunteers.

- Look for some degree of success even in big failures, and point these out.

- Write letters of reference or commendation that can be used when volunteers are applying for paid employment, entrance into educational programs, or other voluntary opportunities.

- Send greeting cards on birthdays and other special occasions.

- Involve prominent community leaders in recognition programs.

- Provide the opportunity for continuing education and enhancement of skills.

- Provide opportunities for advancement and changes in responsibilities or duties.

- Don't ask for more than the volunteer can or has agreed to give.

The techniques you choose will be based on the individuals who volunteer. What will mean a great deal to one may be interpreted as belittling by another.

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On occasion, it may seem that the time and effort required to recognize and motivate volunteers could be better spent in "production activities", and that volunteers should derive sufficient reward just from doing worthwhile work. This is not the case, especially not in the beginning. Increased personal satisfaction leads to increased productivity, and increased productivity leads to even greater personal satisfaction.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Work performed by community volunteers is as important as work performed by paid staff and therefore should contribute to the accomplishment of given goals and objectives. A program evaluation which did not include volunteer efforts as part of program activities would be incomplete.

However, the purpose of this section is not to address program evaluation. It is assumed that an organization is interested in determining the impact of its efforts on a given community problem and will develop techniques to do this.

At this point, the emphasis is on the volunteer/community involvement program specifically. Documentation of work performed by volunteers is often required by funding sources, is useful in public relations campaigns, is helpful in the recruitment of other volunteers and is often requested by volunteers themselves. Further, there should be an on-going attempt to improve the volunteer program and to assess whether or not it is actually bringing about institutionalization of the program.

Recordkeeping

The person that is responsible for the coordination of volunteer work should also design a mechanism to document the work performed.

At a minimum, there should be a recording of the number of hours contributed by each volunteer, and how that time was spent. In this way, there is an accounting of individual contributions, which can be used in providing feedback to that individual, and which should be given to the volunteer periodically, or at the end of their service for their own records. Often volunteers will ask for recommendations to be sent to employers or teachers and these can be more effective if the specifics of the volunteer service can be noted.

Keeping records of individual contributions is also important for the overall accounting of volunteer involvement. These records are necessary to document how much work is being performed by the community and the nature of that work and will help pinpoint gaps in volunteer service.

All of this information is critical when relating to other organizations and the general public. Statements can be made as to the extent of community involvement in programs and these statements can be _supported_.

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Evaluation

Beyond gathering statistics to document community involvement, there should be an attempt to gather data to assist in the design of that program.

The most critical element in evaluating the community involvement program is to obtain regular feedback from the volunteers. Ask them about the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Ask them if roles are adequately defined, if the level of responsibility is manageable and realistic, if orientation and training adequately enable them to do the job. Ask for suggestions and recommendations. Ask for feedback individually and in group settings.

Keep in mind that people are often hesitant to give feedback while they are involved in the program. Therefore it is critical to arrange an interview (person-to-person or by phone) as a volunteer is leaving the program. Keep the interview open-ended or develop a set of questions, but be sure to get specific information about many aspects of the program.

Others who interact with the community volunteers are another excellent source for data on the program. If volunteers are required to work with staff members of another organization, contact those staff members and ask their perception of how well informed/trained those volunteers are. Again, ask for suggestions and recommendations.

A second aspect of evaluation of the volunteer program is to take a critical look at whether or not program institutionalization is taking place. Are community members developing the capacity to carry out program activities autonomously? Are there mechanisms being developed that ensure the continuation of program activities despite turnover of individual volunteers? Is there an emerging volunteer leadership? Is there a system of shared leadership or a mechanism for transferring leadership? Does the community believe that the program is theirs?

These questions are difficult to answer and there will be little quantitative data to draw upon. The observations and perceptions of others will prove all important and it is critical to maintain clear and open communication with people involved in the program and those affected by it.

The management of volunteers and the documentation of their efforts is not effective if the original goals for encouraging their involvement are not met. Do not be satisfied only with a program in which work is well organized and everyone is busy. This is only worth the effort if the community is experiencing a benefit.

HOW TO RECRUIT, RETAIN

AND

REWARD MEMBERS

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INTRODUCTION

Community action creates both the need and the opportunity to recruit new members. As your group gets involved in action projects, there will be many times when you must scale down or postpone planned activities because of a shortage of people power. At the same time, if your group becomes more activist, your program will become more attractive to people who have not formerly participated but who share your goals and interests. If you can bring these people into your organization as active participants, you will significantly enlarge both the size of your group and the impact of its programs.

At the same time if you can provide worthwhile rewards and incentives to all your members, you will keep involvement and enthusiasm high. People are motivated by many things. Some seek work experience and training. Others seek a chance to be of service or to accomplish something worthwhile. Still others seek recognition, involvement, escape, contacts or new friends. From action, the key to maintaining morale and participation at high levels is to determine which of these benefits each member seeks from his involvement and then to provide them to him.

Leadership Action Checklist

Recruiting Members

1) **List the specific jobs that need to be done.** Refine your list into job descriptions that spell out the duties involved and the time needed to complete them. Try to break up large jobs into meaningful components that can be done by several persons donating small amounts of time. In the long run, this division will produce more involved and enthusiastic members.

2) **Develop suitable membership forms** with room for "talent bank" type information on skills, interests, experience and availability.

3) **Develop a "prospect" list** of people who seem likely to be interested in, and suitable for, the jobs you need done. Include in your prospect list both nonmembers, and currently inactive members.

4) **Ask your prospects to work with you.** Few people volunteer spontaneously, even if your work interests them.

   a) Use personal contact to show that you consider each prospect's involvement important enough to make a special effort to recruit her. Make the person feel that she is personally needed for a specific job requiring her skills rather than that your group is looking for people just for the sake of building membership.

   b) Place the job you ask your prospect to do in an "action context" and show enthusiasm about it.

   c) Show your prospect how her involvement will benefit her directly as well as your community.

5) **Recruit within one month of the time you are ready to put the member to work.** If there is a longer lag, the person is likely to lose interest and enthusiasm.

6) **If an inactive member agrees to get involved again, give him only a small amount of work at first so he will not feel overburdened.** Choose an initial task that is simple enough to insure success, interesting enough to rekindle his desire to participate and important enough to show him he is valuable to your organization.

Retaining and Rewarding Participants

Talk to each member to learn what benefits he seeks from his involvement. Then work out ways to provide these benefits, along with any others your group may offer. Some specific suggestions to help provide some of the more commonly sought benefits follow:

Recognition and Prestige

1) In your meetings, publicly thank every member who makes a contribution to your group, no matter how small. Public acknowledgement often inspires members to increase their involvement.

2) Share the limelight with all active members. Take turns being the spokesperson for various group projects.

3) Present certificates of appreciation and achievement at meetings to members who have contributed to your work. Consider humorous awards, too, for achievements like receiving the most refusals while circulating a petition.

4) Always send thank-you letters and make thank-you calls to members who complete a job.

5) In publicizing your organization, stress the achievements and qualifications of your members. If your group is viewed as an organization of the most able people in your community, such publicity will attract motivated people. List active members in news releases so their names will appear in local newspapers.

Involvement and Participation

1) Involve as many members as possible in decisions that affect your organization. Follow up on printed meeting notices with personal invitations to show your sincerity in welcoming full participation in decision-making. Give members background information on the options under consideration before decisions are made to further encourage their feedback and participation.

2) Keep asking members to participate. Some persons need a little more coaxing than others. Don't feel guilty about asking active members to take on new responsibilities. While you shouldn't overwork them, in many cases members who have participated in the past projects welcome the chance to do more -- if they are only asked.

3) Accomodate tasks and schedules to the availability of your members. If a person can work for only two hours a week, divide a four hour job in half so he can participate rather than sacrifice his involvement.

4) Keep all members informed of developments, even if they do not attend meetings.

5) Delegate responsibility and share assignments with others, even if they won't carry them out exactly as you would.

Friendship and Contacts

1) Make new participants feel welcome at meetings. Introduce them to other members and avoid any activities that make your group look like a clique.

2) Encourage current participants to include new participants in their social functions, if possible. Ultimately, many people decide whether to remain in a group according to the number of personal friends they feel they have in it.

3) Team up new and old members in project teams.

Progress, Achievement and the Opportunity to be of Service

1) To a certain extent, these benefits will result from your activities if you succeed in involving your members.

2) Let your members know what has been achieved.

3) Look for successes in all your activities, even in big failures. Maybe something you supported was defeated, but it probably got more votes this time than ever before as a result of your efforts and next time it just might pass.

4) Be sure members always have some concrete outcome in mind against which progress can be measured. When action projects are undertaken, always build in a method of periodically reporting progress or achievement.

5) <u>Choose issues for action where you have a high probability of success</u>, especially at first, even if this means starting out on a more modest scale than you would like. Some success is important because it stirs people on to greater efforts.

6) <u>Share with members letters of thanks or other evidence you receive that attests to the value of their efforts.</u>

TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS

Benjamin Broox McIntyre

INTRODUCTION

Training begins with a prospective volunteer's first contact with the program and continues throughout his association with it. Training is inextricably tied to other personnel management processes. Recruitment begins the volunteer's orientation to the program, and a quality training program is a powerful recruiting lure, since most volunteers are motivated by the desire to learn and grow. A prospective volunteer's attendance and performance at orientation and pre-service training sessions are important parts of the screening process, while the placement interview, a screening tool, plays a major role in orienting the prospective volunteer to the program. On-going training serves as a major incentive for continued participation for many volunteers.

Training Guides and Principles

Presented below are a number of factors to consider when planning and conducting training programs.

- **Training should be on-going.** While a major training event or program may be offered initially, training cannot be treated as if it were a one-shot affair. Volunteers will continue to learn throughout their participation, and if you want to promote positive learning and the continued development of competence, on-going training and follow-up opportunities must be planned.

- **Training should be relevant.** The training design should grow out of the overall program design and be directly coordinated with the needs of the volunteers and the needs and resources of your particular program.

- **Training should be realistic.** The training program should attempt to duplicate real-life situations the volunteer is likely to encounter on the job. Deemphasize the theoretical aspects by using real incidents, authentic situations, and actual conditions as training exercises or activities. On-site visits of similar and dissimilar operating programs can help during pre-service training.

- **Volunteers should actively participate** in planning, conducting, and evaluating training programs. Volunteers should be treated as active participants, not passive recipients. Who knows better than they what they do and do not understand, and what has meaning?

- **Training programs should be flexible.** Different volunteers have different knowledge, skills, interests, and needs. The needs and priorities of the organization are also likely to change as you go along. Training must be flexible and responsive to changing and current conditions and individual circumstances.

- **A training program outline is desirable but should not be considered sacrosanct once developed.** Be willing to modify the training sequence to respond to the spontaneously expressed needs or interests of the participants and to changes in program circumstances. A desirable approach is to assess the expectations and needs of the trainees at the first session or two, and to design later sessions to respond to these.

- The training leaders should act as a group facilitator — a guide — not as a dictator with superior knowledge and authority. Mutual respect and a feeling of equality should be encouraged. The leader's personal opinions and preferences must be identified as such when presented to the group and not assigned superiority over those of group members.

- Training should promote the development of a group identity or a team spirit. The development of an esprit de corps among volunteers facilitates cooperative efforts and reciprocal support for individual participation. It also serves as a powerful incentive for continued participation. Team building is promoted by an environment that promotes friendliness, informality, and interaction, and discourages rigidity and ceremonial structure. The first meeting or so of a training group might be devoted to "ice-breakers" and activities that require involvement and exchange.

- The physical setting or location for training should be comfortable. Atmosphere is so important to some people that unless they feel comfortable with their surroundings, they block everything else out. Consider such factors as lighting, sound and noise, arrangement of furniture, temperature, availability of supplies, water, meals, and rest room facilities. The location should be easily accessible to a majority of the trainees. Such places as churches, schools, private homes, and community facilities might be used.

- Training sessions should not be overlong. Most people have limited concentration spans of one to one and one-half hours, and typically a number of shorter sessions is preferable to long ones. Provide break and rest periods with food and drink.

- The size of any one training group should typically not exceed twenty persons. Generally, a group of eight to fourteen persons is optimal for one leader. Too large a group discourages participation and the development of group identity; a very small group may intimidate members.

- The scheduling of training programs should take into consideration that volunteers are part-time and have a number of other important roles. The training objectives should be considered when determining whether training should be concentrated and intensive or segmented and spread out.

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- Various types of materials (handouts, manuals, films, tapes, booklets, etc.) can enhance training. Training aids and materials should be obtained, reserved, and previewed, or developed well in advance of the target training session.

- Assistance in identifying training needs and developing training programs to meet them can usually be obtained from local professionals and nearby universities. You may be able to recruit volunteers to train other volunteers. Potential trainers and guest speakers at training programs include volunteer program coordinators from other programs and agencies, veteran or experienced volunteers, community professionals and resource people, college professors, local business trainers, and personnel specialists.

- When the project is institutionally or agency based, or when it includes salaried staff, it is desirable to invite salaried staff to attend training programs for volunteers. This helps promote a cohesive working relationship among all parties involved.

Training Aids

Generally, when we think of training or education, we think of the traditional format of the teacher lecturing to students. There are, however, many other ways to learn and, accordingly, many other ways to teach, such as:

- Role playing, where trainees spontaneously act out a situation relating to a probable work situation involving interpersonal relationships;

- Dramatization, where a carefully planned and rehearsed act is executed to illustrate specific points of a problem or situation;

- Round robin, where each trainee responds for a specified time to a topic or problem presented by the leader;

- Case study, where trainees analyze the important factors of an actual situation presented to them as a written case record;

- Demonstration, where trainees hear about a technique or piece of equipment and observe a demonstration of it;

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- Observation, where trainees observe a technique or activity in its real world application, perhaps including on-site visits and tours;

- Simulation games, where trainees simulate or "duplicate" a real life situation and observe the consequences of their actions;

- Group problem solving

- Brainstorming

- Audio visual aids, where trainees view or listen to audio tapes, slide shows, films, television, video-tapes, records, charts, graphs, etc.;

- Panel discussions;

- Symposiums; and

- Lectures.

The range of teaching techniques is limited only by imagination and creativity. Each of the techniques listed above can be adapted to the special circumstances of a particular program.

Trainees should be included in decisions about which training aids to use. The best approach is to use a variety of techniques, since any one of the techniques can be overused. In selecting techniques, consider which can best help you to present your abstract, theoretical, or technical material in a practical, understandable manner.

Types of Training Programs

There are numerous types of training programs and numerous names for each of these types. Discussed below are orientation, pre-service training, in-service training, and continuing education.

Orientation

An orientation program is typically designed to provide information that all volunteers must have in order to participate in the program. Although different volunteers may perform very different tasks, there is some information pertinent to all of them.

Orientation, like any other training, will be determined by your specific program. In general terms, it might include:

— Philosophy, objectives, policies, and history of your program and/or organization;

— Definition of basic terms and jargon;

— Organizational structure, including boards, committees, and task forces;

— Connection and relationship with other agencies, groups, organizations, and agencies, particularly as related to your funding sources;

— Description of the overall criminal justice system and of how your program relates to it;

— Tour of relevant facilities — your own and other agencies;

— Reporting requirements and why they are important; and

— Future training to be provided.

Sometimes enthusiastic volunteers are the best persons to orient the next group of volunteers because they know both sides of the fence. Whoever is responsible for orientation must be sincerely interested and enthusiastic about volunteer services in addition to being knowledgeable about the program.

Volunteers Manuals. Packages of written materials are increasingly being developed and used as part of orientation programs. They can be used as an outline for the orientation program and also as a continuing reference for volunteers throughout their involvement. In addition to including some of the information already listed, the manual might include:

— Organizational chart of your program;

— Flow chart describing your action plan;

— List of board members;

— List of project leaders and contact persons;

— List of key terms and definitions;

— Rules and regulations;

— Information about insurance, reimbursement guidelines, etc.;

— Copy of a current newsletter; and

— Emergency information, such as what to do if you can't report for an assignment, if someone becomes injured, if there is a fire, etc.

Each volunteer should be given a copy of the manual to keep. Using looseleaf binders allows easy updating and the addition of new material and notes to the manual.

Pre-service Training

Preservice or prejob training differs from orientation in that it is used to prepare volunteers for specific jobs requiring technical or paraprofessional knowledge and skills before they begin work. For example, all incoming volunteers would receive orientation, but only those to be involved in psychological testing would receive pre-service training; the remainder would go straight to work. The number of different preservice training programs needed will be determined by how many different specialized, technical job areas your program includes and how selectively you recruit volunteers. If you recruit volunteers who already have experience in the necessary areas, after orientation they can move into on-the-job training.

Pre-service training can include new volunteers being paired with or observing experienced volunteers in action. There is little merit in lengthy, theoretical pre-service training where you attempt to give the volunteers all the answers before they know most of the questions.

In-Service Training

In-service or on-the-job training provides assistance and feedback to volunteers who are actually performing the duties outlined in their job descriptions. The volunteers' supervisor and/or an experienced volunteer provides routine instruction to the new volunteers on their work assignments. Frequently, new volunteers doing similar jobs are assigned to small groups that meet regularly to discuss their work and to learn from one another. Supervision and evaluation, to be discussed later, are integral to on-the-job training. Individual conferences, attendance at group conferences, and special reading assignments may be part of in-service training.

Continuing Education

Continuing education (sometimes also called in-service training) provides new and old staff with additional knowledge that does not necessarily directly relate to the jobs they are presently performing. Continuing education can serve as a major volunteer incentive, because it is directed toward enhancing the volunteer's understanding of and skills in current and critical issues. It may focus on developments related to the criminal justice system or segments thereof, special concerns and problems facing the voluntary movement, particular problems and concerns of your program, or development of new and specialized skills.

Techniques for continuing education are practically limitless and include:

— Rap sessions or group meetings where members share information. (These can be formalized as study clubs by having members responsible for program presentations on different issues.);

— Conferences, seminars, workshops, or classes organized by other groups and organizations;

— Inhouse newsletter; and

— Sharing relevant periodicals and books.

Evaluation of Training Programs

To improve and update training programs, they must be evaluated. The true test is how well trained volunteers perform. Yet, the training process itself can be evaluated by asking volunteers such questions as:

- What was most valuable?

- What was least valuable?

- What would you have liked to see more of?

Suggestion boxes, group discussions, and questionnaires may be used to assess trainees' ideas about training. In some instances a more formal evaluation of the training program may be desired. You may want to focus on how much information was gained through training or what training had on the attitudes of trainees. In such situations, a pre-test and post-test may be needed.

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