



VolunteerMatch

VolunteerMatch Learning Center
Core Components

Creating a Comprehensive and Engaging Volunteer Training Program

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Agenda

- Goals for Good Training Programs
- Determine What Your Volunteers Should Know
- Information Delivery Systems
- Building Your Training Program
- Evaluating Your Training Program
- Things to Think About

Goals for Training Programs

- Understand how they can participate as part of the organization
- Understand why what they do is important
- Feel confident and comfortable with the work
- Prevent injuries/accidents and mitigate risk

This can all help to increase retention and build lasting relationships with volunteers.

What do you want your volunteers to know?

Information about being a volunteer

- Philosophy, Dos and Don'ts

Things to know about your organization

- Mission, History
- How to do the job or work you're asking them to do
- Program/Organization Specific, or Pro Bono Consultant? On the Job, or Classroom Work?

Professional development or continuing education

Gathering the Information

Build from existing training programs

- Keep what works
- Ask for feedback from existing or past volunteers
- Involve paid staff

Identify new information to be included

- Survey paid staff and volunteers
- Include content for new/seasonal programs
- Focus on outcomes “we need volunteers to be able to...”

Include information from outside the organization

- Best practices, research from the field

Presenting the Information

In-Person Trainings

- More personalized for each volunteer
- Answer questions immediately
- Only happens at a certain time/place

Recorded Trainings

- Flexibility for volunteers
- May be hard to stay engaged
- No ability to adjust pace

Presenting the Information

Pre- Reading/Homework

- Can be more in depth
- Volunteers move at their own pace
- Hard to ensure material is being read

On the Job Training

- Job and Organization specific
- May be the only way to learn certain actions/processes
- Potentially variable depending on trainer – the “right” way to do something may be different

Presenting the Information

Reference Binder or Textbook

- Comprehensive
- Can be used to identify the proper way to complete tasks
- Hard to ensure material is being read

Job Aids – Posters, signs, cheat sheets

- Just in time training
- Can remind volunteers of procedures
- Inherently brief
- Easily overlooked

Building your Training Program

The rules of three

- Provide three different ways to access information
- Explain what a volunteer will learn, teach them the information, remind them what you've taught them

Understand how much information can be shared in an hour

- About 20 minutes of information at a time
- Allow time for processing/reflection
- Using the rules of three 20 min of content = 1 hour of training

Getting Creative

Meet your volunteers where they are

- Think about how you would want to learn
- Survey them – what do they know, what do they think they know
- Involve leadership volunteers in the process as SMEs or as trainers

Train outside of the box

- Walk a mile in the client's shoes
- Use humor, problem solving, or situational training

Building your Training Program

What do your volunteers need to know?

- What needs to be learned on the job?
- What can be learned independently?
- Is team building an important part of the training process?

Create learning outcomes

- At the end of this training a volunteer will be able to...

Remember how much can be learned at one time

- Create a tiered curriculum
- Use a variety of training methods
- Contextual learning, mentoring relationships
- Ongoing learning, professional development

Evaluating your Training Program

What did your volunteers learn? Ask them

- Formal v. informal
- Practical testing – “show me how you would...”
- Situational testing – Mock tour, phone call

Ask Paid Staff and Clients

Evaluate retention of information

- Tiered learning
- Build on contextual learning
- Staggered practical or situational testing at 3 months, 6 months

Things to Think About

What are you doing now?

- What's working? Where are the holes?
- What are you doing because you've always done it that way?

Investigate new technology and delivery systems

Engage others

- Volunteers, paid staff, clients or members

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- Build in evaluation points/processes

Thank you!

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