



VolunteerMatch

VolunteerMatch Learning Center  
Core Components

# Successful Volunteer Interview Strategies

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# Agenda

- Why Conduct Interviews?
- Specific Interview Processes
- Forming Good Questions
- Interviewing Pitfalls
- Evaluating the Interview
- Getting Started

# Why Conduct Interviews?

## From the Organization's Perspective

- Promote Organization
- Expand on information from application
- Investigate validity of information
- Obtain additional verbal and nonverbal information
- Identifying the fit

# Why Conduct Interviews?

## From the Potential Volunteer Perspective

- Learn more about organization, culture, programs, etc.
- Norms and Values
- More complete understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Decide if it's a good fit

# Preparing to Interview

- Written Volunteer Position
  - Volunteer Recruiter and Supervising Staff
- Communicating Overall Interview Process
  - Create Buy-In and Trust, Appropriate Level of Interview for Position
- Who's Going to Interview?
  - Team, Volunteer(s), Committee
- Final Decision Making
  - Volunteer and Supervising Staff

# Specific Interview Processes

## Preparation

- Schedule adequate time
- Private Space – clean, orderly, no distractions
- Review position description – identify skills needed
- Select questions

# Specific Interview Processes

## Conduct Interview

- Open Interview - put potential volunteer at ease
- Convey purpose of interview – dialog
- Overview of organization
- Ask potential volunteer for background information – interests
- Questions relevant to position – roles and responsibilities
- Core Questions – same questions for same position
- Respond to potential volunteers questions – responsibilities, organization culture, etc.

# Specific Interview Processes

## Close the Interview

- End Interview - be clear and concise
- Outline Next Steps and Timeline
- Background check, Reference checks, Interviews with staff, Training schedule
- Convey how and when the offer will be made
- Don't complete the process at this step
- Shouldn't be sole basis for volunteer placement



# Forming Good Questions

## Closed Ended Questions

- Answered by “yes” or “no”
- Do not foster additional information or conversation
- Begin with “Can” “Do” “Will” “Is”

## Examples

“Do you type?”

“Can you work in the evening?”

“Do you enjoy working with children?”

# Forming Good Questions

## Open Ended Questions

- Require an explanation
- Help you delve for more information
- Start with “What” “When” “How” “Where”

## Examples

“How did you...?”

“Tell me more about...?”

“What did you like about...?”

“What would you change about...?”

# Interview Pitfalls

## Open Ended Questions

- Not Being Prepared - Don't have questions relevant to position
- Doing all the Talking - Interviewer(s) talk 25% of the time
- Active Listening - Making a decision before the interview is complete, Not asking follow-up questions
- Remember Your Goal - Describe organization, position, responsibilities, etc.
- Don't be afraid to say "I don't know" - Follow up with information you don't have

# Evaluating the Interview

Schedule time to write up interview notes

- Summarize interview while impressions are fresh
- Clear descriptors – jog memory
- Summarize pros and cons – trust your first impressions
- Body language
- Surprises or interesting answers
- Are they a good match?
- What additional information is needed from other sources?
- Make a recommendation for next steps

# Getting Started

- Communicate about the process and the benefits of interviews
- Involve others - volunteers, paid staff
- Manage expectations about the role and timelines
- Tap into technology
- Evaluate the impact - right volunteers in the right roles, buy-in from staff and supervisors

# Thank you!

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