VolunteerMatch Learning Center
Introductory Approaches

The New Volunteer Manager's Toolkit

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Agenda

- Define a successful volunteer program
- Introduce common volunteer engagement program components
- Discuss the importance of risk management
- Best practices for fostering retention
- Effective recognition strategies
Successful Program Characteristics

Apply and integrate qualities for success
- Knowing your volunteers - Initially and ongoing.

Completing your due diligence
- Risk management, but also a chance to better know your prospective volunteers.

Making sure you’re all on the same page
- Does everyone - volunteers, staff, clients – know what’s expected of them? Is it written down? Has everyone agreed to follow the rules?
Common Program Components

Not all programs need each component, but each component should be evaluated regularly.

**Job Descriptions**
- Well thought out, detailed, comprehensive

**Recruitment Plan**
- Where and when, but most importantly why. Targeted message for each channel. Marketing!

**Application**
- Contact information, but start to get to know your volunteers. “why do you want to volunteer at the library?”
Common Program Components

Interview
- Build on the application questions. Ask about skills, interests, experiences – are they a good fit?

Orientation
- An opportunity to share what you do and why you do it. Introduce the culture, policies, procedures. Can be one on one.

Training
- What does a volunteer need to know to be successful?
Common Program Components

Non-Disclosure Agreement
- Should cover work product, equipment, sensitive information.

Background Check
- At-risk populations: children, elderly. Positions with access to sensitive information or PII (personally identifiable information.)

Reference Check
- Consider asking for volunteering references, as well as personal and/or professional.
Common Program Components

Policies and Procedures Handbook

- Begin with applicable HR policies. Determine what other policies need to be included – start with instances where things went wrong. Include conflict resolution, dismissal or termination procedures.

Acknowledgement Form

- I acknowledge that I have been given a copy of the Volunteer Handbook...

Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement Letter

- Specific for each volunteer/volunteer position. Identifies the who, what, when, and for how long. Use to reinforce the most important policies and procedures.
Let’s talk about risk.

All the pieces in your volunteer engagement program need to do one thing...

Protect your

• Volunteer Engagement Strategy
• Volunteers
• Staff
• Clients and Patrons
• Organization

from all of the things that could go wrong – to manage risk.
It’s not just about risk.

Volunteer management is about identifying potential and making the perfect match.

- Provide meaningful work for the volunteer
- Create work that’s important to the organization
- Find the right fit
- Make good use of skills and talents
- Build and maintain personal relationships
Keep the Volunteers You Have

Why do some volunteers leave and others stay?

Difference in expectations

- Organizational culture
- Work v job description
- Time commitment
- Communication and style
- Program support and training
- Motivation and philosophy

Maintain the relationship

- Identify and address signs of disengagement

Volunteers have lives, too. You can’t plan for life.
Saying Thank You

How a volunteer wants to be recognized is unique to each volunteer.

- Ask!
  - Survey, questionnaire. What would they like to do, learn, see?
- Recognize professional work in meaningful ways
  - Credit, public acknowledgement, portfolio
- Don’t underestimate a heartfelt, handwritten note
  - Created by clients or staff
Thank you!

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