

Winifred L. Brown
Administrative Director
Mayor's Voluntary Action Center
61 Chambers St.
New York, NY 10007

During the 1975 fiscal crisis in NYC, a series of meetings was held between the municipal workers union, the city personnel dept., the Mayor's Voluntary Action Center, and key voluntary agencies. This group established an arrangement whereby all requests for volunteers to work in city departments are processed through the Mayor's Municipal Office of Labor Relations. This assures that the request is "appropriate" before it is filled by the VAC. It also serves as a third-party "buffer" between the VAC and the union. Any complaints, etc., are handled by the Office of Labor Relations. Ms. Brown does not know of any other cities that have this type of arrangement, but feels it is certainly a model that could be adapted in other settings.

The guidelines for this arrangement include a 3-part method for determining what constitutes an "appropriate" volunteer job/task:

- (1) List out the paid worker's job specs (i.e. all the tasks specified in the formal job description).
- (2) List out that particular worker's "personal" job specs (i.e. all the tasks done by that individual that are not part of the formal job description; unique talents, expertise, interests, etc.)
- (3) Lift out the tasks from List #2 that are getting in the way of the worker's ability to do the tasks in List #1. These are the things that are appropriate for volunteers to do.

Other general comments:

- Involve union personnel from the very start.
- Never discuss volunteer placements/promotion when union contracts are coming up for re-negotiation. (This is currently the situation in NYC, so Ms. Brown did not want us to pursue this issue directly with the unions right now.)
- Even when union leaders are reluctant to discuss volunteer relations, assistance, etc., they can usually understand that many union members themselves are also volunteers, and therefore can be "won over."

Mildred Ninos
School Volunteer Program
Philadelphia, PA

215-299-7000

- Program policy is that volunteers are used only as supplemental workers and are under the direct supervision of paid staff.
- No formal or written agreement with the teachers union.
- During a strike, all volunteer activity ceases. Since the primary reason for having vols. is to help the teachers, there is no need to cross picket lines; this also avoids bad feelings between teachers and vols.

C.J. Reid
National School Volunteer Program
Alexandria, VA

703-836-4880

NSVP and the National Education Association (bargaining unit for teachers) formed a task force a few years ago to study this issue. They established a set of guidelines that has been adopted by many school districts around the country. NSVP is sending a copy of these guidelines, and some supplemental material.

Carol Kinsley
School Volunteer Program
Springfield, MA

413-787-7017

During a teacher strike last year, they followed the NSVP/NEA guidelines and were able to remain neutral. It is a tricky situation since the vol. program is located in the administration building, and yet the vols. have to work with the teachers in the classroom. Thus, having the guidelines to fall back on was very helpful to everyone when dealing with both management and labor.

Sue Szentlaszloi
School Volunteer Program
West Chester Area Schools
320 N. Church St.
West Chester, PA

215-436-7000

When faced with the possibility of a strike a few years ago, the vol. program wrestled with the question: will we use the formal volunteer structure to staff the classrooms during a strike? They decided not to do so. However, this has never been put into a formal policy statement, and has never been tested since the strike never happened. However, there is a School Board statement that says volunteers will be used during a strike. (Ms. Szentlaszloi is sending

a copy of this.) But the understanding is that such vols. would have to be brought in via other networks--not through the formal school volunteer program.

Betty Dudley
American Society of Directors of Volunteer Services
c/o American Hospital Assoc.
Chicago, IL

312-280-6110

- The American Hospital Assoc. created a set of guidelines to cover volunteer activity during hospital worker strikes. (See attached copy.)
- Ms. Dudley knows of very few cases where unions have filed a grievance against vols. working during a strike.
- She also knows of very few cases where the role of vols. has been questioned by unions. Usually this is worked out on an informal basis. But if a disagreement does occur, it is usually settled by either (1) withdrawing the volunteer from the task, or (2) determining that the task is related to health care development, not patient care. The former is considered appropriate for vols. to perform.

Lillian Noren
Director of Volunteer Services
The Graduate Hospital
19th & Lombard Sts.
Phila., PA 19146

215-893-2278

- When a strike is on, Ms. Noren is clearly perceived as being part of management. In fact, she is placed in charge of the labor pool during that time.
- She does ask vols. to help during a strike, and can guarantee their safety if they choose to come in to work.
- There are no formal guidelines for deciding where vols. are placed within the hospital., i.e. what jobs they can do.

Lois Kraus
Director of Volunteer Services
Temple University Hospital
Phila., PA

215-221-4645

The hospital's "Strike Manual" states that all available resources should be explored to bring in vols. during a strike. Vols. are to report to the labor pool for assignment to non-professional hospital functions. If they have health-care training,

they will be assigned to professional tasks as needed. All paid and non-paid staff who work during the strike receive free meals.

Once a strike begins, Ms. Kraus remains at the hospital continuously so that she does not have to cross the picket line. Vols. are called in via a telephone squad as soon as an injunction has been ordered; no vols. may come in before that time because the entrances are usually blocked and their safety cannot be assured. Ms. Kraus tells the vols. not to wear their uniforms and not to talk with anyone when entering the building--be invisible.

General comments:

- It is important to have good day-to-day relations with union personnel in order to avoid clashes.
- Involve them from the beginning; don't wait for a crisis.
- Vol. program directors must not place vols. into positions where they are competing with unionized jobs.

Albert Noren
Ladies Garment Workers Union
Member of AFL-CIO Health Services Council
Philadelphia, PA

215-351-0763

- Knows of no union that has any formal policy statement about working with volunteer programs. Everything is worked out informally within the individual situation.

Salvatore Barbuto
AFL-CIO Community Service Representative
United Way of Philadelphia

215-665-2500

- Knows of no specific AFL-CIO guidelines about working with volunteer programs.
- Sees a real need for information on how to contact a union, how to work with the union structure, etc.; most voluntary agencies have very little knowledge or understanding about this, and therefore do not work effectively with union staff. Mr. Barbuto does not know of anything like this that exists, though it is possible that the Education Division of the national AFL-CIO might have something.

Mr. Neyhard
Public Information Officer
National Labor Relations Board
6th & Arch Sts., Room 4400
Phila., PA

215-597-7601

Interestingly, the National Labor Relations Act does not define the word "employee"; there is no reference that states that the employee must be a paid worker. Therefore, theoretically, the terms of the Act could apply to volunteer workers as well, although Mr. Neyhard does not know of any situations where this interpretation has been applied.

There are two types of cases where the NLRB may have made decisions related to volunteers in the past:

- (a) Representation petitions: deciding who can be included in the bargaining unit for purposes of elections, etc. It is conceivable, though unlikely, that volunteers may have requested to be included.
- (b) Unfair labor practice petitions: deciding whether volunteers are doing a job that should only be done by union members.

(We will be reviewing the cases handled by the NLRB in order to see if there are any such instances related to volunteers, and will send you any information we find.)