

# Satisfaction and Perception of Needs of Volunteer Administrators

By  
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Assessing the information gathered from the survey, we noted that two trends emerge: 1) satisfaction of needs; and 2) perception of needs.

## Satisfaction

There is wide spread agreement that satisfaction is a key ingredient in retaining volunteers (Naylor, 1967; O'Connell, 1976; Scheier, 1972; Wilson, 1976). Volunteers are motivated by a broad range of things. Some of the things focus on personal needs; others focus on perceived societal needs. In any case, we believe that initially the volunteers are motivated by interest and altruism. We also believe that the motivation to come or volunteer initially and the motivation to stay are different for many people. Altruism, contributing to the public welfare, meeting the needs of a client group, or participation in a social club may provide a reason for volunteering, but those motivational pushes will not suffice to maintain the volunteer in the program if his or her needs are not met.

Some use the Concept of Achievement Motivation as developed by Maslow, Herzberg, and McClelland and Atkinson to explain participation in volunteerism (Wilson, 1976). These theories stress the need for achievement, power and affiliation as basic human needs. Volunteering can meet a person's basic needs. In Maslow's terms, there is a hierarchy of needs with self-actualization resting on top. These theories focus on the individual's needs as the primary motivations for participation in volunteer activities.

In both cases, meeting personal needs or meeting social needs can account for initial involvement. We suggest that in any case volunteer programs must meet the needs of the volunteers or the volunteers will not remain. Volunteers want to be part of a good (well-managed) program.

Harriet Naylor (1967, pp. 64-65) also suggests that the things which cause a person to become a volunteer may be very different from those which keep a person

an active volunteer. Volunteer satisfaction includes a sense of belonging and being comfortable, reaching goals, participation, responsibility and respect. Satisfaction is influenced by a number of things, many of which have to do with the climate of the program.

Marlene Wilson (1976) suggests that program success is dependent upon creating a climate in which volunteers can function effectively and creatively. She points out that the managers of a volunteer program are one of the major determinants of the type of institutional climate created. The climate created by the manager determines motivation and affects greatly satisfaction and levels of performance. The task of the volunteer program manager is to create a climate in which work is achievement and fulfillment and in which the needs and satisfaction of the volunteers are adequately addressed.

We suggest that the satisfaction and needs of the managers are important determinants of the program climate. Much has been written about the volunteer needs and motivation and about the impact of satisfaction on volunteers. Given that organizational climate, satisfaction and productivity are linked and the critical role the manager plays in determining institutional climate, the needs and satisfaction of the managers of volunteer programs are critical factors in program success.

The volunteer program manager is the leader of a group of paid staff and volunteers or unpaid staff. If the leader is not satisfied with the accomplishments of the program, then other members of the group are not likely to be satisfied.

Herzberg and Snyderman have investigated satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Bobbitt, Bienholt, Doktor, and McNaul, 1978). They suggest that hygiene or maintenance factors influence dissatisfaction. Satisfaction, on the other hand, is linked with motivation. Motivations include achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, growth and the work itself. Our study includes information

which will allow us to assess satisfaction with accomplishment and the work itself.

The questionnaire focuses on basic aspects of program operations. The primary areas were recruitment, training, matching, supervision, management, and public relations. Items sought information about techniques and methods, problem areas, success and assistance. Success was measured for training, matching, supervision, management and public relations. In these items respondents were asked to rate their efforts on a four-point anchored scale ranging from very successful to extremely unsuccessful. The items were anchored with statements such as "program operates with no conflicts, interruptions of services or major problems" and "program is stalled most of the time with conflict, interruption of services or major problems."

Table 1 presents the responses managers made to the five items measuring success. For purposes of comparison, this type of scale is most informative when viewed as a dichotomized scale. From this perspective, our respondents are most satisfied with their training and matching efforts. In both cases more than 90 percent identify their operations as successful. While supervision and management are not perceived as successful, both are rated in the upper 80 percent range (88 percent, 87 percent). Public relations is indicated as the least successful function (74 percent successful).

Public relations is usually not perceived as a vital part of the day-to-day operation of the volunteer program. Many of our respondents indicated that public relations was a problem for them (201). Only 51 of the respondents indicated that public relations was ranked low on their list of priorities. The two most common problems with public relations indicated were insufficient finances (112) and insufficient time to build public relations (130).

We noted that we had a low response to the supervision item. We suspect that this reflects the number of criminal and juvenile justice programs which do not supervise their volunteer programs. In criminal justice, some programs recruit, screen, and train volunteers. These volunteers are then provided for agency staff as resources. The agency staff provides supervision.

On the whole, our respondents are satisfied with the operation of their programs. We have noted that in the times dealing with problems, these managers have recognized that they do have problems. In most cases, however, the respondents were able to identify specific

causes of these problems. Problems then are not seen as failure. They are seen as things which must be remodeled.

### Perceived Needs

We support the position that program climate is crucial to volunteer satisfaction and to program success. We recognize that a number of factors such as agency staff, attitude, volunteer task enrichment and recognition play an important role in program climate. However, the most crucial element in this setting is the volunteer program manager. If the volunteer managers' needs are being met and they are satisfied with their work, then positive, supportive program climates will exist.

VIP-NCCD (Volunteers in Prevention, Prosecution, Probation, Prison, and Parole — a division of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency) is devoted to promoting the use of volunteers in justice settings. We seek to assist in the development and improvement of volunteer programs. While a primary focus has traditionally been the volunteer, we also place emphasis on meeting the needs of those who develop and manage volunteer programs. A primary purpose of our present survey efforts is to identify the needs of justice system volunteer managers. By meeting these needs and increasing manager satisfaction, we improve program climate and the quality of justice system voluntarism.

Table 2 summarizes our respondents' preferences for types of assistance. The independence and common sense nature of the volunteer movement can be seen in the types of assistance preferred by our respondents. The two types of assistance most frequently requested in all categories were how-to manuals and training modules for the respondents' staff. These resources increase the ability of the managers to improve their programs at their own initiative. This also indicates that these managers are satisfied with their performance given the material with which they have to work.

In every case, the managers preferred the training and manual resources to consultants or other types of resources. We note the high need areas are recruitment, training for staff, supervision and public relations. It is interesting to note that matching is another area where the most managers indicated that they did not need assistance.

Training for staff and how-to manuals are two aspects of the same thing. Both summarize the set of skills and techniques needed to function effectively. Training is active presentation of the material in the manuals if effective manuals are available. Unfortunately, comprehensive train-

ing and comprehensive manuals are not readily available to struggling managers. Programs which do have comprehensive manuals have developed them after years of often painstaking trial and error program operation. Those manuals which do exist thus tend to be keyed to a particular program in a particular setting.

The National Association for Volunteers in Criminal Justice has recently begun work on developing materials to partially meet this need. With funds provided by the Lilly Foundation and by the National Institute of Corrections, NAVCJ will develop guidelines and model management structures. The grant anticipates a set of manuals and guidelines focusing on technical management for all aspects of justice system voluntary activity.

VIP-NCCD and the University of Alabama have developed a training program for managers of criminal justice volunteer programs with funds from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. This two-week intensive program is offered regularly. So far, over 150 managers have been trained.

We look forward to the continued development of resources and the continual growth of the juvenile and criminal justice volunteer movement. We will do what we can to provide assistance to the movement.

#### Summary

Satisfaction is a key ingredient in the successful operation of volunteer programs. Volunteers remain active and productive in programs which offer a positive

supportive climate. Key to the climate of any program is the manager of the program. When managers are satisfied with their performance, a positive climate will exist which will meet the needs of the volunteers.

Managers of criminal and juvenile justice volunteer programs are satisfied with their performance. They do recognize that problems exist and are willing to seek assistance. They consistently prefer staff training and how-to manuals. These resources enhance the manager's role and control of his or her program.

Both the National Association for Volunteers in Criminal Justice and VIP-NCCD are working toward meeting their needs.

#### References

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Table 1. Criminal Justice Volunteer Program Managers' Satisfaction By Task

Task	Satisfaction								Total Respondents
	Very Successful		Successful		Unsuccessful		Extremely Successful		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Training	131	26	348	69	23	5	5	1	507
Matching	38	8	412	87	20	4	1		471
Supervision	32	7	318	71	84	19	14	3	448
Management	52	11	380	76	59	12	3	1	494
Public Relations	68	13	308	61	111	22	17	3	504
TOTAL	321	13%	1766	73%	297	12%	40	2%	2424

Table 2. Criminal Justice Volunteer Program Managers' Perceived Needs By Task

Task	How-to Manual	Consultant	Training Product	Other	None
Recruitment	195	117	114	77	171
Training	195	102	224	35	171
Matching	116	66	127	94	230
Supervision	174	100	196	64	169
Management	155	78	157	65	185
Public Relations	189	110	170	74	162