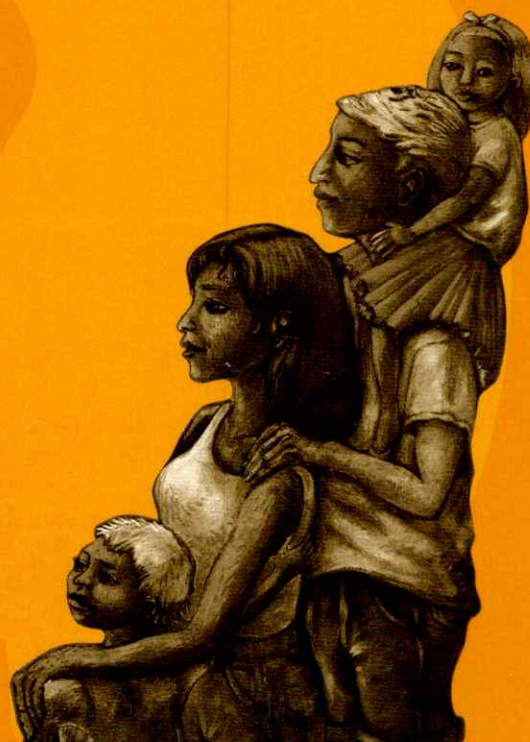
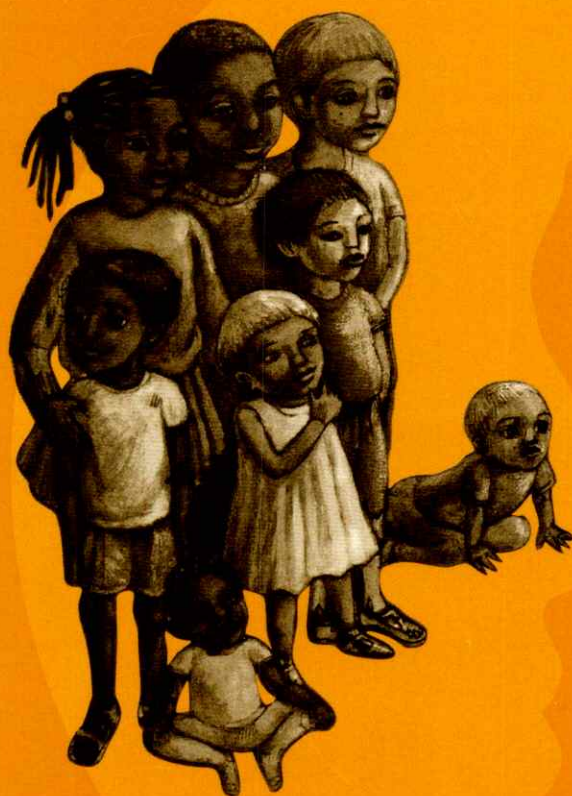




# Family-Friendly Volunteering

A Guide for Agencies



**FAMILY MATTERS**



**POINTS  
OF LIGHT  
FOUNDATION**

# Family-Friendly Volunteering

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A Guide for Agencies

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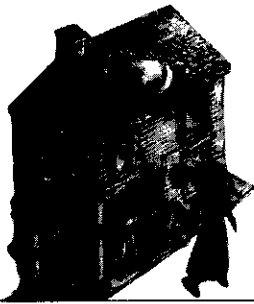
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# Introduction

## FAMILY MATTERS initiative

In 1991, the Points of Light Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation undertook steps to discover the degree to which family volunteering occurs in structured ways across the United States. The study was prompted by a desire to locate a path for families to find new strength through volunteer service directed at improving their communities. What the investigation found was reassuring. It showed that some families are volunteering to work on society's most serious social ills: homelessness, hunger, domestic and child abuse, substance abuse prevention, urban renewal, and a host of other problems. Further research revealed that volunteering families benefit at least as much as those they seek to help and that family involvement in community service promotes its value to a younger generation. The families involved represented the entire spectrum of our society.

The results of the research persuaded the Points of Light Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to investigate the best ways to further family volunteering in six communities—Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York and three



**To institutionalize family volunteering  
in households and organizations  
throughout the United States.**

### MISSION OF FAMILY MATTERS

counties in eastern rural Kentucky. By the time the pilot effort ended, nearly 13,000 families had volunteered in these communities as a result of FAMILY MATTERS. The pilot sites created family volunteer programs, outreach processes, family and community empowerment strategies, and family volunteer recognition tools. In addition, the



programs enabled families to address many pressing social issues. Families cleaned inner city neighborhoods, advocated family volunteering with community organizations and institutions, and established community advisory groups and partnerships. In low-income communities, family volunteers built trust through coordination of efforts for the benefit of their community. By investing in their own communities in this way, families created a special form of empowerment. In several pilot sites, families came together to volunteer outside of formal structures, demonstrating that families are willing and able to exercise responsible leadership for the improvement of their own neighborhoods and social networks. In sum, it was found that family-initiated activity increases the potential for families to impact their immediate communities because they are serving where they live, work, or worship. Family volunteering builds upon the assets of the community, involving families in developing and implementing solutions based upon their strengths and interests.

An evaluation by Child Trends, Inc., shows that FAMILY MATTERS Initiative, Phase I produced the following accomplishments for the period of March 1993 to February 1996:

- An increase in the number of family volunteers in the six pilot sites by 583%. A total of 12,976 families volunteered, contributing 201,340 volunteer hours. An additional 9,000 families (including 50,000 members) volunteered nationwide in conjunction with FAMILY MATTERS' partnership with Target Stores.
- Over 421 partnerships with local organizations that resulted in the development of 1,498 volunteer opportunities for families to volunteer in their communities.
- The generation of over 205.5 million media impressions on some aspect of family volunteering, reaching an estimated 123 million individuals.
- The institutionalization of family volunteering in four Volunteer Centers, two local nonprofits, and one corporation.

At the current time, the FAMILY MATTERS initiative is engaged in replicating family volunteering in twenty additional Volunteer Center communities across America, seeking to institutionalize family volunteering as part of the fabric of American society.

The experience of FAMILY MATTERS during the past seven years shows that family volunteering indeed brings benefits that counter negative forces. Two conclusions stand out: family relationships become stronger and many complex community problems can be resolved through civic involvement of families.

Families who help their neighbors through involvement in community service diminish the separation between economic classes, givers and receivers. FAMILY MATTERS has shown in that developing a strong family service movement enhances the welfare of all members of the community. Research on corporate and community benefits of family volunteering confirms that family volunteering improves communities, builds community pride, generates greater employee contentment and increases customer satisfaction. And at the same time that family members learn about and connect with the larger community, they also learn about and connect with each other, seeing new strengths, experiencing positive working relationships, and developing an avenue for communication about themselves and about larger community issues.



One important lesson from FAMILY MATTERS is that family service helps to strengthen families and communities because it builds upon the potential of each family member and radiates out to others within the community. When family strength is developed and turned outward, individuals feel a sense of worth and accomplishment which in turn enhances community connection. Strong families connected to their neighbors lead to advocacy for positive community change.

The chaos and struggle of American families is mirrored in their larger communities. Sociologists such as Robert Putnam have enunciated the sense of disconnection that is pervading many of the traditional social institutions in our society. As people do not connect with members of their families, so they also are failing to connect with other individuals and groups. Families constitute one of the primary building blocks of social capital within communities, and their involvement, or lack of involvement, significantly affects the ability of the community to function in a congruent fashion. Family volunteering offers an elegant mechanism by which families not only can increase their degree of interaction with each other, but can, in a productive fashion, learn about, connect with, and assist in the greater community.

### **How to use this manual**

This manual is designed for volunteer managers in nonprofit or government agencies. It is intended to be a comprehensive self-study guide, covering both the theory and practice of family volunteering, as well as providing planning worksheets and sample materials. As with all aspects of volunteer involvement, the specifics of program design must be adapted to fit the needs and shape of the organization. The intent is to

provide examples and information to enable the creation of a family volunteering effort that will best serve your cause and your clients, as well as meet the needs of volunteering families. There is additional reference information for those who wish to examine this subject more completely.

The manual is not intended to cover all the elements involved in developing a volunteer program within an agency. Instead, it is designed to allow an agency with an existing volunteer program to expand to incorporate the involvement of family volunteers. It is also designed to help you consider the shape and operation of your own volunteer effort. One of the ways in which it does so is by providing a variety of lists which offer options, including rationales for involving family volunteers, sample volunteer assignments, recruitment techniques, etc.

A box (☐) indicates a list. As you read the list we suggest you put a checkmark (✓) next to those items which might work in your volunteer program. This is a way to "design" the program as you work through the manual. When you have completed the manual, go back and look at the lists and you'll have a planning guide for how to proceed.

Most of the information in this manual comes from practitioners in local Volunteer Centers who work on family volunteering under the auspices of the FAMILY MATTERS initiative. The information represents their work with numerous community agencies who have been successfully implementing family volunteering programs. Their effort, as shown here, demonstrates that family volunteering is a successful addition to most social service agencies, providing a new and unique way of meeting the needs of communities and volunteers.





## Families as Volunteers

**The key element of “families” is that families define themselves. If you think of other people as being a part of your family, then you have made them so.**

### **What is family volunteering?**

Exploration of family volunteering begins with an exploration of what is a “family.”

For the FAMILY MATTERS initiative, a “family” is defined as “any two or more people who consider themselves to be a family.” This inclusive definition reflects the diversity of household structures which exist in America and the wide variations in living arrangements at the end of the 20th century.

### **Family volunteering includes the following configurations:**

- ☐ a nuclear family: parents and children
- ☐ an adult with his/her senior parents
- ☐ a husband and wife
- ☐ a retired couple
- ☐ an adult guardian and child
- ☐ a noncustodial parent and child
- ☐ a single parent and child
- ☐ children and grandparents
- ☐ adult siblings
- ☐ a group unrelated by blood who is living together
- ☐ multiple children from the same family

*Check the categories of “family” appropriate for your agency.*





The definition might also include room-mates, cousins, aunts and uncles, step-families, members of an extended family and other configurations. Graff (1997), for example, provides the following as a definition of "family" that might be used in an organization's policies: "Any group that considers itself a family, including parents, children, adult siblings, foster parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, and others who may think of themselves as a family."

The key element is that members of the group consider themselves to have a close and ongoing interaction which they consider a family relationship.

Besides understanding the scope of "family," it is also important to understand how members of a family might engage in "volunteering". There are a variety of "shapes" that family volunteering might encompass. These include:

- *Members of a family who share in the same volunteer task, working together at the same time.* An example of this might be a family that provides entertainment during friendly visits to residents at a nursing home. They might jointly put on a skit or sing.
- *Members of a family who share in the same volunteer task, but who work at different times, rotating responsibility among members of the group.* An example of this is a family that "adopts" a home-bound senior, with each taking responsibility for providing assistance on a different day of the week.
- *Members of a family who work on different tasks, but do so at the same time or during the same event.* An example of this is a family that volunteers at a local Walk-a-thon, but some members hand

**Half of American adults (51.4%) do volunteer work with family members "several times a year" or more frequently. Nearly one-fifth of Americans (19.5%) volunteer as a family "weekly or more often." All told, a majority of Americans (61.9%) report volunteering with family members at least occasionally.**

AID ASSOCIATION OF LUTHERANS, 1998

out T-shirts, some assist in registration, some act as officials.

- *Multiple families who work together in sharing tasks or events.* An example of this is a group of families who plan and manage an environmental clean-up of a park or recreation area or who host a block party.

Family volunteering is quite flexible, but the key factor which distinguishes it from volunteering done by individuals is the element of sharing and working together. The maximum benefit from this family component comes from enabling families to work together on related projects, common clients, or shared tasks. This focus provides the synergistic element which makes family volunteering greater than the sum of the individual volunteers.



### Why are people interested in family volunteering?

The concept of family volunteering has proven to be widely popular to community members, as verified in several national and local studies. As early as 1987 a survey by the J. C. Penney Company, Inc. revealed that 55% of nonvolunteers felt that involving their families would be an important incentive in getting them to volunteer.

FAMILY MATTERS commissioned an extensive survey by the George H. Gallup International Institute (hereafter referred to as the Gallup Survey) in June 1994 which revealed the following:

- In more than one-third of American households (36%), family volunteering is part of family life. This applies almost equally to younger families, where the household head is 18-34 (30%), those where the household head is 35-49 (39%) and those where the household head is age 50 or older (31%).
- The most common family type involved in volunteering is the nuclear family (60%). The next most common is adults without any children in household (25%). Only 9% of one parent with one or more children were involved as volunteers, and 5% of those families with several adults (not two parents) with one or more children.
- The most common partnership is between husband and wife (60%), although 66% say they volunteer with some other family member, not a spouse or partner. Volunteering with another adult family member is especially common among younger people with 75% of those between age 18-24 doing volunteer work with some other adult not their spouse.

- Family volunteering, once established, tends to become a tradition, with over 80% of those interviewed having served with another family member for three years or more. Almost half (46%) perform service with another family member several times a week (24%) or once a week (21%). This is about equally true in all age groups.

**"Family volunteering activities are prime opportunities for our employees to spend time with their own families while still working as a corporate team to give back to our communities."**

JULIE HENNESSY, COMMUNITY GRANTS COORDINATOR,  
TARGET STORES, 1996.

A study done in 1998 by Lutheran Brotherhood revealed some additional information:

- Of those who had volunteered together on projects, 34% had volunteered with a spouse during the last year; 30% had volunteered with a friend; and 24% had volunteered with their children.
- Those most likely to volunteer with a spouse are ages 35-49, while Gen X's are more likely to volunteer with a friend or with their children. Parents overwhelmingly want their children to volunteer, with 78% saying they encourage their children to volunteer.

A variety of local surveys have also indicated support for family volunteering. A survey done by Volunteer & Information Services of Battle Creek, MI found that 72% of community members were interested in



volunteering with family members. A similar survey done by the Volunteer Center of Heart of America United Way in Kansas City, MO found that 75% of local nonprofit agencies felt current volunteers would be interested in volunteering with other family members.

### Why are corporations interested in family volunteering?

Family volunteering holds a high interest level for providers of volunteers, with a particular relevance to the corporate community.

A 1997 study by The Conference Board of large corporations found 43% have encouraged family participation in corporate volunteer activities for more than five years, and 57% did so within the past five years. Among the principal benefits of families volunteering together cited by the companies are:

- 70% – improved public and community relations
- 57% – greater employee commitment
- 15% – more productive employees
- 12% – fewer hours lost for family responsibilities

Target Stores, Inc. operated as a pilot site for the first phase of the FAMILY MATTERS initiative and worked with The Conference Board in a major study of volunteering families in 444 of Target's 746 stores. The results are highly in favor of family involvement.

For example, when asked, "Did family participation enhance the volunteer experience of Target team members involved?," Target employees responded:

Significantly enhanced .....	119
Somewhat enhanced .....	184
No clear effect .....	63
Somewhat negative .....	0
Negative factor .....	0

Almost 90% reported participation in family volunteering is beneficial, providing quality time for children and adults lost through other methods of volunteering. Other advantages include giving children a positive role model, increasing feelings of well-being through helping others and providing learning opportunities for children.

And when asked, "Overall, how would you rate the benefits of a FAMILY MATTERS project to the following groups?," Target employees responded:

	VH	H	N	L	VL
The Company .....	150	174	35	3	0
Team Members.....	128	191	36	5	0
Nonprofit.....	119	175	45	3	0
Partners					
Guests.....	65	175	14	11	0
The Community ...	106	189	37	3	0

VH = Very High H = High N = Neutral  
L = Low VL = Very Low

More than 90% believe that family volunteering improved Target's image in the community and three-quarters say that participation improved employee morale and helped build positive attitudes in the workplace.

### Why are agencies interested in family volunteering?

The Gallup Survey examined how family volunteering is perceived by social service



agencies who involve families: 97.6% found it to be very effective; 96.3% said it offers unique ways to provide services; and 98.3% said it "benefits families above and beyond volunteering alone."

The major advantages to family volunteering cited by agencies are:

- 46.6% – enables the agency to obtain more volunteers at one time
- 50.3% – volunteers enjoy themselves more when they volunteer with their family
- 15.2% – volunteering families are more likely to volunteer more frequently than individuals
- 20.2% – families are more committed than individuals

The Volunteer Center of Fairfax, VA found in a survey of local agencies that 83% did not actively recruit family volunteers, even though 73% were interested in them.

While most agencies admit an interest in families volunteering, few have taken the time and initiative to implement a successful program. As Betty Stallings (1992) notes: "Family volunteering, per se, is certainly not a new phenomenon; families have quite literally volunteered together throughout all of American history. What is new is identifying families as potential target groups to recruit into volunteer organizations. Family volunteering has been accidental rather than intentional; i.e., it just happens when one member is active and he/she brings along a family member for company and/or support."

### **What is the impact of family volunteering?**

Volunteering is recognized as offering substantive benefits to those performing the

**"...U.S. teenagers have a lot of discretionary time available to them and, for the most part, that time is not being filled with activities that build their skills or characters."**

ZILL, NORD AND LOOMIS (1995)

volunteer work, as well as those receiving services. This benefit seems especially true among children and teenagers.

A variety of recent studies confirm that performing community service substantially alters attitudes and behaviors among young adults, in sharp contrast to what happens to them when left to their own devices.

Zill, Nord, and Loomis (1996) in a review of adolescent behavior note:

*"Time-use patterns of 10th graders were also predictive of whether they would engage in a variety of risk behaviors. For example, compared to those who reported spending 1-4 hours per week in extra-curricular activities, students who reported spending no time in school-sponsored activities were 57 percent more likely to have dropped out by the time they would have been seniors; 49 percent more likely to have used drugs; 37 percent more likely to have become teen parents; 35 percent more likely to have smoked cigarettes; and 27 percent more likely to have been arrested. These significant negative relationships were found after controlling for related family, school and student*



*characteristics such as parent education and income levels, parent involvement in school-related activities, and students' grades."*

Allen, Philliber, Herrling, and Kuperminc, in an evaluation of the Teen Outreach Program sponsored by the Association of Junior Leagues, note the beneficial effect of volunteering upon program participants:

*"Knowing that the Teen Outreach Program is effective in reducing problem behaviors naturally leads to the question of why it has this effect.... One consistent finding has been of the importance of volunteer community service as a key element of the program's success. This finding is consistent with non-experimental data from evaluations of other programs that suggest the potential value of volunteer service, and with helper-therapy theory, which suggests that serving in a helping role will often be therapeutic for the helper."*

And Moore and Allen (1996), in a review of studies of volunteering by younger persons, conclude that it offers the following benefits:

- increased social and academic skills
- reduced rates of academic failure, school drop-outs and teen pregnancy
- improved self-concepts and attitudes toward society
- viewing selves as "help-givers" not just "help-receivers"
- increased leadership qualities and problem-solving skills

Adults and children may also benefit from volunteering together. Ellis, Weisbord, and Noyes (1991) observe that "Group

volunteering allows you to get to know your children in new ways, and vice versa. The process of demonstrating skills and learning new ones gives both age levels the chance to respect each other, share a common goal, and have something to talk about all week. It is an added benefit if you are also mixing teenage children with younger ones."

The Volunteer Center of Kansas City, MO found the following benefits cited by agencies who involved family volunteers:

- 76% – adults and children share a common goal and purpose
- 74% – volunteering strengthens the family unit
- 74% – children volunteers become adult volunteers
- 71% – family volunteering builds a sense of community
- 70% – family members interact with culturally and economically diverse people

The collective experience of the FAMILY MATTERS pilot sites suggests that family members of all ages may gain the following benefits from volunteering together:

- ☐ a sense of responsibility
- ☐ a sense of ability
- ☐ the knowledge that one person can make a difference
- ☐ the benefits of sacrifice
- ☐ respect for different people and conditions
- ☐ filling time wisely
- ☐ learning about the community
- ☐ learning about social issues
- ☐ spending time together and sharing a sense of purpose and accomplishment
- ☐ sharing new experiences which often lead to discussions about important issues affecting the family or community



- ☐ learning new skills
- ☐ appreciating seeing each other in different roles
- ☐ helping parents pass on values and the tradition of service to their children
- ☐ building a sense of civic pride.

*Check the benefits that you think families who volunteer for your organization might gain. These will be helpful in recruiting and motivating family volunteers.*

There is some evidence that volunteering as a family can significantly increase the cohesiveness of families and their ability to communicate with one another. FAMILY MATTERS is planning additional research on the impact of volunteering upon family interaction patterns.

### **The virtues of family volunteering**

Family volunteering offers numerous advantages to the community through the unique way in which it provides services. These can be summarized as "the virtues of family volunteering," and they have formed a centerpiece of the advocacy effort of FAMILY MATTERS:

1. Family volunteering enables populations whose volunteering has been restrained by family care-giving obligations (either responsibilities to children or seniors) to become involved. As a "two-for-one" activity, family volunteering greatly increases the ability of time-depleted working families to engage in service. It is a true "minimum time, maximum benefit" system.
2. Family volunteering acts as a natural multiplier of volunteers, since recruitment of any one family member acts as a catalyst for enlisting other family members. As the Gallup surveys on

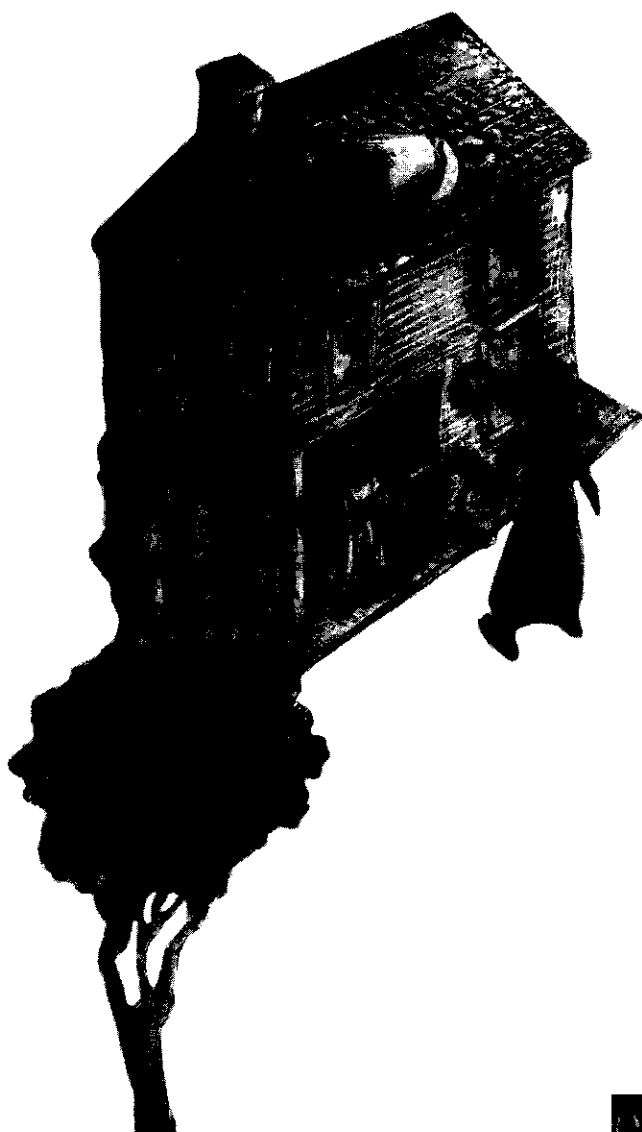
volunteering have shown, this one-to-one recruitment pattern is by far the most effective means of recruitment. As a concept, family volunteering enjoys wide public popularity, making recruitment of community members much easier.

3. Family volunteering is highly attractive to communities with relatively low rates of involvement in structured volunteer settings. The experience of the FAMILY MATTERS sites in attracting support from ethnic, immigrant, and low-income communities indicates great promise in involving these sectors because of their high family orientations.
4. Family volunteering may, in settings where establishing a personal relationship is an integral part of the helping function, provide a plus factor due to the unique nature of families.
5. Family volunteering offers the opportunity for volunteers to take responsibility for identifying and addressing the needs of their community. Empowered family volunteers can directly confront and work to solve their own needs and the needs of those around them.
6. Family volunteering provides all the benefits of individual volunteering, including passing on of social values, building individual self-esteem, and allowing individuals to give back to the community through service. In addition, it strengthens family bonds and communication patterns, and involves parents as role models for proactive social behavior.

These virtues make a compelling case for all those who believe in volunteering to support the institutionalization of family volunteering in households and agencies across America.



# Creating a Family Volunteering Initiative



## Preparing for family involvement

There are steps common to every volunteer effort that must be followed in developing a family volunteering initiative. Before engaging in these, however, it is wise to first consider three preliminary issues.

First, consider the existing experience of your agency in working with families:

- Does your agency have a past history of working with families?
- Do you serve clients who are in family groupings?
- Is strengthening families a part of the mission of your agency?
- Do staff have any expertise in working with families?

A significant success factor for family volunteering efforts is the degree of seriousness with which the agency approaches this issue. This seriousness is much more likely to be substantial when families are already a serious part of the agency's "business," not simply an interesting fad or passing fancy.



If your agency is not already involved with families, then you will need to initiate discussions with staff, executive leadership, and board members about why family volunteers should become a part of the agency's method of operation. Use the following checklist to identify what the rationale of the agency is in undertaking a family volunteering initiative:

- ☐ broaden outreach to the community
- ☐ diversify volunteer population
- ☐ enhance service effectiveness
- ☐ increase number of volunteers
- ☐ grow future generations of volunteers and supporters
- ☐ provide role models for clients
- ☐ improve community image and relations
- ☐ find new ways of meeting needs and solving problems with new perspectives
- ☐ other:

The list is not exhaustive, but does provide guidance for considering why an agency wishes to engage family volunteers. *Check the elements on the list that you believe will form the rationale for why your agency is involving family members as volunteers.*

Second, does the agency have a well-structured volunteer program in place? Is there a volunteer manager who is allocated sufficient time to operate the program? Are there resources and systems in place to provide the support needed by volunteers? Is the community image and presence attractive to potential volunteers?

Starting a volunteer program by beginning with family volunteers is not a desirable practice. The basics must be in place before venturing into new territory. There is a comprehensive checklist in Chapter Three to help you assess your readiness.

**"Family volunteering activities can stretch the precious time of volunteers if tasks are designed so that the entire family can take part."**

STATISTICS CANADA, 1998

Third, as with all volunteer efforts, make sure that you have conducted a risk management assessment of what is needed to safely involve family volunteers.

While involving family volunteers is no riskier than involving any other type of volunteer, there are some areas which require attention. These include:

- Knowing the child labor law requirements in your state. These requirements generally direct a possible minimum age for involvement, restrict some types of dangerous activities, and require a certificate for involvement. In many states these requirements have been determined not to apply either to volunteer situations or to those engaged in activities with their parents, but you will need to determine the exact requirements for your jurisdiction. In most cases this will mean contacting the state Department of Labor or Employment. Be sure to explain that this is about volunteer work and that the children will be participating with their parent or guardian during performance of the volunteer assignment. We have included contact information for each state in Chapter Four.





- Checking the insurance coverage provided to/for volunteers by the agency. The best way to do this is to directly contact the insurance provider, notifying them that the agency will be involving family volunteers and asking them to verify that coverage will be extended to these individuals. If your agency does not provide insurance to volunteers, then it should strongly consider obtaining some. In the meantime, obtain case-by-case insurance to cover volunteer events and encourage your volunteers to broaden their homeowner's policies to cover volunteer activity.
- Investigating state requirements and systems for conducting criminal background checks of staff and volunteers. If involving young children and teens it is wise to ensure that those working with them do not have a history of child abuse or molestation. Under Public Law 105-201, the Volunteers for Children Act, passed in 1998, agencies which provide care, treatment, education, training, supervision or recreation for children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities can request their designated state law enforcement agency to submit fingerprints of staff or volunteers to the FBI for a background check for criminal history. In addition to the FBI check, the state law enforcement agency must conduct its own check at the state level. Fees for this service can be no greater than \$18 to the state law enforcement agency and \$18 to the FBI. Such checks might be unnecessary if volunteer assignments will always be in group settings in which parents and children will be working closely together; in this case, parental presence and supervision mitigates potential risk.

- Examining the site and facilities in which volunteers will be working. Offices, for example, must be safe and orderly, and not have equipment or materials which are either dangerous or fragile. If this is not possible then consider moving family volunteer activities off-site to a more hospitable location.

The experience of FAMILY MATTERS is that family volunteering need not be any riskier than any other type of volunteer activity; however, since it involves children, it does require a bit more attention. The steps outlined above are a good beginning, and coupled with normal risk management processes should alleviate both potential problems and fear. Chapter Four contains three worksheets for performing a risk management analysis of family volunteer assignments.

### **Developing family assignments for volunteers**

The Gallup Survey noted that "Finding projects that are suitable for family volunteers emerges as both the primary reason for not having a program now and the primary barrier to future implementation."

This should not be surprising, since experienced volunteer managers know that developing suitable and attractive volunteer assignments is the key to any successful volunteer program.

Developing assignments suitable for families is different from developing assignments for individual volunteers. Well-structured family volunteer assignments are likely to have different "shapes" than assignments for individuals, and this is particularly true if younger family members are present.



There are a number of ways to develop the basic ideas of what volunteers might do for an organization. In the case of family volunteers, we would suggest three techniques:

**1. Expand existing assignments to fit families**

Many current volunteer assignments which were designed for individuals can easily be done by families working together. This includes most assignments in which volunteers work one-on-one with clients, or community education efforts. Consider, for example, the following volunteer recruitment notice from the Volunteer Center of Green Bay, WI about a family volunteer position for a local library:

"Brown County Library:  
Five families with school-aged children are needed to help with the Summer in the City Puppet Show, performed by puppeteer Majid Been Saad. Help collect tickets and usher audience attendees, set up puppet supplies and assist with a puppet-making workshop following the performance."

This assignment could have been done by individual and unrelated volunteers, but making it a family volunteer assignment produced more fun and an equal quality product. Assignments that may seem boring in the context of an individual volunteer may appear more interesting in a family setting. Such tasks as envelope stuffing, collating, and setting up rooms are more fun when conducted in a group setting. Families engage in conversation while performing the work, somewhat reminiscent of the old "quilting bees."

**2. Work with staff to develop new assignments for families**

Staff are key to development of high-impact volunteer assignments since staff know the most about the kinds of assistance the agency and clients need.

Since family volunteering is a new concept to most staff, a little preparation is required before they will be willing to "risk" involving this different type of volunteer. One way to accomplish this is orient them to the new effort and get them to understand its importance to the agency. Fortunately, most staff will find the concept of family volunteering to be one which resonates with them much as it does with the general public, and many staff can easily relate to how family volunteering relieves the problems of time-burdened adults wishing to spend more quality time with their children. We have included a staff training exercise in Chapter Four, entitled "Thinking about Family Volunteering."

Some staff may have fears about working with children. Many staff will have little experience in dealing with or supervising young children and may initially resist their involvement. Here are some things to point out to concerned staff:

- children bring joy and enthusiasm to work, and communicate it to clients
- children establish relationships that are often difficult for adults
- children, through their curiosity, energize adults around them
- children are the hope for tomorrow, and are the next generation of volunteers

Another way to handle this is to recruit as a volunteer a retired teacher who works with staff to develop appropriate activities for children and who provides staff training on supervising children.



**Instead of asking staff what tasks family volunteers might do for them, consider turning the situation inside out and asking staff:**

- *what do children like to do?*
- *what might families enjoy doing together?*
- *what things would be beneficial for families to be involved in?*

**Then have them look at their answers and see if any can be turned into volunteer assignments.**

***3. Distribute a shopping list of assignments to see if the staff sees an assignment they like.***

This is a partial listing of the kinds of family volunteer assignments that have been developed by various FAMILY MATTERS replication sites:

- ☐ trail maintenance
- ☐ friendly visiting
- ☐ project leadership
- ☐ bagging groceries
- ☐ renovation and painting
- ☐ advisory committee
- ☐ sorting donated books
- ☐ presentations to community groups
- ☐ living history pageant
- ☐ recycling project
- ☐ book drive
- ☐ adopt a block
- ☐ crafts projects
- ☐ litter clean-up
- ☐ mailings
- ☐ family-to-family mentoring
- ☐ planting flowers
- ☐ making science kits for school
- ☐ meals delivery
- ☐ food collection
- ☐ mentoring and teaching
- ☐ school events
- ☐ usher and collect tickets
- ☐ urban gardens
- ☐ providing information to other families
- ☐ block parties
- ☐ fundraisers
- ☐ computer design and layout
- ☐ family story hour at library
- ☐ teach kids to swim
- ☐ greeting and guiding visitors to a facility
- ☐ operating as host family
- ☐ working with animals at zoo
- ☐ bringing pet to nursing home
- ☐ foster family for a child in community
- ☐ surrogate family for developmentally disabled adults, including them in family activities
- ☐ food at homeless shelter
- ☐ entertaining kids at local hospital
- ☐ teaching literacy
- ☐ doing a "spring cleaning" day for elderly
- ☐ attending a city council meeting and present views on an issue at hand
- ☐ adopting an immigrant family for the holidays
- ☐ singing carols with residents of a nursing home facility

*Check the items which represent possible family volunteer assignments in your agency.*



The Gallup Survey lists the following as the "most common" family volunteer assignments:

- helping seniors (60%)
- working with children or youth programs (58%)
- church or religious activities (57%)
- sports or school programs (49%)
- environmental programs (31%)
- assistance to the homeless (25%)

Examples of bad volunteer assignments for families:

- assignments that require all the family, all the time
- putting families with young children in an agency with young children
- assignments locked into a fixed recurring timeframe
- working with breakable objects
- dealing with confidential issues and materials
- inflexible and inhospitable worksites
- single function volunteer tasks that can't be subdivided

Consideration must be made in shaping family volunteer assignments to the age of the family members involved. Seidman and Patterson (1996) note the following, for example:

*"Young people may need to perform some tasks differently from adult participants. Children may need to have a task broken down into individual components or into shorter time periods. For example, when using a child as an office messenger, you may need to have her return to the pick-up location after each delivery, rather than send her out to make a series of deliveries. By breaking the task into smaller components, it may take longer, but you may decrease the chance that the child will become confused or lost or will deliver items to the wrong location. Children should not be expected to work for periods longer than 60-90 minutes and should complete their assignments during the daytime. Adolescents may be able to handle longer periods of time and later hours of service."*

Assignments involving seniors create a need for flexibility around physical requirements. This may seem a disadvantage of family volunteering, but actually the reverse is true. Where physical limitations would be an absolute barrier to an individual volunteer, they may, in fact, be more easily compensated for in a family situation where some other member can provide the necessary physical ability.



In considering family volunteer assignments use the following general criteria:

- ✓ activities that are active, fun, and hands-on
- ✓ activities that allow for a range of experience, talent, strength
- ✓ activities in which work can be shared
- ✓ activities that introduce families to new experiences, environments
- ✓ activities that allow families to reflect upon their feelings and learnings
- ✓ activities with flexibility in schedule and worksite
- ✓ activities with an educational component added for young children
- ✓ activities that allow interaction with other families
- ✓ activities where a direct impact can be seen

Start with assignments of a limited duration and do not place overly frequent demands upon volunteers. Asking families to volunteer for four projects or events a year is a good starting point. If they enjoy the initial experiences they are likely to expand their commitment.

### Recruiting families as volunteers

Recruiting families can be easily integrated into existing volunteer recruitment efforts.

Here are some very simple ways to recruit family volunteers:

- ❑ Ask prospective volunteers if they are interested in volunteering with their family
- ❑ Have a "Family Involvement Day" for current volunteers

### What agencies do to recruit:

- ask individual volunteers to bring their families (76.4%)
- recruit using posters, flyers, other media (52.7%)
- recruit at volunteer fairs (17.3%)
- get referrals from other agencies (9.1%)

### 54% of agencies don't make a conscious effort to recruit family volunteers

GALLUP SURVEY, 1994

- ❑ Prominently list family opportunities in flyers and show families volunteering
- ❑ Feature the concept of family involvement in talks to community groups
- ❑ Create a Speakers' Bureau of family members to talk about family involvement
- ❑ Ask corporate volunteer programs to expand involvement to employee families
- ❑ List family volunteering opportunities with the local Volunteer Center

*Check the recruitment techniques that can be implemented in your program.*

The simplest and best way to recruit family volunteers is simply to ask people to volunteer as families. Many will not have considered this as a possible option, but will be receptive when it is raised. Asking can be done in one-to-one situation or in group settings.



To incorporate a family volunteering appeal into presentations made to groups, pose the following "thought-questions" to the audience (adapted from Allen and Harrison, 1983):

- When you were a child, could you have helped someone else who had a problem? Did you have something you could contribute to the community?
- Would you like to be able to spend more productive time together with other family members?
- Would you like your own children to learn responsibility and the importance of helping others? Could you be a role model to teach children the values that you believe in?
- What can your children do as volunteers? What might you do together as a family that would be both fun and rewarding?
- If your children wished to volunteer, would you be willing to support them in that work?

These questions will get audience members to realize how family volunteering might be beneficial both to the community and to their families.

Recruit by targeting families in recruitment flyers, posters and other materials. Here are some possible targeted appeals for a variety of specific audiences:

#### **Typical corporate parents**

"Family volunteering allowed us to spend time with our kids and still survive our hectic work schedule. It's the best timesaver since my portable computer."

#### **Mom**

"I never knew what my kids were really capable of....until I saw them at the Food Bank."

#### **Teen, with mom in background covered in dirt and smiling**

"Today, I saw Mom in a way that I'd never seen her before..."

#### **Nuclear Family**

"The Merrill family decided to bag Tuesday night...and 800 cans later, 60 neighborhood families had a lot to be thankful for."

#### **Grandparent**

"This weekend I'm teaching my grandchildren about things like caring and compassion. I'm doing it the old-fashioned way – by example."

#### **Extended Family Group**

"This Saturday the Bunt family held a reunion that really made a difference..."

#### **Custodial Divorced Parent**

"I don't have the time to do everything I'd like to do with my children, but I can still take the time to show them what's really important."

#### **Noncustodial Divorced Parent**

"I wanted a way to show my kids that I still know what caring is all about..."

Each of these "taglines" is followed by a description of the volunteer work. Notice that a variety of appeals occur in the examples above:

- ☐ saving time
- ☐ spending quality time with family
- ☐ making a difference together
- ☐ teaching responsibility, caring, and values
- ☐ learning about other family members
- ☐ making a difference in the community



*Which of these appeals applies to the type of volunteer assignments for which you are recruiting and to the types of families you are targeting?*

All of these relate to motivations in volunteering families. You can also, however, use many of the same types of general organizational appeals used in recruiting individual volunteers, stressing the needs of clients and the significance of the work done by the agency. As with individual volunteers, families are best recruited by showing them a community need and a volunteer assignment that makes a significant impact on that need.

A clear advantage of family volunteering is its appeal to a variety of ethnic and cultural groups who have usually not been involved in volunteering for mainstream social service agencies. During testing of the Family Matters concept it was discovered that family volunteering has a very high appeal for low-income groups, Hispanics, and new immigrants. In part, this is because of the high value these groups place on the concept of the "family" and their natural pride and affection in the accomplishments of their family members. One reason is that volunteering as a family, particularly with a strange organization, is "safer" in a family context, since you are taking your friends with you. Involving family volunteers can provide a very useful avenue for an agency wishing to diversify its volunteer base. Remember, however, that this effort, to be truly successful, cannot be merely cosmetic in nature; the agency will also need to involve these groups in decision-making and services, not simply expect them to donate their time to meet your agenda.

**"Are you or your family looking for a unique experience? Something that involves our Jewish community, is educational, FUN, and fills one's life with mitzvot? Become a Host or Host Family for New Americans arriving from the former Soviet Union. You will experience the drama and courage of our people's modern day Exodus."**

JEWISH FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICE OF MINNEAPOLIS

Here are some additional tips for developing recruitment materials:

- use a variety of age, culture, gender and family configurations as visuals or examples
- use personal testimonies from family members
- test your materials with representative families
- approach local media with stories of family involvement (volunteering families are a media magnet)

Finally, involve families themselves as recruiters. Family members should be encouraged to recruit their friends and should be included when making presentations to groups. The enthusiasm and direct personal appeal of family members will do more than any statistical explanation of community needs to recruit new families.



## Screening and interviewing prospective family volunteers

Interviewing families is different from interviewing individuals. The difference in the volunteer interviewing process occurs in two primary ways:

1. Interview the family as a group because part of what you are attempting to discover in the interview is how the family behaves together. This will include observing the family's interaction patterns for signs of dominance, resistance, or coercion. The family volunteering assignment will be more likely to succeed if all family members are, in fact, "volunteering."

Possible questions to ask the family as a group are:

- why did you decide to become involved in volunteering?
- which of you came up with the idea of volunteering?
- why did you select our agency?
- what kind of discussions did you have about volunteering?
- how do you see yourselves working together?

The goal in this part of the interview is to assist the family in bonding together in supporting the idea of volunteering, if they have not already done so. Each member should make a conscious and positive decision to become involved.

An additional way to accomplish this is to present the organization's mission and purpose, describe your clients and their needs, and show how volunteers are instrumental in meeting those needs.

2. You must also interview members of the family as individuals, even though the interview is conducted in a group setting. The reason for doing this is to see if the types of volunteer assignments under consideration match the interests and abilities of each family member. This can be done by encouraging all family members to respond freely to questions or by asking individuals directly for a response.

Good questions to use are:

- what kinds of things do you like to do most?
- what are you good at doing?
- what would you like to get out of volunteering?
- what would make you feel like a success as a volunteer?
- what have you done before as a volunteer?
- what kind of volunteer work do you see yourself doing?

Family volunteering is complex, and it is wise to schedule a second volunteer interview after the family has completed its first volunteer assignment. This provides a check on their experience and make any adjustments that are necessary.

Families volunteering solely for events may not necessarily be interviewed, although it is always desirable to do so. Families matched directly with clients should always be interviewed, and if the volunteer assignment is long-term or sensitive, then try to do a home visit to further observe family interaction patterns.

Screening of families follows the same pattern as screening of individual volunteers. This means conducting appropriate criminal background checks of adults and asking





both adults and children for references who can be called. In the case of children this will often be their teachers, who can provide invaluable information about maturity levels and behavior.

As with individual volunteers, every effort should be made to match volunteer assignments to the skills and interests of the volunteering family. This is more challenging when multiple individuals are involved, but is a key factor in motivating volunteers to perform tasks cheerfully and successfully.

### **Orienting and training families as volunteers**

Orientation and training of families is as crucial as it is for individual volunteers, with the added complexity that the family may be working as a team in performing a task. It is also complicated by the fact that you will be training children as well as adults.

The key during the orientation session is to balance the organizational needs with the needs of the volunteering families.

The primary organizational needs are two-fold:

- To get volunteers to discuss and understand the mission of the agency and the nature and needs of their clientele. In the case of family volunteers, some members might know very little about the agency because they are brought by others. It will be essential to provide a background about the agency to these individuals and "recruit" them to your cause.
- To get all volunteers to understand basic agency rules and requirements and how the volunteer will fit into the agency structure and activities. This is a good opportunity for including other staff members in explaining what the agency does.

Training sessions, which may occur at the same time as the orientation session, are more difficult to design. Key questions to ask in determining how to do the training include:

- will the family be working as a team or separately?
- will all members of the family be doing similar types of work?
- will the family be self-supervising or working for others?

Here are some possible format options for the training:

- ☐ train all family members together as a team
- ☐ train adults and youth at same session but in different areas with different methods
- ☐ train adults who then train children

Indicate the type of training format that best suits your needs.

If the family will be working together on a task, then training should consist of having them work together through a role play or simulated performance. Observe how they approach the work and whether or not all members are involved in performing some part of the task.

If families are working together, it is crucial to clearly explain the purpose, sequence, and logistics of the work. Remember that the adults will probably be trying to explain these again later to children who have forgotten them and high frustration will result if the adults are unable to do so clearly.



Include the following in the training for families who will be working together on projects or events:

- Offer clear and simple guidelines in a step-by-step fashion, explaining the purpose of what is being done and any guidelines or restrictions to be followed.
- If the project or activity has been done before, provide all available information about what was done, what worked and what didn't.
- Explain where all required supplies and equipment are located and demonstrate their use.
- Clearly outline supervisory responsibilities among the volunteer manager, other staff, the family, and its individual members. Be certain everyone is in agreement about who is in charge of what and of whom.
- Establish reporting dates and a channel of communication between you and the family. Arrange to meet more frequently early in the relationship so you can identify problems or points of confusion.
- Have the group discuss how they will approach the project and how they will share the workload.
- If possible, have the group simulate enactment of the assignment.

If youth are involved in the participating families, it is best to involve them as part of the training process, particularly in training other youth. The best place to recruit these trainers is from families that are already volunteering, since they can provide excellent role models. Staff also operate as role models for youth, as McCurley and Lynch (1996) note: "Youth need to be guided in a positive and supportive manner to learn the professional expectations of the organization. This guid-

ance comes in part from an orientation session for young volunteers. It is also modeled by the professional staff as they perform their duties and responsibilities, particularly in their interaction with youth."

Families volunteering at events may not go through a formal orientation and training session prior to the event. However, strive to add a small "orientation" talk as part of the welcome to families who come to the event and provide "training" by matching new families with those who have been involved before, creating an "on-the-job" buddy system.

### Supervising family volunteers

Supervision of volunteering families takes place in a variety of formats. These will partially depend upon the type of volunteer assignment being undertaken and the location and format of the work.

Family volunteers working on long-term assignments should be integrated into the supervisory system used with individual volunteers. These should be a designated staff or volunteer supervisor whom the families report to. Follow all the normal requirements of supervision.

Depending upon circumstances, supervisory relationships may follow a variety of patterns (arrows indicate the direction of supervisory authority):

- Volunteer manager/staff → adults  
(no children in family unit)
- Volunteer manager/staff → adults → children/youth
- Volunteer manager → adults  
Volunteer manager → children/youth



- ☐ Volunteer manager → adults  
Staff → children/youth
- ☐ Staff → adults  
Volunteer manager → children/youth
- ☐ Volunteer manager/staff →  
adults/older children  
Outside group → young children

*Which supervisory models fit the needs of your staff and volunteers?*

Here are some additional tips for supervising family volunteers:

- ✓ Strive to develop “self-supervising systems” where the families take responsibility for managing themselves. This eases the workload on you and empowers families to make decisions about what is important and how things can best be accomplished.
- ✓ Establish a clear rule that the responsible adult is in charge of their own children/youth unless specific other arrangements are made in advance with the volunteer manager.
- ✓ Individual volunteers can be used as supervisors of family units. Consider partnering experienced individual volunteers with new families. This works well for both parties.
- ✓ Pair unenthusiastic youth with enthusiastic volunteers.
- ✓ Children and teens can provide great input and information. Young does not necessarily mean “clueless.”
- ✓ The amount of supervision needed in a given family volunteering situation is directly proportional to the number of

### **Managing family volunteers at events**

- Schedule and publicize the event as early as possible
- Advertise both the nature of event and examples of specific family volunteer jobs
- Enroll families in advance: permission slips, contact information, assignments
- Contact families the week before to confirm details, location, timing
- Brief event staff on participating families
- On day of event, check for materials, equipment
- Be prepared before families are scheduled to arrive
- Have a plan for handling unexpected “walk-on” family members: low risk, easy entry jobs
- Greet families, give assignments, overview of project and purpose
- Use name tags that clearly identify family members (consider color coding by family)
- Check in periodically for problems, and/or needs
- Have a celebratory ending: thanks, recognition, debriefing, reflection, announcement of next event, positive closure
- Debrief event with staff and think of ways to better involve families next time



children present and inversely proportional to their age.

- ✓ While it would be nice to provide child care and transportation assistance, most agencies do not. According to the Gallup Survey only 18% of agencies provide child care to volunteering families and only 17% provide transportation assistance.
- ✓ Alert other volunteers and staff as to the presence of volunteering children.
- ✓ Families, like all groups, have their own internal dynamics and politics, and these may spill into the volunteer situation. You may end up being a mediator for something that has nothing to do with the volunteer work, or you may decide that the family needs to address its own issues away from your agency

### **Recognizing family participation**

Providing recognition to family volunteers is one of the easiest and most rewarding parts of generating family involvement.

Here are examples of good ways to recognize the contribution of family volunteers, adapted from Vineyard (1989):

- ☐ certificates with pictures of the family performing their volunteer work
- ☐ naming some part of the work area after the family: "Macduff Family Trailhead"
- ☐ special agency award for best volunteering family
- ☐ nomination of agency families for community awards
- ☐ coupons or discounts for meals provided by local merchants

- ☐ commemorating family members' birthdays and anniversaries
- ☐ provision of recognition at family's church or children's school or adult's workplace
- ☐ recognition in the presence of peers
- ☐ gatherings and meals
- ☐ photos on agency bulletin board
- ☐ personal notes from co-workers, supervisor, and/or clients
- ☐ opportunities to socialize with other volunteers
- ☐ assignments that offer chance for personal interaction
- ☐ assignments that allow working with friends or neighbors
- ☐ unexpected notes expressing thanks and appreciation
- ☐ inclusion in agency public relations material
- ☐ holiday cards
- ☐ conversational time with supervisor and co-workers before and after work

*Check the recognition techniques which might work at your agency.*

The family connection to volunteer involvement means that many basic volunteer recognition techniques targeted toward individuals who are affiliation-oriented will be effective. It also means that involving some family members in recognizing other family members is a highly effective technique, providing the "personal" touch that will be valued.

Consider having a special recognition event that specifically recognizes family volunteers. This practice, according to the Gallup Survey, is followed by 28% of the agencies who involve family volunteers.



## **RELIABILITY OF FAMILY VOLUNTEERS**

**64% of agencies report  
that most of their families  
continue to volunteer  
regularly.**

GALLUP SURVEY, 1994

When working with families with young children, remember that kids love to see pictures of themselves in the newspaper and that parents are motivated by seeing their children receive recognition.

A key principle of volunteer recognition is that "stuff works." Families are perfect recipients of T-shirts, hats, temporary tattoos, snacks and other items.

Family volunteers, like all volunteers, like to see the results of their work. The impact on a single client, on a park or nature trail, or on the work done by your organization all provide recognition. Family volunteers work to "make a difference," and part of the responsibility of a volunteer manager is to design assignments for which families can feel proud of their accomplishments.

### **Building time for reflection**

One of the most interesting and productive aspects of involving families that does not occur in managing most individual volunteer situations is the provision of opportunities for reflection following the performance of the volunteer work. This practice is taken from the youth community service network, and has been demonstrated to have significant impact on the volunteer

experiences of young people. FAMILY MATTERS experience suggests that it works equally well with adults and works particularly well as a method for getting families to examine and learn from volunteering. It is a key way in which participating children assimilate the values of volunteering and make them part of a lifetime experience.

Reflection periods do not have to be formal, although you may choose to make them so. They are primarily intended as a simple forum for family members (either in an individual family unit or in a group of families) to describe what they did and consider its implications.

The easiest way to do this is to have a facilitator who leads the group through consideration of some questions about what they have done. Here are questions that might be used:

1. What did you learn about the community/client and their needs?
2. Did you learn something new about another family member?
3. What parts of the experience were most challenging?
4. What did this experience mean to you?
5. How have you changed since you first began volunteering?
6. What lessons have you learned from volunteering?
7. What is the greatest challenge you faced in your volunteering and what did you do about it?
8. What is the best time you had as a volunteer?
9. Will you continue to volunteer during the rest of your life? Why or why not?
10. What are you proudest about the volunteering done by your family?
11. What will you remember about the work that you did?
12. What made you proud about this volunteer experience?



**13. What else might be done to further the work that you did?**

Although the reflection process may not be used in your other volunteer management experience, we think you will quickly recognize its value and may even decide to incorporate into your evaluation discussions with individual volunteers.

**Making the effort manageable**

The preceding suggestions for organizing a family volunteer program may seem complex, but the reality of family volunteering is that it is much simpler than it seems. Here are some final suggestions for involving families.

There are some key elements that have to be done for a family volunteering program to operate successfully. Nonprofit agencies working with the Volunteer Center of Kansas City, MO identified the following:

- 40% policy changes to accommodate families
- 51% education of staff
- 54% staff orientation on involving volunteers
- 49% family recognition

These same agencies listed the following as their greatest challenges in involving families:

- 57% coordinating schedules
- 49% appropriate family activities
- 45% recruiting families
- 42% supervising children

At the same time, these agencies also assessed operating a family volunteer program versus operating a volunteer program for individuals:

- Level of commitment
  - same 37%
  - little more 30%
- Ease of coordination
  - same 32%
  - little more 33%
- Time spent volunteering
  - same 38%
  - little more 30%
- Effectiveness with clients
  - same 42%
  - little more 62%

Family volunteering is little more difficult than operating a program for individuals and is certainly no more difficult than other special-focus volunteer efforts.

Here are tips for making your program easier to manage:

- ✓ Start small and grow slowly. Begin with recruiting family members of current volunteers and involving them in one-time or short-term activities.
- ✓ Start with activities that do not require extensive orientation and training.
- ✓ Start with seasonal activities, focusing on weekend events around Christmas or Thanksgiving, or a spring outdoor event such as a clean-up.
- ✓ Start by involving staff who are enthusiastic about the effort. They become role models for other staff.
- ✓ Family volunteering complements and extends the current volunteer program – it does not replace it. Family volunteers will be a part of what you do, not the only part. Take your time in making this initiative become successful.



# Checklist for Involvement

This checklist is designed to allow you to evaluate your plan to involve family volunteers. While you need not check all the items in the checklist before initiating your family volunteering initiative, the greater the number of checks, the higher your confidence level should be in the preparedness of your organization to successfully involve family volunteers.

This checklist will show you the areas where you need to do further work in developing your family volunteering initiative.

## ***Leadership Support***

- ☐ The board has discussed and endorsed the idea of involving volunteer families.
- ☐ Executive staff support the involvement of family volunteers.
- ☐ Family volunteering is included in the organizational strategic plan.
- ☐ Family volunteering is included in the organizational budget.
- ☐ Goals for family involvement are included in the annual plan of the volunteer program.
- ☐ Sufficient organizational time and resources are allocated to the family volunteer initiative.



## ***Integration of Families into the Organizational Context***

- ☐ The organization has prior experience providing services to families.
- ☐ Strong families are a part of the organizational mission.
- ☐ The organization uses a broad definition of "family" which matches the reality of the community.



- ☐ Family members are included in the decision-making processes of the organization.
- ☐ The organization has adopted a rationale for its involvement of family volunteers.
- ☐ The organization has a plan for involving family volunteers which directly links to accomplishment of the mission of the organization.
- ☐ The organization uses family images in agency materials and publications.
- ☐ The organization works in partnership with other community agencies who are involved with families.

#### ***Policies and Procedures***

- ☐ The organization has a policy on acceptance of children volunteering with parent/adult supervision.
- ☐ The organization has a policy on the minimum age of volunteers.
- ☐ The organization has a policy on provision for or reimbursement of child care.
- ☐ The organization has procedures for criminal background checks for those staff or volunteers working with children.
- ☐ The organization performs reference checks on prospective volunteers.
- ☐ The organization has flexible hours and work schedules for staff to accommodate supervision of evening and weekend family volunteer activities.
- ☐ The organization has expanded insurance coverage to specifically include family volunteers.
- ☐ The organization has conducted a risk management examination of family volunteer involvement.

#### ***Involvement of Staff***

- ☐ Staff are involved in approving the concept of family volunteers.
- ☐ Staff set goals for inclusion of family volunteers in program efforts.
- ☐ Staff discuss changes needed to facilitate family involvement.
- ☐ Staff are involved in developing family volunteer assignments.
- ☐ Staff participate in designing and delivering family volunteer training.
- ☐ Staff assume responsibility for supervising family volunteers.
- ☐ Staff participate in reviewing family volunteer involvement for improvements.
- ☐ A system has been established for rewarding and recognizing staff who actively involve family volunteers.

#### ***Volunteer Program Operations***

- ☐ A key person has been identified who will be in charge of the family volunteer initiative.
- ☐ There is an ongoing process to identify and develop family volunteer assignments.
- ☐ Volunteer job assignments offer a significant opportunity to make a difference in meeting agency and community needs.
- ☐ Volunteer assignments offer an opportunity for learning about the community and acquiring new skills.
- ☐ Job descriptions exist for each family volunteer assignment.





- ☐ The organization is flexible in adapting assignments to differing family configurations or schedules.
- ☐ Family volunteer assignments involve tasks which are suitable to families and which can foster shared responsibility and work among family members.
- ☐ The organization locates family volunteer assignments in sites which are hospitable and accessible to families.
- ☐ An effort is made to make family volunteer assignments available in flexible time frames and flexible worksites.
- ☐ The organization has a recruitment plan specifically targeted to families.
- ☐ The organization targets recruitment efforts and materials to a culturally and ethnically diverse grouping of families.
- ☐ The organizations has relationships with corporate volunteer programs who might provide a source of family volunteers.
- ☐ The organization has recruitment materials in a variety of languages spoken in the community.
- ☐ The organization has an interviewing facility sufficiently large to accommodate a family group.
- ☐ The organization has sufficient resources to conduct interviews and perform background checks on prospective volunteers.
- ☐ Volunteers are examined for the qualifications necessary for successful performance of their volunteer assignments.
- ☐ Every attempt is made to match volunteering families to assignments which match their interests and abilities.
- ☐ The organization has system for orienting and training new volunteers.
- ☐ The organization has a system for providing "on-the-job" training at events.
- ☐ Staff receive an orientation in their roles and responsibilities toward volunteering families.
- ☐ Staff receive training on working with families and young children.
- ☐ Supervisors are identified for each family volunteer unit.
- ☐ Staff who will be supervising family volunteers are clear as to their role versus the role of the volunteer manager.
- ☐ Materials, equipment, and workspaces are available to facilitate family volunteer assignments.
- ☐ Arrangements are made for adapting assignments, facilities and supervision for very young children.
- ☐ The organization has developed a set of benefits for family volunteers.
- ☐ A plan has been developed for seeking feedback from volunteers and involving them in discussions of program design and operation.
- ☐ The organization has a system for recognizing the efforts of family volunteers.
- ☐ The organization has an ongoing process for sharing feedback with family volunteers about the results of their efforts.
- ☐ A process is established for evaluating the results of the family volunteer initiative.



***Working with Partner Organizations  
or a Combined Event***

- ☐ The partner organization is prepared and staffed to work with family volunteers on a timely basis.
- ☐ The partner organization provides the volunteers with necessary training and information so that they can perform at the expected level.
- ☐ The partner organization provides sufficient supervision and guidance to volunteering families.
- ☐ The partner organization provides volunteers with a safe work environment and reliable and functional equipment.
- ☐ The partner organization evaluates volunteer performance at regular intervals and shares feedback with the volunteers.
- ☐ One of the participating organizations will provide liability insurance to cover family volunteers.
- ☐ Volunteer assignments are designed to give family volunteers a significant, challenging, and enriching experience.
- ☐ Volunteer assignments are designed to give family volunteers the opportunity to work directly with people and to provide needed social services.
- ☐ Volunteer assignments are designed to give family volunteers significant responsibilities that enable them to use their talents and skills.
- ☐ One of the participating organizations is prepared to deal with health or injury problems and other emergencies.
- ☐ One of the participating organizations has assumed responsibility to work with the volunteers and program coordinators in the event of problems or difficulties.





## Sample Materials

These sample materials can be adapted for use within your program. The forms are intended for use in planning a family volunteer effort and others are for use in recordkeeping, evaluation, and other management functions. It may be possible to expand the scope of existing forms used by your agency rather than creating a new series of forms used only for family volunteers.

Other materials are intended to complement existing volunteer management procedures and records, or to provide contact information or suggestions for implementing some of the procedures suggested in this manual.



# 1. Identification of Risks Worksheet

Use this worksheet to brainstorm possible areas of risk related to a volunteer position. Consider possible risks or problems that might arise in each of the categories below:

**Physical Ability:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Skills/Knowledge:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Attitude, Maturity:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Equipment Use:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Worksite:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Clientele:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Failure to Follow Established Procedures:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Presence of Children/Youth:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



## 2. Risk Assessment Planning Worksheet

### Family Volunteer Assignment:

#### Identified Major Risks of this Assignment:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Special Measures to be Undertaken in Screening Family Volunteers for Assignment:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Special Measures to be Undertaken in Training Family Volunteers for Assignment:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Special Measures to be Undertaken in Supervision of Family Volunteers in Assignment:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Special Measures to be Undertaken to Safeguard Children and Adolescents:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



### 3. Volunteer Task Analysis Work Sheet

Use the worksheet below to identify and record age and physical requirements for volunteer tasks.

Specific Task	Minimum Age Requirement	Restrictions for Elderly or Physically Challenged
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.
7.	7.	7.
8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.
10.	10.	10.



## 4. State Child Labor Law Contacts

### **ALABAMA**

**State of Alabama  
Child Labor Agency  
Dept of Industrial Relations**  
Industrial Relations Building  
Montgomery, AL 36130  
205/242-8265

### **ALASKA**

**Labor Standards & Safety  
Division  
Dept of Labor**  
P.O. Box 0630  
Juneau, AK 99802  
907/465-4855

### **ARIZONA**

**Dept of Labor**  
800 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
602/542-4515

### **ARKANSAS**

**Arkansas Dept of Labor**  
10421 N. Markham  
Little Rock, AR 72205  
501/682-4500

### **CALIFORNIA**

**Dept of Labor**  
P.O. Box 420603  
San Francisco, CA 94142  
415/744-6625

### **COLORADO**

**Division of Labor  
Labor Standards Unit**  
1120 Lincoln Street, Suite 1302  
Denver, CO 80203-2140  
303/894-7541

### **CONNECTICUT**

**Working Conditions Division  
Dept of Labor**  
200 Folly Brook Boulevard  
Wethersfield, CT 06109  
203/566-5160

### **DELAWARE**

**Administrator of Labor Law  
Enforcement  
Delaware Dept of Labor**  
State Office Building, 6th Floor  
820 North French Street  
Wilmington, DE 19801

### **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**Child Labor and  
Polygraph Standards  
Wage & Hour Division  
Dept of Labor**  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Room S3510  
Washington, DC 20210  
202/219-8305

### **FLORIDA**

**Child Labor Section  
Dept of Labor**  
P.O. Box 5436  
Tallahassee, FL 32314  
800/226-2536

### **GEORGIA**

**Child Labor Section  
Georgia Dept of Labor**  
148 International Boulevard,  
Suite 700  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
404/656-3613

### **HAWAII**

**Child Labor, Wage Claim Office  
Dept of Labor Enforcement  
Division**  
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 340  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
808/586-8778

### **IDAHO**

**Wage and Hour Division  
Dept of Labor and Industrial  
Relations**  
277 North 6th, Statehouse Mall  
Boise, ID 83720-6000  
208/334-2327

### **ILLINOIS**

**Child Labor Division  
Illinois Dept of Labor**  
160 N. LaSalle, Suite C-1300  
Chicago, IL 60601  
312/793-2800

### **INDIANA**

**Bureau of Child Labor  
Dept of Labor**  
Indianapolis Govt Center South  
402 W. Washington Street  
Room W195  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317/232-2675

### **IOWA**

**Division of Labor Services**  
1000 E. Grand  
Des Moines, IA 51309  
515/281-3606



**KANSAS**

**Human Resources Department  
Kansas Dept of Labor**  
512 SW 6th Street  
Topeka, KS 66603  
913/296-4062

**KENTUCKY**

**Division of Employment  
Standards and Mediation  
Kentucky Labor Cabinet**  
1047 US 127 South, Suite 4  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
502/564-3070

**LOUISIANA**

**Louisiana Dept of Labor**  
P.O. Box 94094  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9094  
504/342-7824

**MAINE**

**Bureau of Labor Standards**  
State House Station 45  
Augusta, ME 04333  
207/287-3788

**MARYLAND**

**Dept of Labor and Industry**  
501 St Paul Place  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
410/962-2822

**MASSACHUSETTS**

**Office of Attorney General**  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 1101  
Boston, MA 02202  
617/727-3464

**MICHIGAN**

**Michigan Dept of Labor  
Employment Standards Bureau  
Wage & Hour Division**  
P.O. Box 50015  
Lansing, MI 48909  
517/322-1825

**MINNESOTA**

**Dept of Labor and Industry  
Labor Standards Division**  
443 Lafayette Road  
St Paul, MN 55155-4304  
612/297-3351

**MISSOURI**

**Labor & Industrial Relations  
Department**  
P.O. Box 449  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
314/751-3403

**MONTANA**

**Labor Standards Bureau  
Labor and Industry Department**  
P.O. Box 1728  
Helena, MT 59624  
406/444-5600

**NEBRASKA**

**Division of Safety  
Dept of Labor & Labor Standards**  
State Office Building  
P.O. Box 95024  
Lincoln, NE 68509  
402/471-2239

**NEVADA**

**Nevada Dept of Labor  
Labor Commission**  
1445 Hot Springs Road  
Carson City, NV 89710  
702/687-4850

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**Wage & Hour Division**  
P.O. Box 2076  
Concord, NH 03302  
603/271-2597

**NEW JERSEY**

**New Jersey Dept of Labor  
Division of Workplace Standards  
Office of Wage & Hour  
Compliance**  
225 East State Street  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609/292-2337

**NEW MEXICO**

**NM Dept of Labor  
Labor & Industry Division**  
1596 Pacheco Street  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
505/827-6875

**NEW YORK**

**NY State Dept of Labor  
Labor Standards Division**  
65 Court Street, Room 402  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
716/847-7141

**NORTH CAROLINA**

**NC Dept of Labor  
Wage & Hour Division**  
4 West Edenton Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601  
919/733-7166

**NORTH DAKOTA**

**Labor Standards Division  
State Capitol**  
600 E. Boulevard, 6th Floor  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
701/224-2660

**OHIO**

**Dept of Industrial Relations  
Division of Prevailing Wages  
Minimum Wage & Minors**  
2323 W. 5th Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43216  
614/644-2239





**OKLAHOMA**

**Wage and Hour Division**

**OK Dept of Labor**

4001 N. Lincoln Boulevard  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
405/528-1500

**OREGON**

**Bureau of Labor and Industries**

**Wage & Hour Division**

800 NE Oregon #32  
Portland, OR 97232  
503/229-5737

**PENNSYLVANIA**

**Dept of Labor & Industries**

**Labor Standards Bureau**

Harrisburg, PA 17120  
717/787-4671

**PUERTO RICO**

**Dept of Human Resources**

**Labor Standards Bureau**

505 Munoz Rivera Avenue  
Hato Rey, PR 00918  
809/754-5353

**RHODE ISLAND**

**Labor Standards**

**Rhode Island Dept of Labor**

220 Elmwood Avenue  
Providence, RI 02907  
401/457-1800

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

**Bureau of Wages & Child Labor**

**SC Dept of Labor**

**Employment and Standards  
Division**

P.O. Box 1129  
Columbia, SC 29211  
803/734-9603

**SOUTH DAKOTA**

**SD Dept of Labor**

Kneip Building  
700 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501  
605/773-3682

**TENNESSEE**

**Labor Department**

**Labor Standards Division**

710 James Robertson Parkway  
Gate Way Plaza Building  
2nd Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243  
615/781-5343

**TEXAS**

**TX Dept of Labor**

**Employment Commission**

**Labor Law Department**

101 E. 15th Street  
Austin, TX 78778  
512/463-2222

**UTAH**

**Industrial Commission Labor  
Division**

P.O. Box 146640  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114  
801/530-6801

**VERMONT**

**VT Dept of Labor**

**Labor & Industry Department**

**Wage & Hour Division**

Drawer 20  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
802/828-2157

**VIRGIN ISLANDS**

**Attorney General**

**Dept of Justice**

St Thomas, VI 00801  
340/776-3700

**VIRGINIA**

**VA Dept of Labor**

**Labor & Industry Department  
Labor Division**

Powers-Taylor Building  
13 S. Thirteenth Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
804/786-2386

**WASHINGTON**

**Bureau of Employment  
Standards**

**Dept of Labor & Industries**

P.O. Box 44510  
Olympia, WA 98504  
800/547-8367

**WEST VIRGINIA**

**Dept of Labor**

**Labor Division**

**Wage and Hour Division**

Building 3, Room 319  
Charleston, WV 25305  
304/558-7890

**WISCONSIN**

**Bureau of Labor Standards**

**Wisconsin Equal Rights Division**

201 E. Washington Avenue  
Northern Building  
Madison, WI 53708  
608/266-6860

**WYOMING**

**Employment Division**

**Dept of Labor**

6101 N. Yellowstone Road  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
307/777-7261



## 5. Family Volunteer Assignment Description

**Nature of Assignment/Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Goals of Assignment:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Sample Activities:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Time Frame of Assignment:**

Length of commitment: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated total hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Scheduling: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ At discretion of volunteers \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Needed at following time: \_\_\_\_\_

Worksite: \_\_\_\_\_

**Qualifications Sought:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Benefits:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_



## 6. Parental Consent Form

In order for your child/children to volunteer with us, we need your consent and involvement in helping them have a productive experience. Please read and sign this parental consent form if you would like us to continue our process of considering your child as a possible volunteer.

**Name of Agency:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name(s) of Prospective Youth Volunteer(s):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Anticipated Volunteer Assignment:**

**Anticipated Number of Hours Per Week and Schedule of Volunteer Assignment:**

**Expected Duration of Volunteer Commitment:**

*I understand that the child/children named above wishes to be considered for a volunteer assignment and I certify that I have parental or guardianship status regarding them. I hereby give my permission to serve in the described volunteer capacity, if accepted by the agency. I understand that they will be provided with orientation and training necessary for the safe and responsible performance of their duties and that they will be expected to meet all the requirements of that assignment, including regular attendance and adherence to agency policies and procedures. I understand that they will not receive any monetary compensation for the services contributed.*

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nature of Relationship to Volunteer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## 7. Permission to Perform Background Check

*Our agency holds the safety of our clients in the utmost importance. By signing the form below you give us permission to conduct a background check for the limited purpose of verifying the information you have provided us. We are sorry for this intrusion, but we feel it is necessary in order to guarantee effective provision of our services.*

We hereby give [name of agency] permission to conduct a check of my background, including:

- ☐ criminal record
- ☐ driving record
- ☐ past employment/volunteer history
- ☐ educational/professional status
- ☐ personal references
- ☐ physician or therapist

and other persons or sources as appropriate for the volunteer assignment in which we have expressed an interest.

We understand that we do not have to agree to this background check, but that refusal to do so may exclude us from consideration for some types of volunteer work.

We understand that the information collected during this background check is limited to that appropriate to determining our suitability for particular types of volunteer assignments and that all such information collected during the check will be kept confidential.

We also hereby extend our permission to those individuals or organizations contacted for the purpose of this background check to give their full and honest evaluation of our suitability for the described volunteer work and such other information as they deem appropriate.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## 8. Family Volunteer Sign Up Sheet

**Name of Activity:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Activity:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsoring/Partner Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Person:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Family Members	Relationships	Address	Phone/E-Mail
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.



## 9. Interviewing Staff About Family Volunteering

*One of the functions of a good volunteer manager is to serve as an internal consultant to staff, helping them to examine their own attitudes, experiences, and opinions about options for involving volunteers. If you perform this function in your agency, then the following interview questions may help you in eliciting the attitudes and help of staff.*

1. What's your degree of involvement with the volunteers who are currently working with the agency? Do you directly supervise or work with volunteers? If so, how is that working out for you?
2. Have you ever been involved in an agency which utilized family members as volunteers? What was that like?
3. Do you do any volunteer work outside your job? If so, what kind of things do you do? How did you get involved in that?
4. Did you ever do any volunteering yourself as a young person? What was that like? What do you think the impact of that was on you?
5. This agency is now thinking about involving more family member volunteers – where do you think they fit into what your organization is trying to accomplish in the community?
6. Why do you think this agency is making use of volunteers? What do you think volunteers have to contribute to what you're doing?
7. Do you think family volunteers would be any different than what you have just described, either in contributing more, less, or just something different?
8. Why do you think a family would want to volunteer here? Is there anything special that you think this agency has to offer to family volunteers?
9. Are families currently involved in any way in your area of service or activity – are they clients, work on advisory groups, part of the focus of what you're doing?
10. Can you think of anything in particular that you would like to see happen with family volunteers in your area of responsibility? Any particular types of work that would be suitable for families to do together?
11. Are there any particular jobs or tasks that you think shouldn't be handled by family volunteers?
12. Have you heard any worries or concerns expressed about involving families, including those with young children, as volunteers here? Do you have any concerns or questions yourself about this?
13. Are there any additional rules or policies that you think should be considered if families and children are to be involved here at the agency?



14. Can you think of any changes that should be made in orientation or training of family members or other volunteers because of the possible involvement of young children?
15. What challenges can you think of that people here might face in supervising or working with family volunteers?
16. Have you heard any staff express some worries about having to work with or supervise family volunteers, or children? What did those worries seem to be about?
17. What do you think might need to be done to reassure anyone who has concerns about involving family volunteers safely?
18. On a scale of "1" to "7" with "1" meaning "Bad" and "7" being "Excellent," how would you rate the overall general idea of trying to involve families as volunteers here?
19. Again on a scale from "1" to "7" with "1" meaning "Bad" and "7" being "Excellent," how would you rate the current level of preparedness of this organization in being able to successfully involve families as volunteers? By this, we're curious not about whether this is a good idea in general but whether now is the right time for the organization to undertake the effort.
20. Are there any comments you'd like to make about anything you're said so far or anything else you'd like to make a comment or ask a question about?

## 10. Staff Orientation Session on Family Volunteering

The following staff orientation session was first developed by Milton Wooley, a psychologist in Pleasanton, CA. The original appeared in Allen and Harrison (1983), *Families Volunteer: A Workbook for Involving Families*, and is slightly adapted here.

*What follows is the script that a facilitator could use in taking staff through a guided imagery session which allows them to consider the importance and impact of family volunteer involvement. This session is not something which an inexperienced trainer can be asked to perform, since it relies on a degree of interaction with the audience. The equipment necessary for this exercise includes a comfortable room and pencils and paper for participants. Please note that this same session could also be used in a volunteer orientation session or in recruitment presentations to community groups.*

We are going to use a process known as 'guided imagery' to stimulate your thinking about families as volunteers. You will be guided through an analysis of your own family experience as a way of appreciating some of the strengths and potential problems of families as volunteers.

First, get an image set of your family when you were a child.

Image set? Comfortable? Let's begin.

Think back to when you were a child. Were your parents involved in the community as volunteers? What did they do? Did they tell you about their volunteer work? How did they feel about it? How did you feel about the fact that they did it?

When was the first time that you volunteered? How did you get involved? Did your parents or grandparents or brothers or sisters play a role in helping you get started? Did you ever volunteer with any of them? How did your family feel about your involvement? Can you remember telling them about it?

What kinds of things did your family do together? Did it include things that helped other people? Can you remember a specific instance in which several members of your family were involved in helping someone else? What was it? What did each member of the family do? How did they feel about the experience? Was it fun? How did you feel about the person you were helping? Did that experience and others like it have an impact on your volunteer life?

Think again about that example. How did your family get involved in that helping activity? Was it hard to do? Did it take a lot of time? Who suggested that you do it together? Who in the family "managed" the work? What contribution did you make?

Take a moment to rest. What are you feeling about your family and its volunteer experience? Does this kind of thinking stir good memories or bad? Why? What do you think you've learned about remembering your family life as a child and its relationship to volunteering? Can you summarize





that in three or four key phrases or ideas?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Now think about your family life as an adult. Are you involved as a volunteer now? Is your wife, husband, best friend, roommate? Are your children? What do you do as a volunteer? How do you feel about your volunteer work? Is it an important part of your life? Do you tell the rest of your family about it? What do they each think of the fact that you're a volunteer?

Think of the last time you told one of your children or another member of your family something about volunteer work. What did they say? Did you let your feeling about your work show?

Do your children do any sort of volunteer work? What is it? How did they get started? Did you play a role in that? How do you help them in their volunteer activities? How do you feel about the fact that they are volunteers? Do you let them know how you feel?

What does your family do together? Does it include things that help other people? Can you remember a specific instance in which several members of your family worked together to help someone else? What was it? What did each member of the family do? How did each member feel about the experience? Was it fun? How did each person feel about the person you were helping? Did you talk about your work or about the person you were helping together as a family?

Think a bit more about that example. How did your family get involved in that helping activity? Was it hard to get everyone involved? Did it take a lot of time? Who sug-

gested that you work together? Who in the family "managed" the work? What contributions did each member of the family make? What do you think each member gained from the experience? Was it worthwhile? Would you want to do it again? Why?

Once again, reflect on what you've been thinking about. Now, summarize what you've learned from this analysis in three or four key phrases or ideas:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Two final questions grow out of this exercise. To answer them, think about both of the images you've been through.

First, what are the three most important things your families – both past and present – got from their experiences together as volunteers?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Second, what are the three most difficult problems your families encountered in their volunteering?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*The session concludes by inviting participants to share their reactions, providing material for a discussion of how family volunteering is important both to the community and to families. This will then open the way to a discussion of how families are able to contribute to the agency and what the agency can do or change to accommodate volunteer families.*



## 11. Family Evaluation of Volunteer Assignment

**Name of Family:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Agency:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Briefly describe what your family has been doing in their volunteer assignment:**

**2. Did you receive adequate orientation/training before your assignment?**   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

**Comments:**

**3. What aspects of your volunteer service have not been enjoyable?**

**4. What aspects of your volunteer service have been most beneficial to the people served?**

**5. In what way has your experience as a volunteering family been meaningful?**

**6. Overall, was your time well spent as volunteers?**   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

**7. Will you continue as volunteers in your community?**   ☐ Yes   ☐ No



## 12. Self-Assessment for Teens Involved in Volunteering

*Use this as a way to assess your own volunteering and to find ways to better contribute to your community. Put a check in the boxes which describe your behavior. Only check the boxes which you believe accurately reflect how you usually do.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do I offer my services when there is an obvious need for help?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Do I follow through on all work assignments?                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do I accept criticism and suggestions without becoming emotionally upset?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Do I try to take a positive approach to problems even when frustrated?        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do I follow directions?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Do I take personal responsibility for doing the best job that I possibly can? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do I ask for additional instructions when I do not understand what to do?   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do I have a friendly attitude with the agency staff, volunteers, other family members and clients?                                  | <i>Here's what I'll do to be a better volunteer next time:</i>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Am I reliable? Do I meet work commitments on time?  | 1. _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Am I punctual? Do I show up at my worksite at the designated day and time each week?  | 2. _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> If I am unable to serve at a designated time, do I give my volunteer manager at the agency a call explaining my absence in advance? | 3. _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do I listen to those whom I am helping?   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do I listen to those who are trying to help me?   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do I avoid criticism of the agency, volunteer manager, fellow volunteers, staff or clientele?                                       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do I observe my clientele to know their dislikes, likes, preferences, enthusiasms, aversions, etc.?                                 |  |



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# Characteristics of Effective Family Volunteer Programs

## ***Lay the Foundation through Mission and Vision***

- The priorities of the organization include an interest in strengthening families as a part of its mission in the community.
- There is a positive vision – clearly articulated, widely-shared and openly discussed throughout the organization – of the importance of strong families and of the role of volunteering in strengthening families and the community.
- Family volunteers are seen as valuable human resources that can directly contribute to achievement of the organization's mission, not primarily as a means to obtaining financial or other material resources.

## ***Combine Inspiring Leadership with Effective Management***

- Leaders at all levels – policy-making, executive and middle management – work in concert to encourage and facilitate high impact volunteer involvement of all family members.
- There is a clear focal point for leadership of family volunteering but all staff members work on better involvement of families in their areas of responsibility.
- Potential barriers to family volunteer involvement – liability, confidentiality, the involvement of children, hours of operation, etc. – are identified and are dealt with forthrightly.

## ***Build Understanding and Collaboration***

- All members of the family are respected and are empowered to fully participate in planning, decision-making and management related to their volunteer involvement.
- There is a conscious, active effort to reduce the boundaries and increase the teamwork among family members, demonstrating the capability of individuals of all ages and backgrounds to share in assisting their community.
- Stories of the contributions of family volunteers become part of both organizational and family histories, providing role models for future generations of volunteers.

## ***Learn, Grow and Change***

- Reflection upon family community service is used as a means for both the organization and family members to learn more about their own experiences and efforts and about ways to better assist the community.
- There is a recognition that family volunteering can assist the organization in empowering wider representation from all segments of the community, including those the organization seeks to serve.

*The above are based on the Paradigm Characteristics of Effective Volunteer Programs, developed by the Points of Light Foundation.*









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