

Making the Most  
of  
Human Resources

A workshop on training staff to  
work with volunteers

Sponsored by the Minnesota Association  
of Volunteer Directors during the  
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Social Service Association

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The intent of this workshop is to partially fulfill a long felt need among volunteer coordinators for some specifics on training staff, no matter what the setting, to work with volunteers. Since staff members play a crucial role in the success of every volunteer program and since the need for staff training has long been recognized and mentioned in practically every book, paper, study published in the field, it is shocking that there is so little of an actual "how to" nature. Volunteers in leadership positions, volunteer coordinators, administrators of volunteer programs, directors and staff planning to initiate volunteer programs in their agencies, schools, hospitals and organizations up until now have been expected instinctively to know how to include staff, how to train them, how to work with staff working with volunteers. Or has the expectation actually been the opposite?..that we ignore staff and quietly go about setting up volunteer programs and expect staff to instinctively know how to use them

The following pages are designed to lead the workshop participant through a thought and planning process that should culminate in readiness to take the next step-launch a staff training session, series, program.

One final thought before we begin: a workshop is only as good as the ultimate action produced by the workshop participant on the home front. The most brilliant speaker, the best planned session is a waste of time for the planners, the presenter, and for the participants if new learnings or reawakened awarenesses are not immediately utilized in your program.

P.A.

Because of the need to define our topic and avoid getting sidetracked, and trying to cover the entire field of voluntarism we must begin with the following assumptions:

1. A volunteer program is desirable.
2. Planning is desirable.
3. We owe our clients, patients, recipients (whatever) our very best effort.
4. Staff involvement/staff training is desirable.
5. Human beings have the potential and ability in spite of their differences to plan and work together.
6. Each participant in this workshop is an individual in a unique situation relative to a volunteer program but carrying some kind of responsibility.
7. Each program represented is a well run sound program.

Note: We will not be able to deal as a group with individual situations and circumstances within the 2 hour time limit of the workshop. The workshop leader and a number of others will be available afterwards for individual discussion.

S e c t i o n I

B A C K G R O U N D

And now to the task!

Please answer all questions, do all ratings, fill all blanks, with respect to your own agency, organization, program or plans. Only by personalizing your responses will you make a useful tool out of this workshop.

Use the date for your responses, you may want to do it again at a later time.

Be brutal in your judgments.

Identify program (It is perfectly legitimate to zero in on a specific smaller part of a broad program if you choose.)

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1. Your Role and Responsibility (Current or planned) relative to the program you have identified above.

- Planning  Funding  Carrying out
- Supervising the person directly responsible
- Significant contact with program
- Watching it happen (I don't know why I am in this workshop)
- Chairman or Board member
- Cheering section

2. At what point is your program right now.

- A dream
- At beginning of planning
- Advanced planning
- Poised in flight
- Started but brand new
- Young and developing
- Middle aged and struggling
- In its prime and booming
- Stuck on a plateau
- Over the hill being kept alive by artificial means
- Dead as a doornail
- Past history

3. What do you want to do with it? You may write the date by more than one.

- Do everything I can to ensure its success.
- Nothing (I don't know why I'm in this workshop)
- Revitalize it
- Give it a kick and get it moving
- Put it out of its misery and start something new and useful.
- Put it out of its misery and take my considerable talents elsewhere (but I want to learn from this workshop anyway).
- Cry about how other peoples lack of cooperation prevents me from doing anything.

4. My attitude toward the program

- I can't see the forest for the trees.
- I honestly believe the results are worth the work and effort.
- I am committed to the work, effort and even the soul searching, loving, caring and growing that might be demanded to bring it about.
- I am so emotionally involved with it that I take everything personally and can't objectively evaluate so don't bring up any questions,

- criticisms or suggestions.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Blah! (I don't care one way or the other.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Yuk! (I don't know why I'm in this workshop anyway)

5. What kind of staffing is available to your program?

6. What is the chain of command, hierarchy of structure above your program and the attitude of each person?

Person

Attitude



If you are in planning stages.

7. Have you made every effort humanly possible to read and learn everything about every aspect of volunteer programs?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, although I realize that nobody (even the workshop leader) knows everything. And I intend to keep learning...forever and ever and ever.....

\_\_\_\_\_ No, but I'm going straight to the library and get all the materials I can, then I'll write to NCVA and NICOV and get everything they'll send me and read and read and then I'm going to talk to everyone I can that is experienced in volunteer programs and learn all I can from them. Then I'll use the ~~Minnesota Council of Directors of Volunteers in Health Care's consultants or the National Center for Voluntary Action's Consultant Network or the Governor's Office on Volunteer Services~~ to help me avoid making the same mistakes others have made. I can be original and creative and make my very own mistakes!

*My states!*

8. How do you regard the participation of others in the planning process?

\_\_\_\_\_ I'm the only one who knows anything about it and I don't need any one else.

\_\_\_\_\_ I need all the help I can get! Pile on everybody!!

\_\_\_\_\_ I need to select a variety of people for the talents they can contribute to the planning process, for their interest, for the groups they represent, for the role they will play in the future of the program.

9. How are staff currently involved in the planning process?

If you have an established program

7. Where were you when the program was born?
- In the cradle or I'm too young to remember
  - Hiding because I was sure it would blow up.
  - Officiating at the ceremony
  - Standing by to give it all the help and cooperation it needed.
  - Working elsewhere, I'm a transplant.
  - Other (explain)
8. Historically speaking (or writing) how did it start?
- It was a one man show
  - It was a clandestine plot (only a couple people knew about it and they tried to keep it a secret.
  - It was a group project welcoming help from all quarters.
  - It grew like a fungus irrevocably and imperceptably and suddenly it was there.
  - It was inflicted from above
  - The Battle lines were drawn and after a bloody battle our side had won.
  - It was by Court Order.
9. What was the level of staff involvement in starting and early development?

What is the current level of staff involvement?

10. In your mind who occupies (or in the case of planned programs who will occupy) the most important position relative to your program? Least? (M + date=Most; L + date=Least)
- Staff
  - Client, patient, recipient (whatever you call him/her)
  - Coordinator, administrator or director of volunteers
  - Prospective volunteer
  - Board member
  - Funding source
  - Your supervisor
  - Agency or organization
  - Your family
  - Your agency director, hospital administrator
  - The community
  - Inanimate objects
  - Other (specify)
  - New volunteer
  - Experienced volunteer
  - Professional person who volunteers
  - Janitor or janitress

11. Explain any qualifications you might have or haziness you might feel in answering #10.

12. How do others see you (or when your name comes up how do they free associate?) Staff members, volunteers, administration, your supervisor. (If different people see you differently feel free to use letters or abbreviations to designate, then ask yourself some questions about why they perceive you differently and whether this is healthy and for whom.)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honest as the day is long      | <input type="checkbox"/> Bleeding Heart  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snake in the grass             | <input type="checkbox"/> Slob            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Solid as the Rock of Gibraltar | <input type="checkbox"/> Smart Alek      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomat                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Loving          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competent                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gullible                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Gutsy           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spy                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suicidal                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Crusty          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pathetic                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Brash           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Even tempered   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cautious                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Empire Builder  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Scatter Brained |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Judgmental                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Self Centered   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sincere                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Loner           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calculating                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secure                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Enemy           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flaky                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Blah!           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crook                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lover                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traitor                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Zero            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) |

13. Where do you pin gold stars for successes? Where in the hierarchy (not parts of the anatomy) and on what individuals?

14. How do you feel about sharing credit?

15. How do you feel about success and failure?

16. Do you think all efforts are one or the other?

Why?

17. Do you receive pressure about success or failure from those around you or those influential to your employment?

NOW! What we've all been waiting (wading) for! Some specific application.

We're at the point where its necessary to roll all of the foregoing into one big package and, assuming that you were brutally honest as instructed, call it "what I have to work with". It will be necessary from time to time for you to calculate the influence of parts of the package on your plans for staff training. "Staff training" is probably more properly entitled "Working most effectively with staff in such a way as to enable them to work most effectively with volunteers in such a way as to enable them to work most effectively with clients in such a way as to enable them to work most effectively with staff. In other words how to make the most of human resources. ~~I'm sure you were dying of curiosity about where we got the title of the workshop (especially if you got here by mistake and can't get out without making a spectacle of yourself).~~ So far we've identified ourselves and our program. Lets talk about roles.



Since we have mentioned staff in relation to some of the roles, turn to EYES ONLY:

Identify staff as to their attitude regarding your plans or program. Write in names, initials or whatever you use to identify staff members in your own mind.

Something to consider:

Sometimes what you call a person in your own mind not only reflects how you feel toward him/her, but is reflected in your overt attitude and hence your ability to approach, understand, persuade, compromise with or help that individual.

Next entitle the second from left column "Reasons" and write in your diagnosis of the basis of the attitude which landed your staff member in the category you placed him/her in. This may be a bigger project than we have time for here so you may have to do some research, probing and thinking about this back on the job. Please attempt to at least speculate in the "Reasons" column so you will have something to work on for the next step.

Let's pause for a moment to briefly mention a principle which we may discover is the key to planning for staff involvement. One of the main principles in adult education holds that adults are not taught, they learn. In other words they apply past experiences, their own interests, their self concept, skills, satisfactions to a new situation and if the likelihood of some kind of a positive pay off outweighs the likelihood of a failure or penalty they adopt a new knowledge, a new attitude, a new position, a new skill.

So, for our purposes, just as you must offer something to get one adult to become a volunteer (the pay off in terms of satisfaction, new skills, new friendships, service to fellow man, change in society, or any of the other known and unknown, motivations we've been talking about for years ad nauseum, you must offer something to another adult to become involved in planning for involvement of volunteers supervision, provision of desirable atmosphere, promotion, motivation, evaluation, feedback recognition. There must be a positive pay off for the staff member. We must minimize the risk and maximize the pay off.

We have a good start on this effort because we have learned a lot about working with volunteers. We use specialized forms of recruitment, we interview them, we inform them, we screen them, we provide job descriptions, we train them. So by the time the volunteer gets to the staff member we have done everything we can to maximize the likelihood of a positive experience. But have we? We have done it all to or with the volunteer. Where is the pay off for the staff member?

Let us couple the adult education principle with the recollection, from psychology courses and previous workshops in the dim and distant past, that human beings need bodily comfort, security, love and self determination.

Where does all this lead us in terms of staff involvement?

In light of our adult education principle and our knowledge of human needs let's brainstorm the kinds of "Pay Offs" that might persuade a staff member to become positively involved in the volunteer program.

Maslow's  
List

Now, peek back at EYES ONLY; Entitle the column to the right of "Reasons" "Payoffs". Match up all of the staff with the "pay offs" that might be answers to the "Reasons". (Obviously as with the "Reason" column you will need to do more thinking and exploring and revising.) Just a reminder that it isn't dumb to have the problem, its dumb not to do anything about it.

By now you have deduced what to do with the right hand column. But let us brainstorm it with the group first on the chance that someone might suggest a method that you hadn't thought of already.

Rx (It is illegal to use the word "involve" on the grounds that it is not specific enough. Besides its too vague.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.

Now plug it in to EYES ONLY.

# EYES ONLY!

Assign Staff  
members by  
attitude

Love affair  
with the  
volunteer  
program

Enthusiastic  
realistic  
supporters

On the Fence  
So-So

Ignorant or  
unconscious

Agin' It

Bent on  
Destruction

S e c t i o n   I I

S T A F F   T R A I N I N G   E N C O U N T E R

## The ABC's of Staff Training/Involvement

### A. Initial planning

Invite staff (all of it in a small agency or organization or representatives in a large one) to a meeting to participate in determining the desirability and need for a volunteer program.

Needless to say, your pre pre planning activity will have consisted of finding out how various staff feel initially about deploying volunteers in your agency or organization. Then you have as idea of where you stand.

Knowledge of where the idea of having a volunteer program first arose is really helpful here. Obviously, if it is being imposed from above (of course depending on the working relationship between staff and administration) it is far different from having it arise from the staff. It is vitally important that all parts of the system be as equally involved as possible. It does little good to force the funding source by political pressure to fund the program if they do not have a good understanding of it for they have the power to kill it when they please.

A word about staff representation is appropriate here. Department heads are not always accepted as representative of staff feeling. Be sure to identify the key people influential in form "staff opinion" and involve them as much as possible. Again, be sure to recognize the importance of all levels of staff. A janitor that grumbles about volunteers or an elevator operator who intimates that volunteers are a waste of time can be as destructive as an unconvinced social worker, teacher or head nurse.

#### Techniques of involving staff in planning.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.

### B. Established programs

Even if staff were not involved during the planning process it is not too late to involve them and thus improve your program.

What are some of the ways staff could become involved at this point? It is vital to note here that segregating volunteers and staff is dangerous. You want to increase communication between staff and volunteers. They should both be included in meetings and discussions as much as possible. And don't overlook the fact that in addition to the brilliant ideas we list at this workshop, staff and volunteers will be able to come up with more and better

ones and welcome the involvement.

1. Ask staff members to suggest ways they would like to be involved.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

C. MY PLAN FOR STAFF TRAINING

<u>Action</u>	<u>Persons Involved</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Accomplished</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>
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