

# **DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS**



**A Step by Step Guide  
for Local Government**

**NEW ENGLAND MUNICIPAL CENTER**

*Supported in part by the*

**Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Ford Foundation**

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Karl A. Van Asselt, Executive Director  
New England Municipal Center  
Post Office Box L  
Durham, New Hampshire 03824  
(603) 868-5000

# **DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS**

A Guide for Local Government

*Prepared by*

**Susan B. Casey**  
Senior Staff Associate  
New England Municipal Center

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Volunteer training

Volunteer Co.

By SUSAN Sun-

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Volunteer training Workshop on volunteers Volunteers' organization

## 1. VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are not a new phenomenon. People have contributed their time and talents to serve many causes over the years. And although there is a good deal of discussion currently, volunteers in government are not new. When our country began, governmental control over colonial America was 3,000 miles away. Because it often took six to nine months for communications between the colonists and their government in England, the colonists took things into their own hands and did what needed to be done. Although a relatively unstructured society, much of what needed to be done 200 years ago forms the basis of local government services today. All local governing boards, councilors, alderman were volunteers; fire and militia groups were volunteer. Schools, alms houses, road building were, for the most part, taken care of when groups or individuals decided that those were important needs that must be met. From these earliest days, there has been a high level of volunteerism in government.

### FACT OR FICTION

**Fiction:** Community agencies tend to use volunteers a great deal but there isn't much use for volunteers in local government.

**Fact:** A 1981 NEMC survey of local governments found that volunteer use by New England municipal governments is widespread, both in terms of number of communities and in the kinds of services performed. Survey results indicate unlimited possibilities for volunteer use, with communities of all sizes showing creativity in providing municipal services through the use of volunteers.

As a more complex and sophisticated society developed, local government became more sophisticated as well. This tradition of people doing for themselves, of taking on the responsibilities necessary to meet community needs, continues today. There is currently a significant level of volunteer activity in local government in cities and towns across the nation. If every unpaid municipal official, every volunteer committee or board member, every library, school, recreation department volunteer stopped working, local government, as we know it today, would not survive.

The nature and level of volunteer activity, however, varies greatly from community to community. It is the result of a combination of factors, such as: population, area of the country, level of volunteer activity historically, amount of effort that has gone into promoting volunteer participation in government, philosophical commitment to citizen participation, and economics. Formal, comprehensive municipal volunteer programs are increasing but because volunteerism on the local level is often informal, decentralized and steeped in tradition it has been difficult for researchers to accurately gauge the level of volunteer activity in local government. Many do not recognize much of the unpaid local government activity as voluntary. In many communities, for instance, the local government sponsors a range of recreation programs due to the efforts of volunteer coaches and instructors. And the majority of elected and appointed officials are unpaid. Yet, surveys or questionnaires requesting information on the numbers and types of volunteers often do not include these people as volunteers.

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### WHO VOLUNTEERS?

- Teenagers • Housewives • Working Women
- Older People • Corporate Executives
- Middle-aged People • Business Men and Women • Retired People
- Disabled People • College Students • Young Adults

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There has not been a great deal of information available about the nature and level of volunteer activity in local government. What makes such programs work? Why do some communities utilize volunteers to such a great extent and so successfully, while others do not? What is the level of resources and the level of effort that is necessary for successful programs? What techniques and strategies are needed to develop, foster and promote volunteer participation in local government?



In an attempt to better understand some of these issues, the New England Municipal Center (NEMC) began a unique project in February 1981 focusing on the use of volunteers in local government. Supported by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Ford Foundation, three New England communities were selected as demonstration sites and provided supporting funds to hire a full-time volunteer coordinator to design, implement and coordinate a comprehensive municipal volunteer program in each community. Acton and Danvers, Massachusetts and Lewiston, Maine developed unique volunteer programs suited to the needs and individual interests of their communities. The experiences of these communities, the issues addressed, problems encountered and solved, strategies that failed and succeeded are a primary source of information contained in this manual.

Successful management of volunteer programs in government requires an adaptation and integration of volunteer management skills and knowledge, with a sophisticated understanding of the complexities of local government processes. The demonstration nature of the NEMC project provided the ability to observe this process from program development through implementation and evaluation and provided an excellent laboratory to test out theoretical management principles and document practical variables that impact on the successful utilization of volunteers in local government.

#### **VOLUNTEERS CAN . . .**

- Assist with special projects
- Free your staff for other tasks
- Enhance current level of services
- Do what your staff doesn't have time to do
- Provide additional services
- Improve employe morale
- Do most anything paid staff can do

The information contained in this manual pulls from the theoretical study of public administration, volunteer management and local government. The theory is integrated with experiential knowledge available from cities and towns across the country which utilize volunteers and, to an even greater extent, with the demonstration and laboratory information that we were able to obtain through our 1981-1982 project. The purpose of this manual is to provide municipal officials, municipal managers and volunteer coordinators with practical, how-to information to assist them in developing and managing volunteer programs in their cities and towns. This manual does not attempt to address major theoretical issues or problem areas, but is instead a recipe book, a prescription, a blueprint for successfully developing and managing a municipal volunteer program. Although the manual is designed to assist in the development and management of a comprehensive municipal program, the information is easily adaptable for those interested in more limited programs.

## 2. SUCCESSFUL MUNICIPAL PROGRAMS

Successful municipal volunteer programs don't just happen. Someone has to decide it's worthwhile and be willing to work towards the establishment of such programs. In order to develop a successful, comprehensive, municipal volunteer program, the following must occur:

- (1) There must be commitment from the chief executive, whoever that is; the manager, the mayor, the first selectman, councilor or alderman;
- (2) Department heads must understand that the municipality has made a commitment to develop a municipal volunteer program and be willing to be involved;
- (3) A competent and professional manager must be responsible for development and implementation of a volunteer program; and
- (4) There must be support from the community.

### COMMITMENT

The most important factor in developing a successful volunteer program in local government is commitment from the chief executive officer. That individual has to believe that having citizens involved in the day-to-day operation of government is good; that volunteers can make a significant contribution to the level of service that local governments must provide; that government is an appropriate

### MUSTS

- Commitment from the top
- Involvement of department heads
- Professional management
- Community Support

setting for utilization of volunteers, and the potential benefits of a comprehensive municipal volunteer program outweigh costs.

This basic commitment is necessary for many reasons. Skeptical department heads may need to be convinced that volunteers can be helpful to them. Boards and councils may need to be convinced that it's cost effective to appropriate the necessary funds to pay for the program. Staff may need to be convinced that they can benefit from having volunteers working with them. The public may need to be convinced that services will be enhanced, not lessened if volunteers are providing some municipal services. Union leadership may need to be convinced that jobs will not be lost if volunteers are working throughout local government. In order to deal successfully with these and other issues that may arise, the person in charge must have an understanding of the potential that volunteers can provide; an appreciation that many people do not understand the contribution that volunteers can make to government; an awareness of many of the misperceptions that exist about volunteers and; a commitment to see the program through some potentially difficult times. With few exceptions, only the manager, or chief elected official has sufficient legitimacy to provide this kind of leadership. If this commitment does not exist at the top, chances of success are slim.

## **DEPARTMENT HEADS**

The image of the typical volunteer as the community "do-gooder" is no longer accurate, if indeed it ever was. Educating those in responsible positions about the variety of individuals with a wealth of talent who could be available to meet the needs of individual departments is an important process, and one that must begin during the initial stages of program development. A key to making this process successful is the involvement of department heads in the earliest stages, preferably before the commitment to initiate such a program is made.

### **KEY PEOPLE**

- Manager • Volunteer Coordinator
- Chief Elected Official • Department Heads

When the mayor, manager or chief executive officer includes department heads in discussions regarding the rationale for program development, hoped for benefits, possible issues or problems, they will be better prepared to work constructively on program development. All of the issues mentioned previously regarding the role of volunteers ultimately must be dealt with by department heads and supervisors. Extensive involvement initially will lead to a greater understanding, commitment and ability to deal with the range of issues and concerns that will arise.

Department heads are the key individuals who will be determining the level and extent of volunteer use within individual departments, and ultimately the success of the entire program.

## **PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT**

One of the most important ingredients in insuring that the volunteer program will be successful is to make sure that the person responsible for developing and managing the program has the experience and skills necessary to do the job. There is a new and growing field of volunteer administration and although it is not necessarily critical that the program coordinator be certified in volunteer administration, the coordinator must have a range of experiences and skills including:

1. Understanding of and experience working with volunteers;
2. Program development skills;
3. Experience and skills in developing job descriptions;
4. A sophisticated understanding of local government operations;
5. Familiarity with the community;
6. Marketing skills;
7. Familiarity with recruitment techniques;
8. The ability to communicate effectively with individuals and groups;
9. The ability to design and implement appropriate training programs; and
10. Public relations skills.

In most cases, hiring an additional staff member to take on the responsibilities for developing and managing the program is necessary. It is a rare city or town that has someone with all of these skills and talents already on staff who is not being utilized to the fullest with other responsibilities.

In order to exercise the kind of leadership role necessary, the volunteer program coordinator must be viewed as a professional with status equal to that of department heads and must be considered a member of the *management team*. When a volunteer program is run out of the mayor's or the manager's office, it emphasizes the seriousness of intent and provides a high level of program legitimacy that is difficult to duplicate any other way.

A volunteer program coordinator must also have sufficient time to do the job. In larger cities and towns, a full-time professional volunteer manager is an absolute necessity. In smaller communities, once a program has been established (start-up time is 12 to 18 months) and a structure and system is incorporated into daily government operations, program management may be possible on a part-time basis. However, one cannot overemphasize the amount of skill, expertise and time that is involved in the development and management of a comprehensive volunteer program. A municipal volunteer program will have the best chance of success if a full-time professional manager is hired to establish and manage the volunteer program.

#### **VOLUNTEER MANAGER MUST HAVE. . .**

- Sufficient time
- Experience with volunteers
- Management experience
- Good communication skills
- Public relations experience
- Experience working as part of a team
- Knowledge about local government
- Good organizational skills
- Training experience

#### **COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

Support from the community is something that must be nurtured and must grow in order for a volunteer program to be successful. It is important on two levels. First, especially on the local level, government is of, by and for the people. In order to institute a new government program, you have to win the support of the public. At the same time, once the program is operational, the *staff* of the program—the volunteers—will come from the community. There should be a good deal of care and thought in the earliest stages of ways to interest the public in the program to insure the level of community support necessary for success.

### **3. DEVELOPING VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS**

Once the decision has been made to establish a centralized, comprehensive volunteer program; once there is commitment, support, involvement by the person at the top, department heads, and the public; once money has been allocated to fund program costs and a full-time professional to manage the program hired, the development of a comprehensive municipal volunteer program can then begin.

#### **STEP-BY-STEP**

- Hire coordinator
- Assess needs
- Develop job descriptions
- Train staff
- Recruit volunteers
- Train volunteers
- Place volunteers

## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The first thing that must be done is to assess which department and which tasks within each department could be undertaken by unpaid, part-time help. This is a complex and difficult process, for it may require that department heads and staff begin thinking about departmental roles, responsibilities and staff use in new and different ways. Department heads, supervisors and staff have to think through the various tasks that each employe does in the course of carrying out certain responsibilities, consider which tasks are currently not being done on as timely a basis as one would like or not at all because of lack of staff time. Are there tasks that should be done by the department or municipality that are not currently being done? Are there tasks that when done by volunteers, would allow paid staff time to do other more sophisticated tasks or would allow department heads to better utilize the time of paid staff? In looking at department needs, it is important to consider special projects that could be handled by volunteers as well as general support services to the entire department on an ongoing basis. Business and corporations are showing an increased interest in assisting government. It is important to consider what specialized expertise is not available through current staff that, if provided, would enhance departmental capacity to provide needed services.

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### **QUESTIONS TO ASK**

- What must be done that isn't getting done? Daily? Weekly? Periodically?
  - What should we be doing that we just don't have the time to do?
  - If someone else did some of the daily tasks, what other things would paid staff have time to do?
  - What tasks that staff currently do could be done easily by volunteers?
  - What special projects or additional tasks take staff away from their priority areas?
  - If you could have two people, eight hours a day for 4 weeks to do anything, what would they do?
-

In order to accomplish an accurate, comprehensive and creative assessment of department needs that can be met by volunteers, the volunteer program coordinator must have an in depth understanding of various departmental responsibilities, goals and current staff capacity. The initial needs assessment process is the responsibility of the volunteer coordinator but is conducted by working closely with staff, supervisors, department heads, and managers.

A written assessment that details the variety of possible tasks and jobs should be prepared by the coordinator and distributed to all department heads for modification, additional information and approval. The coordinator, in cooperation with department heads and manager should then prioritize needs within individual departments and throughout government. Prioritization should be based both on individual department needs and on the level of effort required to fulfill such needs. For instance, even though considered a priority need, if the finance office needs specialized computer or data processing volunteers to revamp the tax collection system prior to the preparation of this years tax bills, it may not be appropriate to expend the level of effort that would be required to fulfill this need during initial stages of program development. Such an undertaking may be so time consuming that it would preclude or limit the ability to develop volunteer assistance in any other area. Small manageable tasks that have a good chance of success initially should be high on the priority list. Once the decisions are made regarding the priority areas, job descriptions can then begin to be developed in these areas.

### **JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

Specific jobs easily emerge from the needs assessment process and become the basis for job descriptions. *Written* job descriptions are essential. They are helpful to the volunteer, the staff, supervisors, department heads and the volunteer coordinator. A

- JOB DESCRIPTIONS. . .**
- Insure that the job assigned is the job that needs to be done
  - Serve as the basis for supervision and evaluation
  - Help match the right person with the right skills to the right jobs
  - Establish a set of mutual expectations for all concerned
  - Document identified needs and services provided
  - Provide a record of individual volunteer experiences
  - Clarify roles of volunteers and staff



**POSITION TITLE: OFFICE ASSISTANT/FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**DESCRIPTION:** The Fire Department, serving a community of 26,000 people in a 14.7 square mile area, responds to approximately 2600 emergency calls each year. The Department employs approximately 50 Firefighters who are assigned to one of three stations.

The assistant will be involved in a wide range of general office procedures including typing, filing permits, charts and graphs, the vacation schedule, listing the percentage of fires, typing budget requests and keeping statistics. Some travel may be involved on special assignments.

Anyone doing this work must be willing to keep all information completely confidential.

**GOALS:** The goal of this assignment is to assist the Fire Department in up-dating and maintaining its recordkeeping systems.

**DEPARTMENT/ON-SITE SUPERVISOR:** Deputy Chief Richard Wessell, 777-0001, ext. 264.

**SKILLS NEEDED:**

- dependability
- accuracy
- ability to work with figures
- typing helpful, but not mandatory

**TRAINING/RESOURCES:** Volunteers will receive on-site training from Deputy Wessel on a job-by-job basis.

**DAYS/HOURS:** Monday through Thursday. The preferable hours are 1-3 P.M., however 9-12 A.M. will be considered.

**POSITION: DOG LICENSING ENFORCEMENT**

**DESCRIPTION:** The Danvers Police Department is developing a brand new program for more efficient enforcement of the Massachusetts dog licensing laws. It is estimated that in Danvers over 50% of all dog owners fail to comply with licensing regulations. This not only causes a problem in terms of public safety and animal control, but limits the amount of revenue received by the Town to be used to fund temporary animal shelter for stray, problem, or lost animals.

Volunteers are needed to assist staff in dog license recordkeeping. Current dog licenses need to be organized in a 2-part system by license number and by street. Volunteers will also be asked to match rabies certificates against licenses in order to determine violations of the licensing law.

Volunteers can also assist in the processing of tickets, docket sheets, complaint forms and in obtaining information from the courts. For those interested there will be opportunities to match descriptions of lost dogs with those animals which have been found.

**DEPARTMENT/ON-SITE SUPERVISOR:** Although this is a police department project, volunteers will work out of the Town Clerk's Office, under the direction of Dan Toomey, Town Clerk.

**SKILLS NEEDED:**

- accuracy
- good organizational skills
- concern for and commitment to the problem of dog control
- typing

**TRAINING/RESOURCES:** Volunteers will work under the guidance and supervision of Dog Officer Nancy Kiley. The one-hour orientation session can be taken any day of the week (Monday-Friday) from 3-4 P.M. Reference materials will also be made available.

**DAYS/HOURS:** Volunteers can coordinate their own schedule with Nancy. 3 hours per week minimum is required.

**JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

detailed job description enables the volunteer to assess his or her interest in a specific assignment and make a judgement as to whether or not he or she has the skills necessary for success. Job descriptions are also clear evidence to the volunteer that there is real work to be done and provides the volunteer a sense of being needed. It also serves as a record for jobs completed by individual volunteers and can serve as the basis for both a work history and performance evaluation when seeking future employment.

The volunteer coordinator uses the job descriptions to match the interests and skills of various volunteers with the requirements of the job. With good, clear job descriptions, the coordinator is better able to insure that the department will have its specific needs taken care of. Because volunteers will have a clear understanding of what is expected before taking on an assignment, it also increases the likelihood of volunteer satisfaction and, the more successful each placement, the easier the job of the coordinator.

**JOB DESCRIPTION SHOULD INCLUDE. . .**

- Title of the job
- Department
- Location
- Skills needed
- Specific tasks to be done
- Number, flexibility of hours
- Long-term or short-term
- Contact person

The staff, supervisors and department heads working with volunteers benefit from written job descriptions as well. By clearly spelling out tasks to be undertaken by the volunteer, the relationship with paid staff, both co-workers and the on-site supervisor, is clear from the beginning and eliminates confusion over roles, assigned tasks or jobs. The job description serves as a tool for supervision, monitoring and evaluation, and acts as a guide to insure that similar expectations are shared by all concerned. A clear, well written, accurate job description is one of the best tools for successful placement of volunteers on the job.

Job descriptions must be specific, need not be overly long, should not be theoretical and must be written. It should describe in concrete terms exactly what tasks need to be done, how the task should be done, how long it might take, where it would be done, the skills necessary to accomplish the tasks, which department and who the supervisor would be. Discussion regarding how this particular task relates to other departmental responsibilities and why it is an important task to be accomplished is often helpful as well.

Some volunteer managers recommend written contracts be attached to job descriptions so that once a volunteer has accepted an assignment and met with the supervisor, all expectations are clearly spelled out. This provides an additional tool for establishing a mutual understanding of the job to be done, the specifics of when, where, how, and facilitates monitoring, evaluation and record keeping.

## RECRUITMENT THOUGHTS

The fact is that millions of Americans volunteer each year. But who are they? Where are they? How do we find them? When you ask municipal officials what the major stumbling block to the development of volunteer services by municipal government is, recruitment of volunteers is the overwhelming choice. There is somehow the notion that there are magical recruitment plans, strategies and techniques that would bring volunteers in droves to city or town hall as soon as they were implemented. There are a variety of recruitment strategies and techniques, some more sophisticated than others that do impact on the number and quality of volunteers available. But the *best recruitment strategy is a sound, well managed program* based on an understanding of why people volunteer and what local government has to offer volunteers.

### FACT OR FICTION

**Fiction:** Only old people and housewives volunteer.

**Fact:** A 1981 Gallup Survey found that 37% of those over 65 years of age volunteered in the last year, while 59% of adults from 25-44 and 54% of those 17-24 volunteered, during that same time. The survey also found that working women are more likely to volunteer than women who stay at home.

### PEOPLE VOLUNTEER TO . . .

- Make a contribution
- Learn something
- Feel needed
- Be in on things that matter
- Meet other people
- Gain experience
- Use their talents and skills
- Establish contacts
- Re-enter the workforce
- Keep busy
- Feel good

There are a variety of reasons why some organizations, agencies or groups have more success recruiting volunteers than others. The kinds of job assignments available, the worthiness of the cause, knowing others who volunteer in the agency, the personal contacts of agency staff, the kinds of skills required by volunteers, the potential for making contacts that can lead to a paid job, the challenge available, the meaningfulness of the work, the level of recruitment effort are a few of the variables. Understanding these factors is important in planning your recruitment efforts.

People who volunteer want to do real work, work that is meaningful, in a setting that provides some status, where they can feel good about their jobs and feel good about themselves. Some issues people consider before deciding to volunteer are:

*Is the Cause Worthwhile?* When government is seen as people working together to provide essential services for your community, services that enhance the quality of life of your city or town, that provide for basic needs, protection of friends and neighbors, the answer is unequivocally, yes! But one of the problems of local government today is that it is sometimes seen as separate from the people, as an imposing, not necessarily positive force in people's lives. Emphasis on the good that local government does, the contributions it makes to the quality of life of the community, an appeal to a sense of community pride and spirit, of participation by citizens in their government is essential and has to be an integral part of the public relations recruitment campaign.

*Are There Real, Important Jobs That Must Be Done?* Volunteers need to feel that they are doing something that matters, that is real work, not make work, that their presence makes a difference. Although the sometime image of the public employe as having little to do, being lazy, and involved in make-work projects bears little relationship to the reality of staffing local government today, it is an image that often must be countered. The long lines during tax collection time, the cuts in the number of hours libraries can remain open, lack of adequate transportation for the elderly, parks without recreation programs are ample evidence that there is real work that volunteers can do to make a substantial difference in the level of service available. There is more than enough work to be done and staff, paid or unpaid, are needed to provide these services.

*The Image Of Public Employe.* The image that public employes have of themselves must be positive and the image that the public has of public employes must also be positive. Volunteers want to be identified with jobs and a staff that is held in high esteem. Educating the public of the high quality of public employes, the interesting, vital and stimulating work that takes place, and the importance of the work of public employes in maintaining the quality of life in the community contributes to the necessary positive image.

*How Well Managed?* Volunteers also want to be a part of an organization that is well organized, well managed, where they are treated as significant people in the organization. Not only must municipal government be well managed, but the municipal volunteer program must also be a well managed, organized, professional operation. At every point of visibility—the volunteer director, support staff, written materials, office space, media—the appearance of professionalism must be apparent.

Understanding these and other factors that impact on the decision to volunteer are the foundation on which a creative and comprehensive recruitment plan can rest. The following recruitment ideas can only supplement, not substitute for a sound, well managed volunteer program with meaningful jobs.

### FACT OR FICTION

**Fiction:** People who work don't have the time to volunteer.

**Fact:** People who are employed are more likely to volunteer than those who are unemployed. Gallup found that 55% of full-time workers and 65% of part-time workers volunteer, compared to 45% of those who are unemployed.

## RECRUITMENT ACTIONS

When devising a recruitment strategy for municipal government volunteer programs, you must draw from advertising and marketing, public relations, personnel recruitment, citizen participation and volunteer management fields. But, in its simplest terms, recruitment plans are the variety of ways you *ask* people to volunteer. Volunteers rarely walk through the doors on their own asking if they can be of help. The key to recruiting volunteers to work in local government is to find enticing ways to ask volunteers to come through the doors of your city or town hall, rather than to another agency or program.

And asking once is not enough. People have to be asked at *least three times* just to catch their interest; they have to be asked over and over again to gain their commitment. There are an endless number of ways to ask. Most of the methods used to recruit volunteers can be grouped under the following categories:

- The media
- Personal contacts
- Special interest groups
- Information/advertising
- Special events

### RECRUITMENT TIPS

- Be aggressive
- Be specific
- Be fun
- Be professional
- Be persistent
- Be patient

### HINTS

- Have plenty of jobs available before beginning recruitment
- Begin with small, manageable tasks
- Begin with placements that guarantee success
- Don't promise staff immediate ability to fill job requests
- Try and create a job for a particularly eager or talented volunteer



# The BEACON

NUMBER 5

Thursday, February 11, 1982

## Volunteer is compiling Acton's past

By Hedy Lopes

ACTON-By her own admission, Barbara O'Brien had time on her hands. With a husband whose job involved long hours and frequent travel, and with her children grown, O'Brien was spending many long days at home.

Recently, though, through a friend, she heard about the Volunteers in Public Service (V.I.P.S.) program and has recently been spending several hours a week at her "job".

O'Brien has been working in the Town Clerk's office, where she pores over the bound volumes containing the minutes of Special Town Meetings and Annual Town Meetings. The goal of her project is to cross reference various topics on index cards.

While the project may seem tedious (O'Brien began with 1948 and has been working her way through 1957), O'Brien finds it interesting.

A history and polycience major in college, O'Brien said she has always had an interest in town government. And through this project, O'Brien, a 9-year resident of Acton, said she has discovered fascinating information on "how the town evolved."

For example, while plowing through the 1952 records, O'Brien read that the town was purchasing land for the West Acton fire station. And through the fifties, she finds references to the construction of schools, certainly an anachronism. Also, in past years, before the public's environmental consciousness was raised, voters even appropriated money for the spraying of poison ivy along public ways, O'Brien noted.

O'Brien said she finds the "formative" years of the town, when it experienced growing pains, more interesting than recent years.

According to Town Clerk Lydia Lesure, O'Brien began her research with the year 1948 because prior to that year, the minutes were all hand-written. In fact, there are records dating back to 1735. Musty, with yellowed pages and withered brown edges, those volumes are written in a formal, barely legible script. But later handwritten volumes are characterized by a recorder's neat, exacting script.

Lesure, who characterized the end result of the project as a "reference tool", is very grateful for the assistance.

"It has been in the back of my mind for the last couple of years," she said, adding, "it's a project that really needs doing, but there's no way I had time to do it."

Lesure also said the nature of the work is such that it can be "picked up and put down" according to the volunteer's schedule.

Marsha Gratz, coordinator of the VIPS program, which began last fall, commented the overall response to the program, has been "pretty good."

She said town employees have "been coming up with new jobs as time goes on."

Gratz said she hopes the number of available jobs at one time might peak at 25. To date, Gratz said 14 positions have become available and 13 have been filled.

Characterizing the jobs, Gratz said they are "mostly office jobs that don't require special skills and the hours are flexible."

Gratz added, "the hours are as many as the volunteer wishes to give."

VIPS will be instantly recognizable throughout the town shortly after a recent distribution of blue and white bumper stickers that state, "I'm one of Acton, Massachusetts' V.I.P.S."

## THE MEDIA

Newspapers and radio provide a variety of opportunities to stimulate the interest of volunteers and has proven to be the most effective means of recruiting volunteers in many communities. The media strategy should be comprehensively planned to insure maximum coverage. A typical media plan might include two feature articles per month, a weekly job bank column, daily radio public service announcements, radio talk shows twice per year, quarterly editorial endorsements, occasional half page newspaper advertisements inviting the public to get involved.

### FEATURE ARTICLES

**Program Focus**—Feature one specific program or service that is currently being provided by volunteers. *“The library is now open five days per week, six hours per day now that there are volunteers contributing fifty hours per week to the library.”*

**Need Focus**—Feature an area where there are unmet needs. *“The children at the Jones School won’t be able to participate in after school sports programs this year unless volunteers can be found to supervise, referee and coach.”*

**Individual Focus**—Recognize an exemplary volunteer, with biographical sketch and an interview about why he or she volunteers, the benefits, joys, the contributions made.

**WEEKLY COLUMN**—Columns could cover a range of topics including the latest in the field of volunteerism, announcements of jobs available, descriptions of current programs underway, benefits of being a volunteer, recognition of individuals, etc.

#### ***VOLUNTEER SERVICES***

City of Lewiston  
36 Oak Street  
Lewiston, ME 04240

#### **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

Citizen Participation....that's what happens when we all pitch in to make our community a better place in which to live! The City of Lewiston's volunteer program depends on citizen participation to keep libraries open, provide recreational opportunities for children, and keep our parks and play areas clean and safe. To find out how you can help, call 784-2996.



# THE LEWISTON DAILY SUN

LEWISTON-AUBURN, MAINE

25 CENTS

THURSDAY MORNING, JULY 29, 1982

## She Relishes the Work with Students

By JOE O'CONNOR  
Sun Staff Writer

### VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Tina Monto loves children, and believes reading is an important part of their education. So, when her niece brought home a paper from Frye School last fall, asking for volunteers to work in the Lewiston school's library, Ms. Monto naturally responded.

A former Head Start worker, and mother of a 4-year-old herself, Ms. Monto enjoys her work in the Frye School library. Each Wednesday and Friday morning, she spends three hours working with the second through fifth-graders, helping them find books, signing out books, and writing reminders to those with overdue books.

Ms. Monto also loves art, and one of her favorite parts of her job is making posters for the library. She also makes bookmarks, which she passes out to students withdrawing books.

While her volunteer work gives her a lot of satisfaction, being able to make her own hours gives Ms. Monto plenty of time to pursue her other interests, which include sports such as racquetball and skiing, as well as aerobic dancing.

"Tina was nervous at first; she was very shy. But she's been really reliable, and she's kept on plugging," said Lewiston Volunteer Services Coordinator Jennifer DeLong-White.

Ms. Monto is one of about 60 people working in the Lewiston Volunteer Services program. The program, which began last summer, enables city residents with extra time and a desire to help others, to perform work that might otherwise not get done in this time of over-pressured city budgets.

The Lewiston volunteer's duties range from filing or clerical duties in the city clerk's office and police department, to working "one on one" with students needing remedial help in their studies, to manning the desk at the Lewiston Public Library.

One of the major services performed by volunteers is guarding crossings near several city elementary schools. By having volunteers handle these duties, the city can provide for the safety of school children without having to add to the burden on already-strapped taxpayers.

The Lewiston volunteers, said Ms. DeLong-White, range from high school students to senior citizens. Like Ms. Monto, they are motivated by the desire to make use of their extra time—and like her, most of them find a special reward in helping others.

The Volunteer Services program has several openings, and the type of work and the hours are up to the volunteer, said Ms. DeLong-White, whose office is located in the Lewiston School Department building on Ash Street.

"If they want to work every day, or if they just want to give a few hours a week we can find something for them. And if some folks prefer not to make a long-term commitment but would like to do something as a one-shot deal, that can be arranged too," she said.

"We're also looking for people with special skills, such as travel or nutrition, to speak in schools about their experiences," she said.

As for Ms. Monto, she plans to keep working in the Frye School Library, where, she says, both teachers and students have made her feel welcome and wanted.

"The teachers are great, they've all made me feel so welcome. And I love kids—it makes me feel good" to be a volunteer, she said.

**WEEKLY JOB BANK**—Publish a help wanted column for volunteers, listing five openings each week with job descriptions, phone number of who to call.

**EDITORIAL**—Through personal contacts with reporters and editors, encourage editorial support of the *program*, editorial support of the *community* for attempting such a program, editorial support of individual *volunteers* for contributing their time.

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**—Provide radio stations with a variety of copy and encourage them to read as often each day as possible.

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Volunteers In Service In Our Neighborhood**

**TOWN OF DANVERS**  
Municipal Volunteer Program

Town Hall, Sylvan Street  
Danvers, MA 01923

**TOWN OF DANVERS SKILLSBANK:** Would you like to share your talent and experience with your community, but cannot make an on-going commitment? Many of us, due to family and work schedules, find ourselves in this situation. Nonetheless you can still serve your community. Registering in the skillsbank means that you will be called *only* when a specific project of limited duration arises in your chosen field or interest: cooking, counseling, computers, finance, juggling, dance, gardening, or music...just to name a few. Skillsbank is a response to the changing lifestyle of volunteers. It's a good way to do some volunteer work, broaden your experience, make contact with working people, investigate career change, and have fun....in the available time that you have. To have an application mailed to you, please give VISION a call at 777-0001, ext. 202.

**PAID ADVERTISEMENTS**—Purchase and professionally design an occasional quarter page or half page ad encouraging participation in the volunteer program.

**TALK SHOWS**—Many local radio stations have talk shows, some are audience call-in, others straight interview and would be receptive to having the volunteer coordinator, the mayor, or manager talk about the volunteer program.

**Volunteers  
are**

***very  
special  
people***

**Thank You!**

Lewiston City Volunteers  
763-1421

**Bookmark**

## Volunteers needed to aid senior citizens and center

Volunteers  
In  
Service  
In  
Our  
Neighborhood

**VISION** is a weekly listing of opportunities available through the Danvers Municipal Volunteer program. For more information, or to volunteer, call the program office at 777-0001.

**RECEPTIONIST:** The Town Hall is looking for volunteers, available in the afternoon, who will help answer phones, direct visitors to the various departments and take messages. Light clerical work is available for quiet moments, if you want to brush up on your office skills. This assignment is available any afternoon between 2 and 5 p.m.

**SCHOOL CROSSING ESCORT:** An escort is needed immediately at the Centre and Prince Street intersection for Thursday mornings only from 7:40 to 8 a.m. After the holidays, an escort will be needed at Centre and Prince on Tuesday afternoons only from 2:20 to 2:45 p.m.

**TRANSPORTATION FOR SENIORS:** Some seniors have difficulty arranging transportation to visit friends in nursing homes, to doctor appointments or to special events. If you have a car and are willing to help out once in a while, we'd like to hear from you. The need will become even more critical as inclement weather approaches.

**SENIOR OUTREACH:** There are many home-bound seniors who would appreciate a weekly telephone call or visit from a concerned individual. The senior center would also like to maintain contact with these seniors so that we can provide any services that are needed. You will be an important link between the center and an elderly person. Daytime hours are preferable. You can telephone from your own home or from the Town Hall.

## PERSONAL CONTACTS

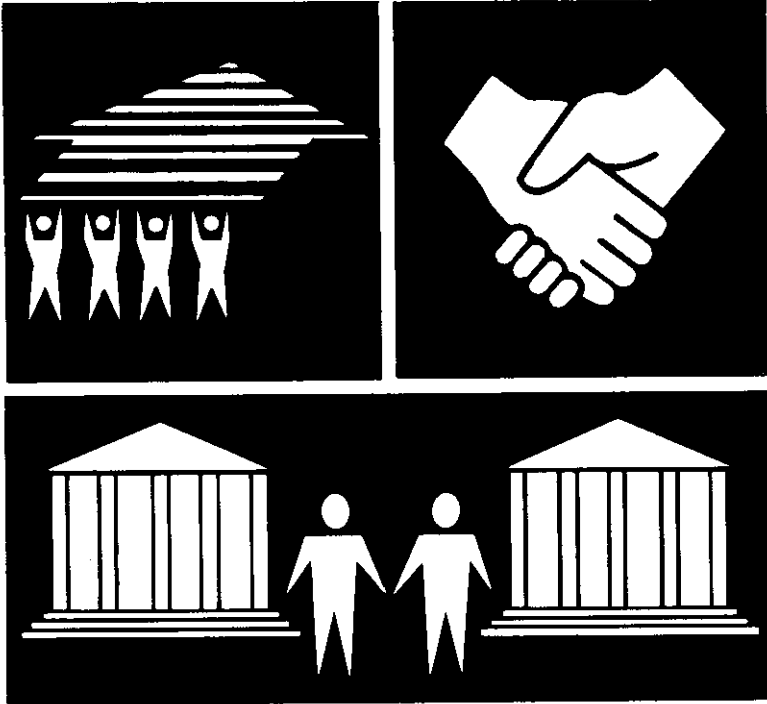
In the recent Gallup poll (Americans Volunteer: 1981), people were asked how they first learned about the program they became involved with as a volunteer. The largest percentage became involved in a particular volunteer activity either because they were asked personally by someone or because someone they knew well was involved in the volunteer activity. Person to person contacts are one of the best ways to recruit volunteers. Strategies should be developed to encourage:

- (1) Current paid employes to interest their friends and relatives in volunteering (*bring a friend to work today* campaign);
- (2) Current volunteers to recruit others (a *contest* to see who brings in the most volunteers over a two month period, the winner gets lunch and a picture in the paper with the mayor);
- (3) Council members, board members, commission members to volunteer in other ways and invite others as well (everybody must bring one friend or family member for one Saturday afternoon to clean-up an area of town).

Most communities have political organizations as well as a great number of municipal boards and commissions. Because these individuals have shown an interest in contributing to local government, personal calls to former board members or current political activists will produce results.

*I'm one of Acton, Massachusetts'*  
**V.I.P.S.**  
*Volunteers in Public Service*

# VOLUNTEERS ...



# Making Government Work

City of Portland Volunteer Program  
(516) 734-6211

With these personal contacts, as well as most recruitment activities, it is very important on the initial contact to ask people to do something specific, something time limited, something manageable. In addition to a general inquiry about their willingness to be involved on any level, it is important to ask about a specific job. For instance, when talking with someone for the first time, it is much better to say, "We are really looking for someone to help the tax collector for a few hours each day the week of the 23rd." If that particular task is not of interest or possible for someone, you follow up with examples of other jobs that would be available and ask if any of these would be of interest. Individuals who show any interest should be mailed an information sheet and called again in the near future. People need a great deal of encouragement, rarely say yes immediately, and need to be asked a number of times in order to feel comfortable making a commitment.

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Local groups such as the Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, Women's Club, High School Student Council, PTA's and others can be a good resource for volunteers. *Targeting* groups to meet a specific need in their interest area (Chamber of Commerce to work with the economic development office, the Garden Club to maintain a park area) is often the most effective way of gaining their interest and commitment in providing services to the city or town. A well organized, publicized *Adopt-a-Program* campaign whereby each local organization is asked to take responsibility for meeting the needs in one of a number of specific areas (five hours of filing per week in the clerk's office, coaches for six girl's softball teams, transportation for weekly shopping trips for ten elderly) can also be very effective in motivating groups to contribute time to local government. Another method of approaching groups is through speaking engagements. They provide the opportunity for personal contact with large numbers of people, and can result in group participation as well as the recruitment of individuals to work in a variety of areas.



TOWN OF DANVERS MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

# UPDATE

## NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY '82

### TO OUR READERS...

NO.....your mail has not gone astray! Already two weeks into March, I mail you this copy of the February UPDATE with an apology for its lateness. On a more positive note, however, I hasten to add that its lateness is due to an extremely busy VISION Office!

More and more people are joining our program every day. At our last count, 82 volunteers had registered since last Fall. The idea is really catching on; not only within our Town and municipal offices, but in other cities and towns as well.

Please know that your contributions are extremely valued here at the Town Hall, Police and Fire Stations, Electric Division, Data Processing, Library and the Senior Center. Without you, we would never have been able to develop such a fine example of citizen concern and participation in town government.

Deborah Hitchcock  
Editor

Dick Pelletier  
Production Assistant

### "WANTED"

#### DANVERS TO HOST TWO SPECIAL EVENTS—VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Town of Danvers will be hosting two very special events during the months of March and April. If you or anyone you know, would like to assist us at these functions, please give the VISION office a call.

*HEALTH WORKS '82:* The 2nd edition of Health Works has been announced for the week of March 15-21. The week long series of free public health fairs will be presented under the auspices of Shawmut Banks, WCVB-TV (Channel 5), WHDH Radio, and the American Red Cross. Hunt Memorial Hospital and the Danvers Chapter of the Red Cross will be sponsoring medical clinics at the Liberty Tree Mall on *March 19th* and *March 20th* from 9:30 A.M.-9:30 P.M. The clinics anticipate service to over 1,175 residents of Danvers. Non-professional volunteers are needed to help set up, to assist at the registration tables, and to chart heights and weights. Volunteers with medical credentials will also be greatly appreciated.



VISION

**Volunteers In Service In Our Neighborhood**  
**777-0001**

## PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY BENEFIT:

On Sunday, April 18th from 7-11 p.m., the library is hosting a dance and evening of entertainment at the Liberty Tree Mall. Proceeds will provide the funds needed for new furnishings to be used in the newly renovated facility. People are needed to help stuff envelopes, sell tickets, telephone, and assist during the event itself.

## New VISION Display in Town Hall

Unfortunately, the slide presentation is not yet ready for viewing. All of the photography has been completed, but your volunteer coordinator has not completed the script necessary for the audio portion.

In the meantime, however, some of the slides have been enlarged to 5 x 7 prints and are currently on display in the front lobby of the Town Hall. These photographs were taken by: Dr. Hal Bantly, Hildegard Wilson, Dr. Al Tatarunis, and former Assistant Town Manager Stephen Delaney (I bet you didn't know that he is an accomplished amateur photographer who has exhibited locally!)

It's a *terrific* display and we urge everyone to stop by and see it. . . . besides, that's the only way you'll find out if your picture is there!! The volunteers have done a splendid job with the photography for this production. With thanks to our "volunteer" photographers, the volunteers who posed for the pictures, and private donations, this display has been made possible at no expense to the taxpayer.

## YOU'RE INVITED

The North Shore Association for Volunteerism is having a "brown bag" get-together at the Shaughnessy Hospital, Dove Ave., Salem on Thursday, March 25th, from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend. The *informal* topic of discussion will be "volunteer recognition".

**PLEASE COME AND  
SHARE YOUR IDEAS.**

## THANKS FOR JOINING US!

VISION would like to welcome the following people who have joined our program between mid-January and February:

BETTY ALMEIDA: Treasurer's Office  
INGRID BARRY: Archival Center  
JUNE BASER: Smoke Detector Survey  
TERRI BUSBY: Administrative Assistance in the Legal Office and Management Services  
MARSHA CAMPBELL: School Crossing Escort  
IRENE HUBISCZ: Special Projects in Management Services  
DIANE HUSSEY: Archival Center and Technical Services at the Peabody Institute Library  
LINDA HUSSEY: Smoke Detector Survey  
MRS. LESTER KEDDY: Smoke Detector Survey  
TAMMY KNIGHT: School Crossing Escort  
CARMELA MANSON: Special Project—Management Services  
CHRISTINE MEERS: Administrative Assistance in Management Services  
CAROLYN MURRAY: School Crossing Escort  
MARJORIE O'BRIENT: Technical Assistance at the Peabody Institute Library  
CLAIRE O'NEILL: Assessor's Office  
MRS. S. B. PORTER: Smoke Detector Survey  
PATRICIA SANIDAS: Clients & Veteran's Services  
KAY SMALLWORD: Technical Assistance at the Peabody Institute Library (Kay is returning to VISION after having a temporary job—we're glad she came back!!!)  
SHEILA SUMMIT: School Crossing Escort  
ROSE TOOMEY: Smoke Detector Survey  
GAIL WOODARD: Smoke Detector Survey

**TELL A FRIEND  
ABOUT VISION  
777-0001**

## INFORMATION/ADVERTISEMENTS

Using a variety of advertising and informational materials is important in gaining visibility, understanding and support for the program. Bookmarks that can be left in bookstores and libraries, bumper stickers, posters, leaflets, flyers are some of the standard advertising materials that are used. Although posters or flyers in themselves do not produce large numbers of volunteers, they are very helpful in establishing the presence of the program and the legitimacy of the program. They entice potential volunteers to want to find out more, and supplement other recruitment efforts.

Program information can be featured in municipal newsletters, can be included in mailings to citizens (with water bills, tax bills) and be available at the library checkout desk, in the tax collector's and clerk's office or wherever there is a good deal of public traffic. Every opportunity for sharing information or increasing program visibility should be utilized.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

The range of special events is limited only by one's imagination. Contests, competitions between community groups and municipal departments, information booths at fairs and community gatherings, recognition nights, volunteer of the year awards, open houses, weekend "know your government tours" all contribute to the excitement of working for local government, provide recognition and status to those who volunteer and encourage others to want to be a part of what's happening.

### **ORGANIZING A RECOGNITION DINNER**

- Set a date
- Ask the mayor, manager or chief elected official to be the host
- Ask private company to pay for dinner costs
- Ask a well known, well liked, well respected public figure to give the keynote speech
- Prepare special certificates of appreciation
- Establish special awards
- Prepare information packet for distribution at dinner
- Send written invitations to volunteers, department heads, staff and elected officials
- Call the press, ask them to take pictures
- Call and personally invite volunteers, department heads, staff and elected officials

## **LEWISTON'S ADOPT-A-PARK PROJECT**

CITIZENS, UNITE!!! PARKS AND RECREATIONAL AREAS ARE A VALUABLE RESOURCE IN OUR COMMUNITY, BUT SOMETIMES IT SEEMS THAT NO ONE CARES.....THESE AREAS ARE IN A STATE OF DISREPAIR; THEY NEED TO BE PAINTED UP, PICKED UP, AND CLEANED UP.....

Specifically, we would like for your group members to donate a Saturday to beautify our parks. The materials and supplies will be furnished—what you provide is the person-power. Perhaps you can combine clean-up efforts with a socializing or recreational outing for your group members and their families.

Please bring this immediate need to your group's attention. If you would like additional information, call Jennifer at 784-2998. If you prefer, I will speak to your group personally about the project.

THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE AN INVALUABLE SERVICE IN OUR OWN COMMUNITY. UNLESS YOU PARTICIPATE, IT SIMPLY WON'T GET DONE. LET'S JOIN TOGETHER TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY SPIRIT!!!

**we need you!**

**FLYERS**

## 4. MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

Assessing needs, preparing job descriptions, and recruiting volunteers are the initial steps in establishing a municipal volunteer program. They also comprise the major ongoing program activities. You never stop assessing the changing needs in various departments, you never stop writing, rewriting, modifying job descriptions as different tasks become available and, as long as there are needs to fill, you must continue to recruit. But there are many additional managerial tasks that are the responsibility of the volunteer coordinator and are important to the success of a municipal volunteer program: training, supervision, public relations.

### TRAINING

#### *Staff*

Although training may not be the most appropriate word, one of the jobs of the volunteer manager is to provide information and support to municipal staff to insure that having volunteers working with them is a positive experience. A positive working climate can occur when staff have an understanding of the philosophy and rationale behind using volunteers, when they understand the ways in which volunteers will be used throughout government and in the specific jobs that affect individual staff, when they are comfortable with their own role and the level of responsibilities in relation to volunteers.

### **A "not unusual" day for a Volunteer Coordinator**

- 8:30 a.m. Conduct a training session for new volunteers.
- 10:00 a.m. Department head calls and needs five volunteers for a special project tomorrow afternoon. Place calls to volunteers.
- 11:00 a.m. New volunteer arrives at the office, wants to talk to someone about volunteering. Discussion and interview.
- 11:30 a.m. Supervisor calls, volunteer scheduled to work the switchboard during the lunch hour called in sick. Substitute volunteer can't be reached by phone. More phone calls to other volunteers are unsuccessful. Volunteer coordinator acts as substitute (this one time only!). Stops by to see two volunteers on the way.
- 1:15 p.m. Drop a Public Service Announcement at the local newspaper, talk with editor about the programs.
- 2:00 p.m. Talk with three supervisors about current volunteers.
- 2:30 p.m. Write three recommendations for volunteers who are applying for jobs, phone calls, etc.
- 3:30 p.m. Manager calls, needs statistics on volunteer hours, jobs, etc. for tonight's council meeting. Data gathering and compilation, typed and reproduced by 5:00 p.m.!

If staff have not had experience working with volunteers in the past, there are often misperceptions about volunteers, what they can and can't do, and attitudinal barriers that must be overcome if volunteers are going to be accepted. Staff must have the opportunity to voice their concerns and fears and clarify some of the perceptions and misperceptions that many have about volunteers. All of these things can happen but they will not happen naturally. A well-planned and executed inservice training program is the most appropriate vehicle for insuring that these issues are addressed and that municipal staff receive the kind and amount of information necessary.

Training sessions should be designed to deal with a range of philosophical and practical issues including:

- Philosophy of using volunteers
- What to expect from volunteers
- What volunteers will expect from staff
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities of staff, supervisors, volunteers and volunteer coordinator

- How to supervise volunteers
- Common perceptions and misperceptions of volunteers
- Specific jobs volunteers will be assigned
- Using the job description or contract as an organizational tool
- How to provide necessary support and recognition to volunteers
- Organizational and procedural guidelines

Training sessions should be designed to anticipate as many of the questions or concerns that staff might have, and to provide the answers to those questions before a volunteer is placed. This not only minimizes confusion and the amount of time spent by volunteer coordinator, supervisor, staff and volunteers dealing with these issues later on, but also establishes a positive tone for acceptance of volunteers and maximizes chances of success.

### *Volunteers*

There is also a great deal that volunteers need to know before they begin their jobs. Government, even on the local level, is a very complex operation. An overview of the various roles and responsibilities of all of the departments and how they interact with one another to provide adequate services to the public is very important in establishing the context in which the volunteer must function. Volunteers will need to become familiar with all of the personnel rules, the general government policies and regulations that paid staff are governed by, and any other rules and regulations that volunteers should be aware of.

Training sessions should be used to detail supervisory responsibilities, provide on-the-job training skills, cover organizational details such as scheduling, record keeping, hiring and firing, and also allow volunteers the opportunity to discuss their needs and concerns.

## *DESIGN AND CONDUCT OF TRAINING SESSIONS*

Because staff and volunteers are busy people, the amount of time that they can spend in group training session will be limited. Providing as much information as possible without attempting to do so much that it becomes overwhelming, unwieldy or time consuming is not always easy to accomplish. The secret of good training programs is being prepared to deal with everything, while covering in the limited time available what the group needs to know most. Good trainers "listen" to group members for they are better able to decide what they need to learn than the leader is. Written material with general information hints, tips, rules and regulations can be distributed to cover additional areas. A skilled leader accurately reads the learning needs of the group, and proceeds accordingly.

### **TRAINING TIPS**

- **Be familiar with adult learning theory.**
- **Minimize the amount of time necessary for training.**  
Volunteers and staff are busy people.
- **Use the time allowed well. Be prepared.**
- **Make the presentation challenging and exciting.**
- **Provide practical, specific, concrete information.**
- **Listen to what participants say they need to know.**

Designing and conducting training sessions is an art and a science. The content can be easily outlined, but communicating the ideas and information successfully is more difficult. Understanding adult learning styles, the dynamics of group process, how to use case studies, the value of brainstorming sessions, group activities and other exercises is essential to providing exciting and challenging learning experiences for staff and volunteers. There is a substantial amount of information on training and group process that can help volunteer coordinators design and conduct quality training sessions.

General orientation sessions for volunteers and most inservice training for staff are the responsibility of the volunteer coordinator. Specific how-to sessions might be best handled by a staff person with sufficient understanding in that skill area. Whenever specific detailed skill areas (such as how to run the switchboard) need to be covered, the staff person most skilled in those areas should do the teaching, with support and guidance from the volunteer coordinator. Department head, supervisors and other staff can be enlisted to assist with various training needs as appropriate.



## **SUPERVISION**

All employees need supervision and the needs of volunteers are not unlike those of paid employees. Volunteers need to know who they should turn to when there is a problem, who they should ask when they have a question about their specific job. They need someone to monitor and evaluate their performance, someone to maintain records of their hours and experience, someone to provide training, recognition and support.

### **SUPERVISORS. . .**

- Provide job task assistance
- Solve problems
- Keep records
- Provide recognition and support
- Evaluate performance
- Provide on-the-job training
- Monitor activities

Not all of these needs will be necessarily filled by any one person. As with other municipal employees, the supervisory responsibilities vary from department to department, job to job, supervisor to supervisor. For instance, the volunteer coordinator might be the person who keeps all of the records and is ultimately responsible for the hiring and firing of all volunteers, while a department head or staff member might be responsible for on-the-job supervision, job training, evaluation and problem solving. In some municipalities, personnel departments might take responsibility for some of the supervisory functions. There are many options and each community should design the most effective supervisory system that makes the most sense for staff, department heads, the volunteer coordinator and the volunteers.

An essential ingredient in supervising volunteers is to remember that volunteers have the same needs for supervision, sometimes more, than paid employees do and the necessary supervision must be there to insure that the jobs that volunteers do are done well, that volunteers exercise responsible work habits and that volunteers do not create more work than they contribute. Supervisors also have to provide the atmosphere that keeps volunteers wanting to volunteer. They must insure that volunteers receive the support, recognition and help they need to do a good job, to feel good about the job they do and to be a part of a positive working situation.

#### **A GOOD SUPERVISOR**

- Assists
- Teaches
- Helps
- Encourages
- Guides
- Supports

In a well managed program with adequate training and sound placement decisions, the amount of time staff must contribute to provide adequate and successful supervision would be minimal.

#### **VOLUNTEERS NEED TO HEAR. . .**

- Thank you.
- We really need you.
- I don't know what we'd do without you!
- What do you think?
- How's everything going?
- Thank you.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

There is no other place where relationships with the public are more important than local government. When the public is being asked to become even more involved in the ongoing tasks of its government, it becomes even more critical.

The public relations responsibilities of the volunteer coordinator are not a separate defined entity that is accomplished on an established schedule. It is the essence of the ongoing process of management. Public relations is a part of supervision, recruitment, training, press relations, work with employes, elected officials and groups. Creating and maintaining an image of the volunteer program as a positive contributing force in the life of the community, establishing volunteerism in local government as a legitimate means of delivering and supplementing services, and selling the program to the public, to elected officials, to public employes and to the media is an everyday, ongoing process.

This can be accomplished by establishing and managing a professional, well-organized program, by impressively articulating the positive benefits of such a program and by evidencing a comprehensive knowledge of local government needs. Opportunities for public relations will present themselves daily, especially when involved in some of the recruitment activities. An appreciation that public relations is an element in all of the contacts, personal and written, that the coordinator and other representatives of the volunteer program have with employes, groups, individual volunteers, and serves as a solid foundation for successful public relations.

## **5. FORMS, FORMS, FORMS**

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteer Request

Please complete and return to the Volunteer Coordinator.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

DIVISION: \_\_\_\_\_

One of these forms should be used for each area in which you could use volunteer assistance. (Areas can include a specific project, advisory/consultant positions, general office assignment, programs, special events, or as appropriate).

Description of Assignment (purpose, goals, duties of volunteer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Supervision/Training (content and frequency)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Qualifications (Mark N.A. if not applicable.)

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Education: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Skills: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Minimum time commitment: \_\_\_\_\_

Schedule

Number of Volunteers Needed	Days / Hours						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Example:

1	9-11am		9-11am		9-11am		
---	--------	--	--------	--	--------	--	--

These requests will be kept on file and filled as soon as appropriate candidates have been located. Be as specific as you feel is necessary in order that we can recruit the volunteer most qualified for this position. Please feel free to use the reverse side for additional comments.

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteer Evaluation

TO: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Staff Supervisor*

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Volunteer Coordinator*

RE: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Volunteer's Name*

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

*Please complete the following form and return to the volunteer office.*

Does the volunteer report promptly and regularly? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the volunteer have a good working relationship with staff? \_\_\_\_\_

With program consumers (if applicable)? \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the volunteer on the following:  
(excellent, good, fair, poor)

willingness to assume responsibility	_____
self-initiative	_____
judgement	_____
ability to perform assignment	_____
quality of work	_____
quantity of work	_____

Does this person need close supervision? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the volunteer accept and profit from constructive criticism? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you satisfied with this person's performance? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the volunteer appear satisfied with this assignment? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any suggestions for improving the performance of this volunteer?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Supervisor's Signature*

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Agreement

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (H) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Volunteer) (B) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Organizational Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Assignment \_\_\_\_\_ Starting Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(description)

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Division: \_\_\_\_\_

On-site Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Days/Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

You have chosen an assignment which we hope you will find challenging and rewarding in terms of your personal growth and professional development. Our staff will provide the support, supervision, training, and recognition that you deserve as a valuable member of our organization.

In return, we ask that you accept the responsibility of this assignment by agreeing to work within the guidelines of your job description, to respect issues of confidentiality, and to abide by the same policies and procedures governing all municipal workers.

If, at any time, you cannot come in as scheduled, please notify your supervisor. We will make every effort to adjust your hours as needed.

Should you have any questions about your assignment, please feel free to contact the Volunteer Office.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Municipal Volunteer Coordinator)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Volunteer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

*For Volunteer*

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Contract

VOLUNTEER \_\_\_\_\_

PLACEMENT \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Placement

\_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer Services

Special Skills/Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Days, Times of Volunteer Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I agree to fulfill the roles and responsibilities as outlined in this job description for a 30-day trial period.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(volunteer's signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)



*For Volunteer*

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteer Registration Card

*VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION CARD*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: High School \_\_ Years--College \_\_ years--Married \_\_ years--Children \_\_

Volunteer Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interests or Skills: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Available: \_\_\_\_\_

General Information: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteer-Of-The-Month Nomination Form

Name of Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_ Approximate Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Native or newcomer: \_\_\_\_\_

Short description of volunteer's family, occupation or other interests: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for volunteering: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Why are you submitting this person as a candidate for Volunteer-of-the-Month? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

For Staff

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Reference Request

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

REQUEST FOR REFERENCE ON: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Volunteer)

1. How long have you known the applicant and in what capacity? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Has the applicant any special qualifications or limitations about which we should know before making an assignment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. How does the applicant get along with others? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. To the best of your knowledge, do you find the applicant to be:  
Trustworthy? \_\_\_\_\_  
Able to keep commitments? \_\_\_\_\_  
Emotionally stable? \_\_\_\_\_  
Co-operative with supervisors and associates? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Would you recommend this applicant for volunteer service?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Please offer any further comments you think would be helpful.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Department Monthly Record

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Month: \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Report On Hours Served By Volunteers

Hours worked by days of month

Volunteer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	TOTAL	

Under the days the volunteer worked, write the number of hours.  
Add the names of any volunteers in your department which are missing on this form.  
If volunteer is not coming in, write in reason: illness, vacation, terminated, got a paying job, reason unknown, etc.

Name of person filling out this form: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE MAIL BY THE 6th OF THE MONTH TO VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Job Description

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Volunteers: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_\_\_ Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Head: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Skills required,

Skills that will be taught on the job.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

Training: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Work Days: Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thu. Fri. Sat. Hours: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Time Flexibility: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Work at Home: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Minimum Hours Per Week: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Requesting Volunteers: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration: Ongoing \_\_\_ or \_\_\_ Commencing: \_\_\_\_\_ Ending: \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal Dates: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Potential Problem Areas: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Interview Form

Date	Age	Mr. Mrs. Miss	(Name)	First	Middle	Last
Address:		City, State and Zip			Phone: Home _____ Business _____	
Person to be notified in case of emergency:						
Name:		Phone No.		Relationship:		
Transportation (circle) Bus or Car				Limitations: Family, Personal		
Employment: Present and Past				Full-Time _____ Part-Time _____		
Group Affiliations:				Education Completed: High School _____ College _____ Grade _____ Degree _____		
Volunteer Experience, Hobbies, Interests and Skills:						
Reason for Volunteering:				School Credit _____ Other _____		
Spare Time _____ Civic Minded _____				Learn New Skill _____ Sharpen Old Skill _____		
Days You Are Available:				Type of Work Desired:		
Sunday _____				1. _____		
Monday _____				2. _____		
Tuesday _____				3. _____		
Wednesday _____				4. _____		
Thursday _____				5. _____		
Friday _____						
Saturday _____						
Hours: _____						
Other Pertinent Data - Foreign Languages Spoken:						
How Did You Hear About The Municipal Volunteer Program?						
TV _____ Newspaper _____ School _____ Friend _____ Radio _____ Other _____						

\_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewer's Name

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteer Record Card

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Assignments: \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

19\_\_ VOLUNTEER RECORD

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	TOTAL
Jan																																
Feb																																
Mar																																
Apr																																
May																																
Jun																																
Jul																																
Aug																																
Sep																																
Oct																																
Nov																																
Dec																																
Post hours worked daily in appropriate block.																Yearly Total																



MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Personnel Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_  
(B) \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about the municipal volunteer program? \_\_\_\_\_

Education (circle last year completed) Grade 5 6 7 8 High School 9 10 11 12  
College 1 2 3 4 Graduate 1 2 3 4

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Courses: \_\_\_\_\_

Employment Type of Work Employer

Current: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous: \_\_\_\_\_

Skills and Interests

Have you had experience in teaching or other special fields which might be of interest in planning your volunteer program? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have musical talents, hobbies or craft skills you might share? \_\_\_\_\_

Experience in Community Work (Please list other volunteer experience that you have had.)

Municipal Volunteer Opportunities (Please check your areas of interest.)		
<input type="checkbox"/> administration/clerical	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> resource development
<input type="checkbox"/> advisory board membership	<input type="checkbox"/> community education	<input type="checkbox"/> senior citizen outreach
<input type="checkbox"/> art/music	<input type="checkbox"/> companion visits	<input type="checkbox"/> special needs programs
<input type="checkbox"/> bookkeeping/finance	<input type="checkbox"/> dance/drama	<input type="checkbox"/> tutoring
<input type="checkbox"/> career exploration	<input type="checkbox"/> library	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____ (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> children's programs	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation	

Availability (Which day and hours can you volunteer?)

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday  
AM PM AM PM AM PM AM PM AM PM AM PM AM PM

How long will you be able to volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Time Sheet

Please fill in this sheet each time you work.

This information provides the Volunteer Office with important data used in the verification of course requirements, your recommendation, statistics cited to promote legislation affecting volunteer benefits, and for our own program evaluation.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Month: \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_.

DATE	ACTIVITY	DEPARTMENT/LOCATION	TOTAL NO. HOURS

You may utilize the reverse side of this page for any additional comments and suggestions regarding your assignment. The Volunteer Office will make every effort to adjust your hours and assignment as needed. Comments will be kept confidential.

For Volunteer.

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

School Volunteer

Because of our school volunteer program, we are able to keep school libraries open, offer after-school recreation programs, provide one-to-one assistance for special needs students, and offer a variety of services which would not otherwise be available.

Our "unpaid staff" persons are valuable members of the educational team. Their talents, skills, and enthusiasm enrich the school program. We'd love to have you join our volunteers by participating in the educational process.

SCHOOL VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

(Please Print)

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Education:     Elementary School  
                  Junior High  
                  High School/GED  
                  College \_\_\_\_\_ Major

Work Experience: (What kinds of jobs you've had) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Special Skills: (A hobby? Interest Area? Ability to Operate Equipment?)

\_\_\_\_\_

Type of Work Preferred:     Library Assistance                     Classroom Aide  
                                  Clerical/Office Helper                 Tutor  
                                  Recreation, Sports Activities        Other \_\_\_\_\_

School Preferred: (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Level Preferred:     Elementary     Middle     High School

Days of the Week Preferred:

Monday     Tuesday     Wednesday     Thursday     Friday     No Preference

Time of Day Preferred: \_\_\_\_\_

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM  
Assignment Evaluation

- Are you receiving adequate supervision and guidance in your volunteer work?

---

---

---

- Are you getting adequate feedback on your performance? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

- Has the staff been helpful to you? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

- Do you feel that you're receiving enough information and training in order to do the best possible job? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

- Have you felt free to use your own ideas? Have you been encouraged to assume responsibility? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

- Is there any aspect of your present assignment that you would like to change? (For example; hours, days, tasks) \_\_\_\_\_

---

- Would you like to set up a time with the Volunteer Office to discuss alternative assignments, recommendations and verification of your hours, or any other issue surrounding your volunteer work? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

- Other Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **6. WHAT VOLUNTEERS DO**

Defining what a volunteer can do is an impossible task because there are as many different kinds of volunteers as there are jobs to be done. Volunteers can provide direct services, do specific tasks, provide management, professional and consulting assistance, almost any task that is done by paid municipal employees. The following list contains but a few of the many jobs that volunteers currently fill in city and town government across the country.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

The titles may vary from community to community, but the following jobs are carried out by volunteers in many city or town hall offices such as: Assessors, City and Town Clerk, Tax Collectors, Community Development, Planning, Finance, Managers, Registrar, Vital Statistics, Economic Development, Zoning.

- Bookkeeping
- Switchboard operator
- Receptionist
- Answering office phones
- Information specialists
- Collating bills, special mailings
- Typing
- Records clerk
- Voter registration
- Citizen's information desk

- Citizen's newsletter
- City employe's newsletter
- Statistical research
- Compilation of annual reports
- Charter revisions research
- Legislative updates
- Copying
- Packaging materials
- Layout and design of letters, publications, announcements
- Recruiting volunteers
- Scheduling volunteers
- Preparing press releases
- Writing information pieces
- Staff aide to elected officials
- Office assistants
- Developing handbooks for boards and commissions
- Developing employe handbooks
- Writing local government services handbooks
- Computer advisory consultant
- Long-range planning consulting
- Constructing a fire house
- Economic development assistance
- Census or data collection
- Promotional activities for "clean-up day", "energy saving", etc.
- Financial management
- Investment analysis consulting

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

- Fire protection talks
- Civil preparedness
- Crime watch
- Emergency police
- Police reserves
- Animal control talks
- Animal control information
- Crime prevention talks to civic groups, schools
- Developing microfiche from reports
- Filing
- Typing reports for officers
- Compiling statistics on traffic accidents

- Answering phone for information calls
- Dispatcher assistant
- Crossing guards
- Bicycle safety courses
- Smoke detectors surveys
- Fire prevention inspections
- Wood stove inspections
- Consultation on wood stove installation
- Domestic dispute assistance

## **RECREATION**

- Coaching
- Painting benches, fences
- Assisting with registration
- Scheduling assistants
- Duplicating forms
- Special mailings
- Instructors in sports, arts, crafts
- Assisting special needs children
- Supervising at wading pools
- "Adopting" a park
- Conducting tournaments, special events
- Chaperoning field trips
- Driving on field trips
- Bus monitors
- Collecting fees
- Repairing equipment

## **LIBRARY**

- Shelving books
- Filing
- Labeling
- Conducting children's story hours
- Cataloguing
- Clerical work

- Repairing books
- Running informational programs
- Preparing weekly activities letter
- Preparing new books lists
- Research, archives
- Organizing special information files
- Selection and delivery of books to shut-ins
- Nursing home library services
- Library desk work
- Periodical files
- Display case preparation
- Designing bulletin board displays

## **HUMAN SERVICES**

- Home visits to elderly
- Blue light program
- Telephone check-in programs
- Adopt-an-older person programs
- Transportation to doctors
- Big Brother/ Big Sister
- Conduct counseling groups
- Assist with vision, hearing screening
- Conduct immunization programs
- Conduct health educational programs
- Drug awareness programs in schools
- Drug awareness programs to adult groups
- Deliver meals to elderly
- Take elderly grocery shopping
- Teach a class at the senior citizen center
- Advocate for rights of elderly, handicapped, children



## 7. A FEW WORDS ON . . .

### FINANCING

Even volunteer programs cost money. A volunteer program cannot be initiated unless there are funds to pay the salary of a coordinator, support staff to answer the phone and prepare the necessary letters, forms and informational materials, office space and equipment and money for copying, printing and travel. Depending on the current availability of office space and equipment, the prospect of sharing support staff with others and the inhouse capacity for printing and copying, total program funding could be little more than the coordinator's salary (comparable to municipal department heads).

#### **COSTS**

- Salary
- Office space
- Supplies
- Staff time
- Commitment
- Support

The manager or chief elected official interested in developing a comprehensive municipal volunteer program must be able to articulate the benefits and potentials of such a program to the elected representatives responsible for appropriation decisions and/or to the public, if governed by town meeting. Discussions regarding programs in other cities and towns, their costs and benefits, the projected benefits for your community, as well as possible ways to maximize the volunteer concept in future programs can be compelling arguments for attempting to institute a volunteer program.

It then becomes the responsibility of the coordinator to insure that by the end of year one, the program receives the necessary support in the community and that the records of service hours, number of volunteers, money saved and program areas served are impressive. Maximum use of local business and corporations providing staff, equipment and services on a volunteer basis to the volunteer program make the arguments for developing and maintaining a volunteer program even more compelling.

## **INSURANCE**

One of the most common reasons cited for not using volunteers in a variety of jobs revolves around the issue of liability. What if a volunteer gets hurt on the job? What if someone is injured while under the supervision of a volunteer? Can volunteers drive municipal vehicles? Few municipalities could be expected to assume these responsibilities without protection. Unfortunately, the assumption is often made that insurance carriers are unable to make such protection available or that additional premiums for such coverage would be exorbitant. In practice, obtaining liability coverage for volunteers is relatively simple. Often, at no additional charge, the insuring agent simply adds a clause that automatically covers all volunteers while performing work for the municipality. There have been occasional exceptions, specific companies or carriers whose policy prohibits such additions, but these are rare and usually can be rectified whenever the policy is rewritten or renegotiated. National volunteer organizations have been working with various insurance companies and can be helpful in assisting municipalities where this becomes a problem.

## UNIONS

The majority of municipal workers are represented by unions who negotiate contracts and provide a variety of mechanisms for protection of workers' rights. While the national labor councils support the *concept* of citizen participation and volunteerism, extensive use of volunteers performing tasks and jobs of paid employes is viewed as a threat to the job security of municipal workers. On the local level, however, there appears to be little concern about volunteers taking away or replacing paid workers. When union leaders are involved in the initial program planning, have input into the utilization of volunteers and have an understanding of the role of volunteers within the government, most problems can be avoided. Even without that initial cooperation, most employes and officials understand that the budget cuts, RIF's and lay-offs that are taking place in cities and towns are the result of a myriad of national and local economic problems and policies and are not related to the availability or use of volunteers. When local services have been reduced or curtailed, there seems to be little opposition to any attempt to supplement existing services with the resources that are available within the community.

## 8. IMPACT

In addition to contributing to the quantity and quality of services that local government provides to its citizens, a municipal volunteer program can also have a more subtle and wider-ranging impact on a community.

Municipal volunteer programs increase the *awareness* of the public of the range of services that municipal governments provide. With an active volunteer program, a large number of individuals gain an *appreciation* of the sophistication and complexity of local government management, the difficult nature of the jobs that need to be done and the resources necessary for providing services.

A municipal volunteer program can *enhance the image* of public employees and can help develop a more *positive relationship* between elected officials and the public and municipal employees and the public. A successful program can increase the interest of the public in local government and increase the *participation* and input of citizens at public hearings and other forums. In turn, a better informed and more active public helps make local government more *responsive* to the needs of people. A municipal volunteer program is simply an extension of or a return to the basic democratic philosophy of a government of, by and for the people.

### FACT OR FICTION

**Fiction:** Volunteers are more trouble than they are worth.

**Fact:** Managing and supervising volunteers does take time and effort, but in seven months in 1981, volunteers contributed over 4,600 hours to the city of Lewiston, Maine; saved the town of Acton \$20,000 in consulting fees; and contributed over \$9,000 worth of staff time in six months in Danvers, Massachusetts.

## **OTHER NEMC PUBLICATIONS**

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUNICIPAL PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN SERVICES.** This 32-page handbook is designed for municipal officials interested in defining their responsibilities, roles and relationships within the local human services system. Includes several checklists and numerous examples. Second printing, \$5.00.

**EVALUATING HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS AND PROVIDERS.** Most evaluation methodologies are extremely clinical, difficult to understand and expensive to implement. This 30-page manual outlines a common sense approach to evaluation which can be implemented without outside assistance. It contains checklists and worksheets to assist local officials. Third printing. 2,000 copies distributed to date. \$5.00.

**FIRE BEHIND BARS: AN ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE FOR PREVENTION & CONTROL.** Administrators of correctional facilities share a common concern: The threat of a fire disaster. This guide provides a yardstick against which correctional personnel can measure the "fire-safe" status of their facilities and act to remedy those deficiencies likely to cause future incidents. 122 pages. Softbound. \$6.00.

**A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSIONS.** The case study approach is used in this 86-page workbook and trainer's notebook to assist historic district commission members, planners, managers and local officials with often complex historic preservation issues. Workbook \$10.00. Trainer's Notebook \$10.00.



# **New England Municipal Center**

The New England Municipal Center is a regional local government resource and program center sponsored by the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, Maine Municipal Association, Massachusetts Municipal Association, New Hampshire Municipal Association, Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, and Vermont League of Cities and Towns. This report is prepared under a grant supported by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and The Ford Foundation.

**Post Office Box L, Durham, New Hampshire 03824**

**(603) 868-5000**