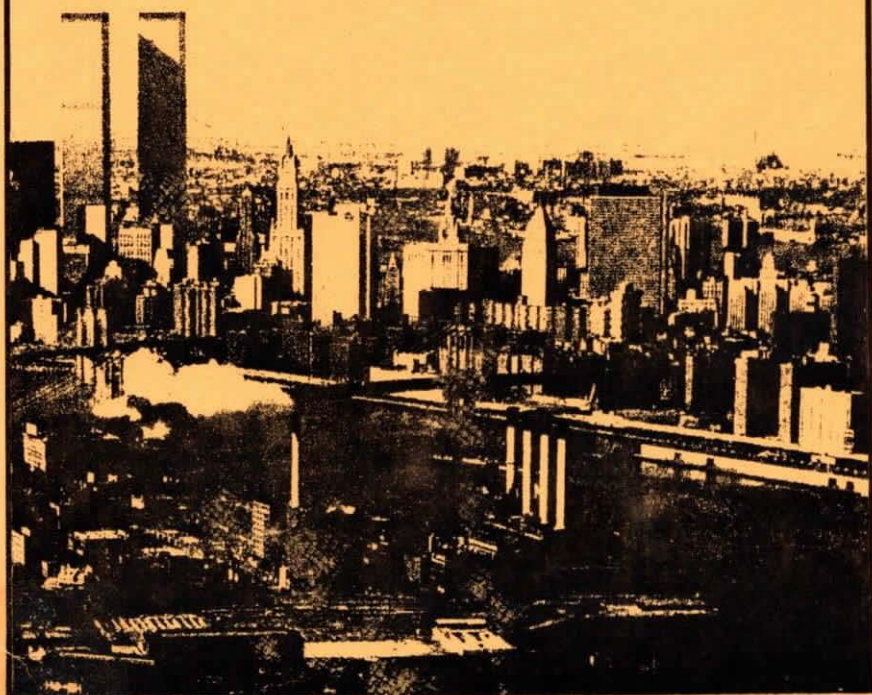


THE BASICS OF VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT



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A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Volunteerism, a great American tradition dating back to the earliest days of our country, is essential today to countless New York enterprises.

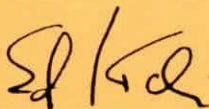
Volunteer service helps to alleviate hunger, loneliness, illiteracy, and pain throughout our City. In addition to working in our hospitals, parks, schools and cultural institutions, volunteers also donate their time to senior citizen centers, homeless shelters, the uniformed services and environmental agencies. New York City's volunteer corps is a creative, diverse and compassionate group who perform an immeasurable service in helping to improve the City's quality of life -- for which we are grateful.

Another essential element to successful volunteerism is the partnership between the volunteers and the many city employees, supervisors, coordinators and managers who work with, supervise, support, train and promote this vital cooperative effort.

Together we all make life in New York even better.

I hope this booklet will be useful as we all work toward continued improvement in the quality of life for everyone.

My congratulations to all those who have developed this handbook. Special thanks to the members of the Task Force on City Agencies who conceived and put together this informative booklet.



Edward I. Koch
Mayor
January 1987

**THE BASICS OF VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT
IN GOVERNMENT**



WHAT IS THE MAYOR'S VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER (MVAC)?

Established in 1967, MVAC was the first coordinating agency in the country to be sponsored by city government, to serve both the public and voluntary sectors.

It was designed to help mobilize the City's people power on behalf of the community; to be a clearing house on volunteerism; to act as a catalyst for the development of new programs of voluntary action in areas of need.

Among its many services, MVAC provides consultation to agencies in all areas of volunteer management; runs workshops and conferences; administers the citywide Mayor's Volunteer Awards; and interviews and refers volunteers for assignment.

The Mayor's Voluntary Action Council is the advisory arm of the Mayor's Voluntary Action Center. The Council identifies priorities, suggests areas for program development, and serves as a resource to the Center. It works through appointed Task Forces.

WHAT IS THE TASK FORCE ON CITY AGENCIES?

Formed in 1979, the Task Force on City Agencies is a component of the Mayor's Voluntary Action Council. Its key function is to provide feedback to the Council, as well as to the Mayor's Office, on issues of volunteerism in municipal government.

THE TASK FORCE PROMOTES VOLUNTEERISM BY:

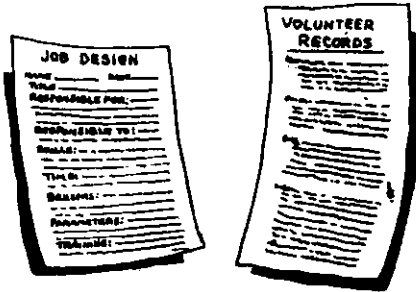
- Conducting professional training programs for supervisors and coordinators of volunteers.
- Facilitating the development and support of recognition programs.
- Developing recruitment strategies.
- Resolving and/or recommending resolutions to the Council on specific volunteer policy issues.
- Maintaining information and statistics through studies and surveys.

SOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- 1983 NYC Department of Personnel policy decision recognizing documented, verifiable volunteer work experience as valid experience for Civil Service employment.
- Establishment of annual conferences for City managers and supervisors of volunteers.
- Publication of "The Basics of Volunteer Management in Government".
- Establishing linkages among coordinators of volunteer programs in City agencies.

WHO IS THIS BOOKLET FOR?

- The **MANAGER** who wants to best utilize volunteer resources to enhance and maximize the delivery of agency services.
- The **SUPERVISOR** who trains and guides volunteers for enrichment of agency programs and volunteer needs.
- The **ADMINISTRATOR** who consults and collaborates with professional and technical volunteers to obtain additional expertise and new perspectives on programs.
- The **STAFF PERSON** who interacts with volunteers and would like to be more receptive and sensitive to their needs.
- The **INDIVIDUAL** who would like a useful guide to effective selection, placement, supervision, guidance, management of, and interaction with volunteers.





WHO VOLUNTEERS & WHY?

- retirees keeping active and useful-
- college students exploring careers-
- high school students developing marketable skills-
- homemakers re-entering the job market-
- skilled professionals contributing expertise-
- transitional workers re-training for the job market-
- foreign students augmenting their formal education-
- people developing work habits and marketable skills-
- temporarily unemployed persons maintaining their skills-
- people enhancing the quality of life in their community-

WHO SUPPORTS VOLUNTEERISM?

The private and the public sectors encourage volunteerism across the nation. New York City has been a forerunner in the utilization of volunteers in the public sector. This is in keeping with our heritage of self-help and the spirit of helping others.

WHAT HOURS MAY THEY WORK?

Hours are determined by mutual agreement. Volunteers generally are not full-time. Schedules might include evenings or weekends.



HOW DO THEY MEET THE COST OF VOLUNTEERING?

They may be receiving agency reimbursements for carfare and/or lunch.

They may be receiving a stipend from a school or training program to cover expenses. They may be working full-time or have other sources of income.

WHAT TYPE OF JOBS MAY THE VOLUNTEERS DO?

Volunteer assignments are as diversified as the varied needs in our city. Do not limit your ideas and thinking. Volunteers can stretch your imagination. They can enhance your creativity as well as your productivity.

You do not have to limit volunteer positions to simple assignments. This will neither stimulate nor retain skilled volunteers for long. Keep in mind new projects and try to match a new volunteer's background, interests and capabilities to the position. Be open to ideas the volunteers may offer. Of course there are many volunteers who want to and/or are required to do routine work.

VOLUNTEERS MAY:

- be given assignments in any area except those limited by union negotiation, labor law or agency guidelines.
- work outside of your office. They may have access to libraries and texts unavailable to you, and may do special research assignments. Avail yourself of their contacts.
- supervise other volunteers
- work on a team project
- train staff in the volunteer's area of expertise
 - an attorney might coordinate and supervise a group of law school interns on a particular project.
 - a retiree from business may have expertise to share, and thereby train volunteers in the art of negotiating consumer complaints.
 - a museum curator or artist may supervise the hanging of an exhibition, or help index and catalogue new acquisitions.

New York is a very rich resource for individuals who offer time, commitment and talent for the reward of experience, work satisfaction, personal growth and the knowledge they are assisting our City.

ARE THERE ACTIVITIES THAT SHOULD NOT BE DONE BY VOLUNTEERS?

- Volunteers may not do any task which would eliminate or threaten a paid position.* They may supplement staff and/or innovate and experiment with new concepts.
- Volunteers should not perform tasks which would not be required of employees.
- Volunteers generally may not perform official inspections or issue violations.
- Volunteers may not work on an assignment until orientation and proper supervision is provided.
- Volunteers may not drive city vehicles.

WHAT ARE THE SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THOSE VOLUNTEERS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE?

- All minors need working papers. The agency Volunteer Coordinator should have the papers on file. The working papers indicate the work limitations of minors.
- All minors must have close supervision on the job.
- Volunteers under 14 years of age are limited to group projects under the close supervision of a school appointee.

* In 1975 and 1976, during New York City's fiscal crisis, MVAC began to take a more assertive stance toward the use of volunteers in city agencies. Prior to that time only a limited number of municipal agencies used volunteers, with little restriction on the type of assignments they could fill. However, as the city began laying off large numbers of its employees, the use of volunteers to fill service gaps became increasingly sensitive. MVAC established the current procedure of placing volunteers in new positions with the cooperation of the municipal unions and the Mayor's Office of Municipal Labor Relations (OMLR).

This procedure generally allows any activities that were utilizing volunteers prior to 1975 to continue them as volunteer positions. All assignments after that time would be processed through MVAC. When there is a question as to a volunteer assignment, MVAC refers the information through OMLR to union representatives. OMLR provides the final determination on the appropriateness of an assignment.

WHAT IS THE AGENCY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE VOLUNTEER?

Every agency has basic responsibilities in selecting, training and supervising its volunteers. These can be broken down into the following categories:

INTERVIEWING AND SCREENING: Standards and requirements must be met by each volunteer. These will vary by assignment and should be included in the agency's volunteer application. These items can include requirements regarding age, education, experience, background check, etc. The agency should always try to match the volunteer's skills, abilities, and interests to the needs of the agency.

JOB DESCRIPTION: A clear, complete description of the assignment is needed. This clarifies expectations and can serve as the basis for evaluation, corrective action to improve performance, or if necessary, termination.

ORIENTATION: Volunteers should receive a general orientation and should be made to feel part of the organization. Acquaint the volunteer with your agency goals, organization and office codes. Agency material and visual aides may be provided.

TRAINING: Supervisors should be trained to effectively utilize their volunteers. Volunteers should be trained to ensure a successful and productive partnership.

RECORDKEEPING: Volunteers depend on your records to verify: completion of school requirements; work references; work experience credit; tax credit; and other significant documentation. Potential employers, agency coordinators, and the Mayor's Office may require volunteer data during the year.

RECOMMENDATION: Relevant, documented volunteer work is often recognized as valid work experience for paid employment. Many government agencies including New York City and New York State accept this type of experience. When appropriate, supervisors provide letters of recommendation for employment in the private or public sectors.

SUPERVISION: On-going supervision by staff should be provided to all volunteers. This is particularly important when detailed references will be needed by the volunteer.

RECOGNITION: All volunteers should be recognized for their contributions. There are many ways to do this: luncheons, certificates, plaques, etc. Contact MVAC for suggestions.



WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STAFF PERSON SUPERVISING VOLUNTEERS?

- To thoroughly orient the volunteer to the functions of the department and the specific assigned tasks. Study materials may be provided.
- To explain to volunteers the importance of the work they will be doing.
- To insure effective functioning of the unit by establishing working hours in cooperation with the volunteer and to emphasize the importance of adherence to that schedule.
- To inform volunteers in a timely fashion of schedule changes, i.e. vacation time, scheduled meetings, etc.
- To recognize volunteer contributions and provide constructive feedback on their work.
- To respond to the volunteer's questions and concerns.
- To assign, where possible, a second person to whom the volunteer can report in the absence of the supervisor.
- To assign meaningful work--although repetitive tasks are sometimes appropriate.
- To insure that volunteers are working in a pleasant and cooperative environment.
- To keep the agency volunteer administrator current on the volunteer placement.
- To increase volunteer's responsibilities, as warranted.

ANYTHING ELSE?

- Volunteers should not be asked to run personal errands for staff.
- Volunteers need and desire supervision: the supervisor or an alternate should be available for questions as they arise.
- Supervisors should not feel that they cannot give constructive criticism and feedback to the volunteer. Volunteers need to be told if they are doing a task incorrectly or if their lateness is causing problems.
- Volunteers should be included in departmental functions when appropriate; e.g. a student may attend a program meeting.
- Volunteers should be thanked for their efforts. Volunteer recognition is as basic as saying "thank you" for the gifts of time, talent and self that volunteers freely offer. Expressions of appreciation are part of the pay-back every volunteer deserves.

Questions or concerns relating to volunteers should be addressed to your agency coordinator.



WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU DON'T HAVE A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM?

- Discuss the idea of a program with the agency managers. A good person to start with is your agency's personnel officer.
- Ask around - maybe other staff are interested.
- For further information call MVAC...(212)566-5950.

**Mayor's Voluntary Action Council
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MAYOR'S VOLUNTARY ACTION COUNCIL
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TASK FORCE ON CITY AGENCIES

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Department of General Services
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Human Resources Administration
Department of Parks & Recreation
Police Department
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MAYOR'S VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER
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City of New York

"...Utopia cannot be conjured up with a magic formula of more services, more agencies, more plans and more programs. A better City requires ... people who are willing to give of themselves."

**EDWARD I. KOCH
Mayor
City of New York**