

Staff Reactions to Volunteer Programs: **A Basic Feedback Form**

The staff feedback form is designed for paid employees who work directly with volunteers; for example, social workers, nurses, probation officers or teachers. The form assesses paid staff's impressions of the volunteer program—their levels of understanding, commitment and satisfaction. If used regularly, it should help the volunteer administrator identify the initial stages of staff resistance while the problem is still manageable. This form can also aid in reorganizing the program towards staff needs.

1. How long have you had any sort of contact with the volunteer program? _____

2. How much time during an average week are you in any sort of contact with volunteers? _____ hours

3. What are the main things volunteers you supervise do? _____

4. What do you think is the best way of organizing volunteers for your agency?
(Circle one.)

- a. In an organization of their own, as a separate auxiliary.
- b. Integrated within the agency as "unpaid staff."
- c. Undecided.

5. In relation to the total number of clients served by your agency/organization, what would be the best or highest ratio of volunteers to clients you would want?
(Circle one.)

- a. One volunteer to 50 or more clients.
- b. One volunteer to 20 clients.
- c. One volunteer to 5 clients.
- d. One volunteer to 2 clients.
- e. One or more volunteers for every client.

6. Could your agency now use (circle one):

- a. More volunteers?
- b. Fewer volunteers?
- c. About the same number?

7. What concerns you more about the volunteer program? (Circle one in each line.)

- a. Insurance (liability) *or* b. Volunteer training
- a. Volunteer turnover rate *or* b. Spending too much time with volunteers?

8. What useful jobs, if any, could volunteers perform that they don't now?

9. Could any jobs volunteers now perform probably be done better or more efficiently using paid professional or paid paraprofessional staff?

10. What are some of the things you see as particularly helpful in the volunteer program?

11. What are some of the things that could be improved?

12. What are the best ways of involving volunteers in your organization or agency?
(Circle one on each line.)

- a. Working directly with clients *or* b. Administrative duties
- b. Serving as individuals *or* b. Serving as groups

13. Were you ever a volunteer in a service area similar to the one you are in now?

- a. Yes
- b. No

14. Any other comments or suggestions you would care to make would be most welcome.

Signature (optional) _____ Date _____

SCORING

(Note: Some important responses are not categorized in this scoring index.)

- _____ 2: 0 hours = 0. Beyond that, points *up to 10* for the number of hours reported divided by 2 and rounded to next highest whole number. Thus, if 7 hours is reported = 3½ points rounded to 4 points; 20 hours = 10 points.
- _____ 3: (1) 0 listed = 0 points; 1 listed = 1 point; 2 listed = 3 points; 3 or more = 4 points.
- _____ (2) For every one of first three which appears *responsible*, add 1 point.
- _____ (3) For every one of first three involving direct significant contact with clients, add 1 point.
- _____ 4: (a) = 0 points; (b) = 10; (c) = 5.
- _____ 5: (a) = 0 points; (b) = 2; (c) = 4; (d) = 6; (e) = 10.
- _____ 6: (a) = 10 points; (b) = 0; (c) = 5.
- _____ 7: (a) = 0 points; (b) = 5 (line 1).
- _____ (a) = 5 points; (b) = 0 (line 2).
- _____ 8: None listed = 0 points; one = 3 points; two = 5; three = 8; four or more = 10.
- _____ 9: 0 or "none" = 10 points; one = 5 points; two or more = 0.
- _____ 10: None = 0 points; one thing listed = 3 points; two things = 5; three things = 8; four or more things = 10.
- _____ 12: (a) = 5 points; (b) = 0 (line 1).
- _____ (a) = 5 points; (b) = 0 (line 2).
- _____ Total number of points (raw score)

NORMS

The norms for the Staff Reactions to Volunteer Programs form are based on responses from a total of 184 paid staff working directly with volunteers:

If your staff support raw score is:	You are higher than approximately:
0-39	5% of programs
40-45	10%
46-47	15%
48-49	20%
50-51	25%
52-53	30%
54-55	35%
56-57	40%
58-59	45%
60	50%
61	55%
62	60%
63	65%
64-65	70%
66-68	75%
69-70	80%
71-72	85%
73-75	90%
76-79	95%
80-100	You are in the top 5%

Within the limits of standardization, a staff volunteer support index below the 25th percentile may be a warning signal. At least, it suggests a heart-to-heart talk with the staff persons concerned. There may be reasons which can be worked out. It also suggests working first with staff who have a more promising volunteer support index.

The staff reactions questionnaire is reprinted from Basic Feedback Systems: A Self-Assessment Process for Volunteer Programs by Bobette W. Reigel. The manual provides concise, ready-to-use checklists for each of the basic constituencies of a volunteer program: volunteer administrator, volunteer, line staff, top management, client, board member and local resource center. It may be obtained from Volunteer Readership, PO Box 1807, Boulder, CO 80306, (303) 447-0492. (Ask for free catalog with current prices.)

A Checklist

for Determining an Organization's Volunteer/Staff 'Climate'

The following checklist is designed to identify key factors influencing the state of staff-volunteer relations in an agency-sponsored volunteer program. It is adapted from the Volunteer Staff Relations Diagnosis form in *Winning with Staff: A New Look at Staff Support for Volunteers* by Ivan Scheier, 1978. Available from Volunteer Readership, PO Box 1807, Boulder, CO 80306. (For price, write for most recent, free catalog.)

- _____ Our organization is stable, healthy and free of conflict and survival tension.
- _____ Top management has issued a clear, specific, forceful policy statement, assigning high priority to involving volunteers in the agency or organization.
- _____ Roles of staff and volunteers are clearly defined and distinguished, both generally and in terms of specific tasks.
- _____ Most volunteer job descriptions are based on staff work assistance needs; information about these needs is provided by staff themselves.
- _____ We have a wide variety of volunteer jobs and roles from which staff may select those they are most comfortable with.
- _____ Our goals for increased numbers of volunteers are realistic.
- _____ A significant, well-planned part of preservice volunteer training emphasizes sensitivity and sympathy to staff problems.
- _____ Volunteers are rewarded and recognized only in conjunction with their staff supervisor or associate.
- _____ Staff receptivity to volunteers is carefully diagnosed; volunteers primarily work with receptive staff.
- _____ We have a system of concrete, specific rewards for staff who work productively with volunteers.
- _____ Receptivity to and experience with volunteers are two of the criteria actively used in recruiting and selecting new staff.
- _____ We have a well-planned program for orienting and training staff to work with volunteers.