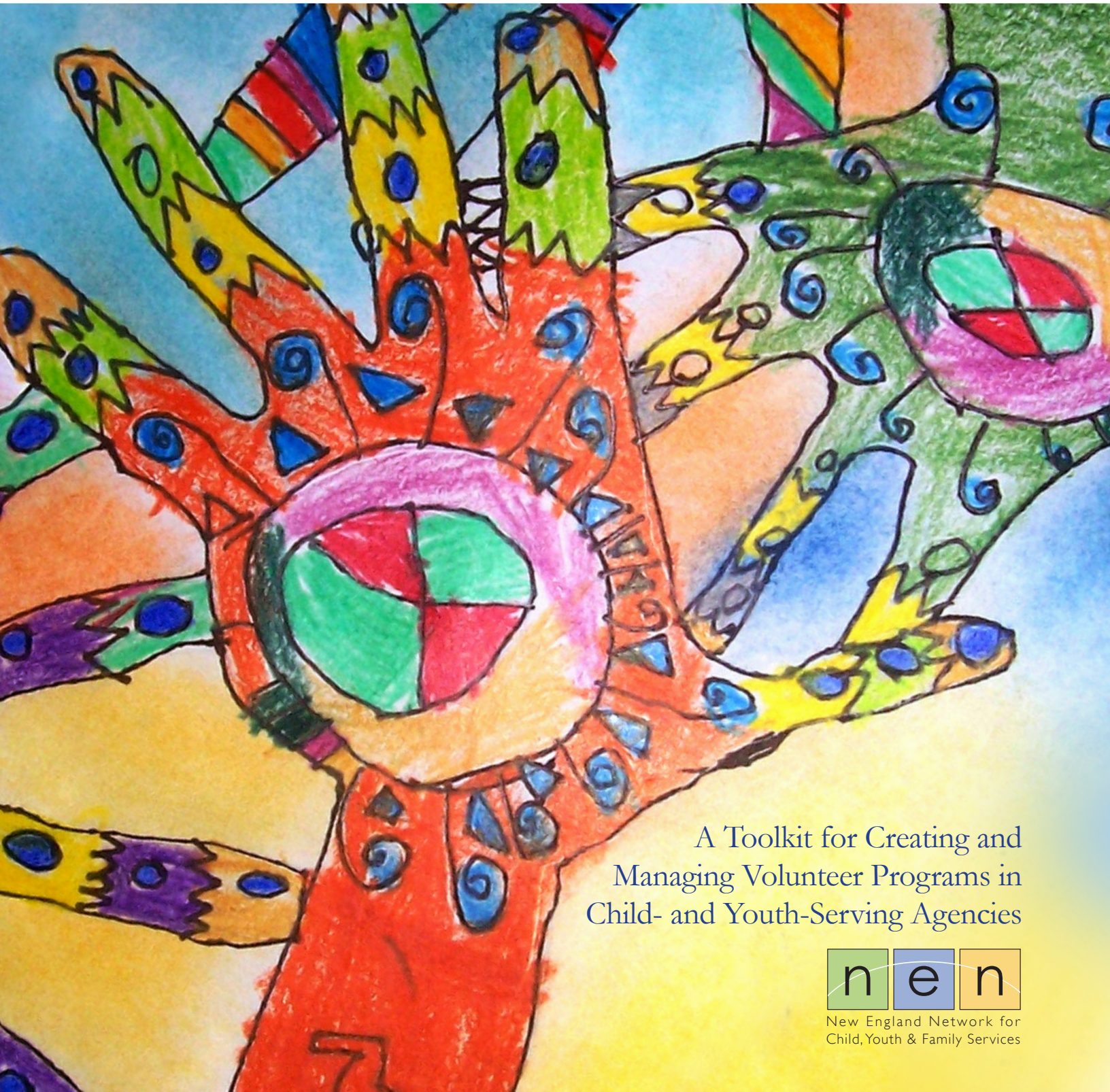
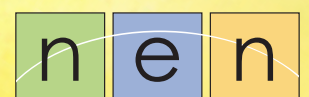


The Hidden Workforce

**How to Use Volunteers to Expand,
Extend and Strengthen Your Services**



A Toolkit for Creating and
Managing Volunteer Programs in
Child- and Youth-Serving Agencies



New England Network for
Child, Youth & Family Services



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the following individuals, all of whom were interviewed for this toolkit:

Stephanie Bolson, Albertina Kerr Centers
Susan Ellis, Energize, Inc.
Sarah (Sam) Elliston, Consultant
Kari Lensing, Youth Villages at Inner Harbour
Nyasha Pfukwa, Germaine Lawrence, Inc.
David Voegelé, ACT Volunteer Center at DIAL/SELF Youth and Community Services
Sally Walko, St. Joseph Children's Home
Tarin Washington, The Women's Center

We also thank these organizations, whose materials we borrowed with permission: Idealist.org; James DeWitt and Matthew Cooper, Guess & Rudd P.C.; the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Linda Graff, Graff and Associates, Inc.; VolunteerHub; Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service; Kelowna Women's Resource Centre; Nonprofit Risk Management Center; and MENTOR, www.mentoring.org.

This report was prepared by Mindi Wisman.

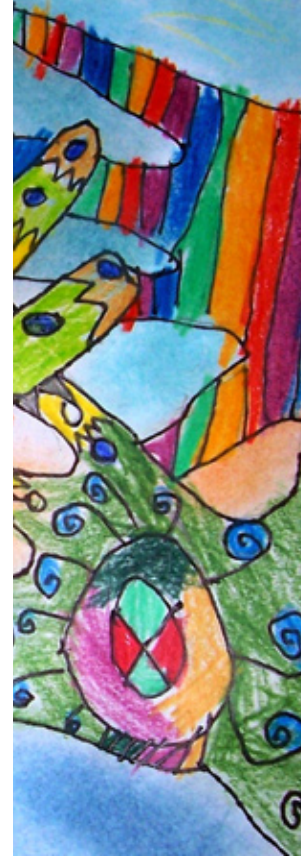
2010[©] by New England Network for Child, Youth & Family Services. All rights reserved.

New England Network for Child, Youth & Family Services
PO Box 35
Charlotte, VT 05445
<http://www.nenetwork.org>

Edited by Melanie Wilson and Jennifer A. Smith
Cover and text design by Douglas MacLaughlin
<http://www.tamsmiracle.com>

CONTENTS

Volunteers: Are They Worth It?	4
Key Questions	4
The Benefits: What the Research Says	5
Financial Benefits	5
Intangible Benefits	5
The Bottom Line: What the Experts Say	6
How to Get Going	7
Starting a Volunteer Program	7
Characteristics of Successful Volunteer Programs	8
Addressing Staff Resistance	9
Roles for Volunteers	11
Mentoring	11
Financial Mentoring	12
Fundraising	12
Homeless Youth Outreach	13
Residential Treatment	13
Social Media, Website and IT Volunteers	15
Recreational Volunteer Opportunities	16
Skill-based Volunteering	16
Volunteer Lobbyists	17
Special Volunteer Groups	19
One-time Volunteers	19
Baby Boomer Volunteers	20
Singles Volunteering	20
AmeriCorps Volunteers	21
Faith-based Volunteers	22
Managing Volunteer Programs	24
Retaining Volunteers	26
Tools	27
Before Implementing and Designing a Volunteer Program	28
Organizational Volunteer Readiness Assessment	29
Creating Sound Volunteer Program Policies	30
Volunteer Policy Manual Outline	31
Volunteer Risk Management	32
Myths About Nonprofit Liability and Risk Management	33
Targeted and Non-Targeted Volunteer Recruitment Strategies	35
Tips for Using Online Recruitment	36
How to Interview Potential Volunteers	37
Sample Volunteer Application	38
Volunteer Interview Record	39
Background Screening of Volunteers	40
Sample Volunteer Orientation Checklist	41
Key Factors in Retaining Volunteers	42
Tips for Recognizing the Efforts of Volunteers	43
Evaluating the Performance of Volunteers	44
Volunteer Performance Evaluation	45
Evaluating Volunteer Programs	46
Comprehensive Volunteer Program Evaluation	47
Additional Online Volunteer Resources	53





VOLUNTEERS: ARE THEY WORTH IT?

Since the early 1990's, experts have been assuring the nonprofit world that an advancing wave of retiring baby boomers would soon be landing on its doorstep, eager to give them all sorts of assistance, and for absolutely free. This in itself posed an enormous challenge for nonprofits, not all of whom were prepared, or even eager, to absorb this new resource. But then something else happened: community service as a concept took hold. Since the first Bush administration, the imperative to "give back" has gained enormous political traction, resulting in millions of new dollars for national volunteer efforts like AmeriCorps. Thus the question for nonprofits has become even more urgent: are they ready for the new volunteers that are coming their way? Can they use volunteers in ways that truly improve their services, cut their

overhead, and extend their reach? Are they even interested in trying?

We know that agencies want to improve their services, create better outcomes for clients, and reduce staff workloads, and conventional wisdom tells us that utilizing volunteers is one way to accomplish these goals.

But are volunteers really worth the effort? Depending on the organization, the very mention of volunteers inspires either hope or dread. Many agencies have thriving and even innovative volunteer programs, while many more use only a few volunteers in highly conventional ways. Others use no volunteers at all, and bristle at the suggestion that they should. Aren't they professional organizations, after all, doing sophisticated work that requires specialized training and experience? Embracing volunteers, they seem to suggest, is harkening back to the old days of Lady Bountiful and church-run alms houses, not today's world of evidence-based practice in which they now compete just like any other business.

Yet sources of public financing are dwindling, hastened by the economic collapse of 2008, and even previously well-heeled agencies find themselves with fewer resources than ever, and just when more clients are coming to them for help with the same economic stresses. Could volunteers be part of the solution? This resource guide explores that question, looking realistically at the values and costs volunteers can bring to nonprofits. While many social service organizations can benefit from this toolkit, it is designed particularly for agencies working with poor or at-risk children, youth and families. Despite voluminous material on volunteer management that is now readily available, relatively little specifically addresses this sector, which is odd given how underfunded it is, yet how potentially attractive it could be to volunteers.

KEY QUESTIONS

How do successful volunteer programs function, and what strategies do they employ? What are some of the obstacles faced by volunteer programs and how can they be overcome? Do volunteers really produce positive outcomes for clients, staff and organizations, and do those benefits outweigh the work that goes into managing them? In this toolkit we present the best wisdom of experts in volunteer management and explore intriguing volunteer models developed by youth and family-serving agencies around the country. Our goal in producing the toolkit was simple: to find out how volunteer programs truly look in agencies that use volunteers extensively and well, and to review what lessons those agencies have learned about creating and managing such programs. The last section of this report provides tools for agencies interested in creating new volunteer programs or improving or expanding the ones they already have.

Depending on the organization, the very mention of volunteers inspires either hope or dread

THE BENEFITS: WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Financial Benefits

In 2004, the Urban Institute, in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service and the USA Freedom Corps, conducted the first national evaluation of volunteer management capacity in over 1,700 charities in the United States. Their findings revealed that 80% of responding organizations use volunteers, and six in 10 say their volunteers create financial savings and increase the quality of services or programs they provide. The evaluation also confirmed what the majority of volunteer management experts also say: that the most effective volunteer programs have a paid staff member who dedicates a substantial portion of his or her time to volunteer management.¹

Yet if it takes dedicated resources to run a volunteer program, agencies understandably worry if those programs are really worth it. While the financial impact of volunteers is hard to measure, research does exist. In a recent study of hospital volunteer programs in Toronto, for example, researchers calculated the cost of volunteer programs in 31 hospitals (including staff time, training materials and administration) against the value of the time that volunteers ultimately contributed. They found that for every dollar a hospital spent, it earned on average \$6.84 from volunteers—a return on investment of 684%.² A separate study by The Independent Sector calculated the value of volunteer time at \$20.25 per hour in 2008.³


Despite promises of a positive return, agencies may still find the up-front costs of running a volunteer program daunting. What does it take to manage volunteers effectively? A 2002 Public/Private Ventures report looked closely at research examining the costs spent on volunteers in over 50 mentoring programs in the United States.

The research found that staff members spent approximately 23 hours per volunteer per year on screening, training and management.⁴ Using a typical annual staff salary from 2002 of \$23,000 plus benefits, researchers calculated that the screening, training and management costs to the agencies was approximately \$300 per volunteer per year.⁵ Since managing direct-service volunteers is necessarily more labor-intensive than managing many other kinds of volunteers, it makes sense that the \$300 figure might be on the high end of the cost spectrum. Other volunteers—say, those doing administrative work, organizing fundraisers, or doing landscaping—would almost certainly consume less in agency resources.

Interestingly, the financial impact of volunteers seems to extend beyond simple cost-benefit analyses. In the Toronto study, over 80 percent of the hospitals said they also received financial donations from their volunteers.⁶ A 2009 study by VolunteerMatch found that people who volunteer donate nearly 10 times more money to charity than people who don't volunteer, and two-thirds of volunteers say they generally donate money to the same organizations to which they donate time.⁷ So beyond the concrete value that volunteer programs can create for an organization, it appears that successful volunteer programs can also create committed donors.

Intangible Benefits

Finances aside, there are other reasons why volunteerism can enrich the organizational culture of nonprofits, the clients to whom services are directed, and the volunteers themselves.



Using a typical annual staff salary from 2002 of \$23,000 plus benefits, researchers calculated that the screening, training and management costs to the agencies was approximately \$300 per volunteer per year

¹Urban Institute. (2004). *Volunteer Management Capacity in America's Charities and Congregations: A Briefing Report*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/410963_VolunteerManagement.pdf

²Handy, F., & Srinivasan, N. (2004). Valuing volunteers: An economic evaluation of the net benefits of hospital volunteers. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 33(1), 28-54.

³The Independent Sector. (2007). *The Value of Volunteer Time*. Retrieved from http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html

⁴Grossman, J., & Furano, K. (2002). *Making the Most of Volunteers*. Public/Private Ventures. Retrieved from http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/152_publication.pdf

⁵Ibid.

⁶Handy, F., & Srinivasan, N. (2004).

⁷Fidelity Investments. (2009). *Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund and VolunteerMatch form Alliance and Release Landmark Study on Volunteering*. Retrieved from <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20091203005609/en/Fidelity%20AE-Charitable-Gift-Fund-VolunteerMatch-Form-Alliance>



Like other capacity-building approaches an agency might employ, volunteer programs can be invaluable, but they aren't necessarily easy or cheap to run

Volunteering can make people feel like part of a community, that they are doing their civic duty, helping others, and making a difference. It appears that volunteering also has measurable health benefits for individual participants. A 25-year-long National Institute of Mental Health study of seniors found that highly organized activity, like regular volunteering, was the second strongest predictor of longevity and vitality for older people.⁸

A 2002 study by Public/Private Ventures on the value of volunteering reported that only 30% of Experience Corps volunteers (who are in their 50's and 60's) reported that they were in excellent or very good health before they started volunteering, while 42% of them reported excellent or very good health after volunteering. After one year, those same Experience Corps members reported fewer

difficulties in driving, reading a map, using a calculator and grocery shopping than they did prior to their volunteering experiences.⁹ Improving the well-being of volunteers may not be of primary interest to most nonprofits, but at the very least, presenting volunteering as a win-win for all involved should make the programs easier to promote in the community.

In a well-run program, volunteers can also strengthen organizations and their clients in ways that are harder to quantify. Youth who lack grandparents can benefit immensely from senior mentors, while adolescents in recovery can be motivated by spending time with adults who were "just like them" when they were younger. Staff members working alongside volunteers can be reminded why they were inspired to work with at-risk youth in the first place. While it's challenging to link these benefits directly to financial gains for nonprofits, that doesn't mean the gains are insignificant. In the end, organizations themselves must decide how volunteers are likely to impact

their staff and clients, and whether a volunteer program could strengthen their relationship with the community. They also must decide whether they have the administrative capacity to nurture and improve a volunteer program over time. A poorly conceived or mismanaged volunteer program can be far worse than none at all, so agencies should take their time making a decision.

The Bottom Line: What the Experts Say

So what do experts say about the real value of volunteer programs? The consensus seems to be that, like other capacity-building approaches an agency might employ, volunteer programs can be invaluable, but aren't necessarily easy or cheap to run. The bottom line is that volunteers and volunteer programs require dedicated supervision; recruitment and retention are challenges for everyone; staff buy-in can be a major obstacle; client benefits are difficult to measure, but seem apparent; and volunteer recognition is critical to retaining old volunteers and attracting new ones.

⁸Grossman, J., & Furano, K. (2002). Making the Most of Volunteers. Public/Private Ventures. Retrieved from http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/152_publication.pdf

⁹Ibid.

HOW TO GET GOING

Our Experts

Susan Ellis is the president of Energize, Inc., an online training, consulting and publishing organization that specializes in volunteerism. She is the author or co-author of 12 books and has written more than 120 articles on volunteer management.



Sarah (Sam) Elliston has been a volunteer manager and consultant for more than 20 years and is a frequent conference presenter.



Stephanie Bolson is community relations and volunteer manager for hundreds of volunteers at Albertina Kerr Centers in Portland, Ore., which serves children and adults with developmental disabilities and mental health challenges.



Each spoke with NEN about developing and managing volunteer programs. To read full interviews with each expert, go to www.nenetwork.org.

Starting a Volunteer Program

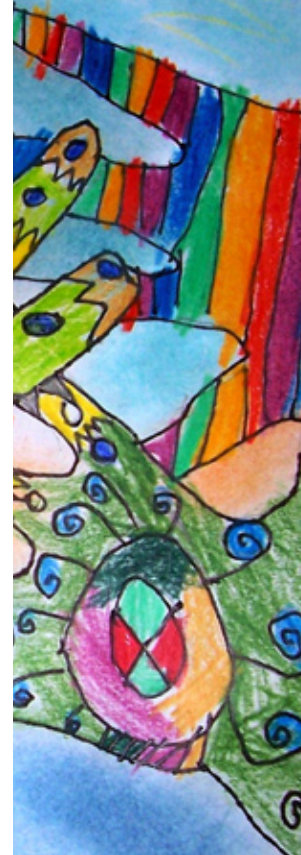
Organizations should think strategically before beginning or expanding a volunteer program. Have volunteers been used in the past? What is the public perception of the agency? Where are volunteers needed, and how can they contribute?¹⁰ Once these questions have been answered, agency management should engage the rest of an organization's staff in a dialogue about volunteers. They

should ask whether staff has worked with volunteers before, where they see a need for volunteers, and if there is any anxiety about volunteers edging out regular employees.¹¹ In child- and youth-serving agencies, it is obviously also important to address staff concerns about keeping clients safe, and to make sure that there are ways to dismiss or 'demote' volunteers who turn out to be inappropriate with clients. Energize, Inc. president Susan Ellis offers these suggestions for beginning a volunteer program:

"There is no easy way [to start a program]; it's hard, it's time-consuming. The question isn't, how does an organization do it easily? The question is, how do they make their goal important enough that the resources they put into it are cost-effective for what they get out of it. No one is saying you have to start a program with 700 volunteers the first month. Start small, pick one unit of your facility, aim for five quality volunteers and see what happens. Go online, pull up the names of organizations similar to yours, see if they have volunteer involvement and see what they do. That's how you do it.

"If an agency wants to start a program, they need to find somebody in the organization who is interested in doing it, and free them from a few things so they can focus on it for a couple months. They should test pilot the volunteer program first [with an existing staff member as a volunteer coordinator] so they don't need to hire anybody new. When you're starting out and you're trying to designate someone to get it off the ground, the biggest issue is, do they [the staff member] want to do it? You've got to have somebody who's enthusiastic; it doesn't matter if it's a secretary or a social worker. Find somebody who is going to be genuine with people and it will make all the difference in the world."¹²

'Start small, pick one unit of your facility, aim for five quality volunteers and see what happens'



¹⁰Rehnberg, S., & Clubine, B. (n.d.). *Volunteer Recruitment: Tips from the Field*. RGK Center, University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved from <http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/rgk/serviceleader/leaders/tips.php>

¹¹Idealist Volunteer Management Readiness Center. (n.d.). *Organizational Readiness*. Retrieved from <http://www.idealists.org/en/vmrc/bestpractices/organizationalreadiness.html>

¹²S. Ellis (personal communication, Aug. 28, 2009).



Volunteer management consultant Sam Elliston agrees that starting a program takes thoughtful planning. She says:

“The first step is to ask, ‘If you were given a grant to hire a new person in every department, what would you have them do?’ Have each department chew on that and develop the tasks they think are the most pressing. Then ask, ‘How could some of that be done by people who aren’t being paid?’ ... If you don’t have somebody on staff whose job it is to manage volunteers, it’s wasting everyone’s time. Sometimes you can find funding to pay a temporary, part-time salary for someone to put that structure in place, do trainings, make ‘friends’ for the volunteer program, and work with the community and the staff.”¹³

‘If you don’t have somebody on staff whose job it is to manage volunteers, it’s wasting everyone’s time’

Stephanie Bolson shares her experience developing Kerr’s volunteer program:

“You have to invest initially, but after that it pays off. It’s important to first identify the staff in your agency who will be your cheerleaders and start with them. People will say they

are too busy, so you need to be able to show them someone who is busy, but can make it work and lead by example. Start small. You don’t need 20 volunteer roles; start with one. Start with something manageable, something you’re knowledgeable about—don’t invite a volunteer to come in and redo your marketing plan if you don’t know anything about it. That way, you will be able to train and supervise that volunteer.”¹⁴

Characteristics of Successful Volunteer Programs

Successful programs have *specific written policies* on behavior, expectations, safety and training, have written job descriptions for all volunteer positions, and use applications to screen volunteers. Successful programs also use multiple strategies to recruit volunteers, conduct thorough interviews of potential candidates, offer initial and ongoing orientation, training and supervision, and have methods for recognizing and evaluating their volunteers.¹⁵ Sam Elliston adds:

“In a successful program, paid staff are interested in involving volunteers. The agency is thinking of ways to involve volunteers; there is a process for intake, orientation and placement, and volunteers are integrated throughout the organization. Another indicator is that the board is actively involved, and really knows about the volunteer program. Also, there’s an opportunity for volunteers to give feedback. A healthy volunteer program will have people moving from being volunteers onto committees, and maybe eventually to the board.”¹⁶

Susan Ellis says *flexibility and management* are key components to successful programs:

“[Successful programs] look like they’re consciously run and integrated into the organization. The number one factor that is consistent throughout any successful volunteer program is that somebody is designated to be in charge of it. Also, variety and flexibility to be able to meet volunteers on their own terms, when they can give time, is essential. I genuinely and seriously believe that there is no skill in the world that you cannot get donated. But, if you need that skill at 11:45 on a Tuesday, you may not find it.”¹⁷

¹³S. Elliston (personal communication, Sept. 4, 2009).

¹⁴S. Bolson (personal communication, Oct. 21, 2009).

¹⁵Nonprofit Center of Milwaukee. (n.d.) *Components of a Successful Volunteer Program*. Retrieved from http://www.volunteermilwaukee.org/Components_vol-program.pdf

¹⁶S. Elliston (personal communication, Sept. 4, 2009).

¹⁷S. Ellis (personal communication, Aug. 28, 2009).

Stephanie Bolson says that *executive support* is also crucial:

“When you have leadership that believes strongly in volunteerism, everything falls into place. Our senior leadership accept volunteers themselves. Our CEO usually has masters’ level interns with him, so that sets a good example. Senior staff facilitate the placement of volunteers and interns so other staff see that the leadership is interested in seeing volunteers succeed at the agency. Setting the example has a big impact.”¹⁸

Addressing Staff Resistance

Agency leaders and staff members are sometimes resistant to working with volunteers, who can seem like just another burden to manage. But with proper planning and supervision, volunteers can reduce staff workloads and, more importantly, improve services for clients. Sam Elliston has these recommendations for addressing staff resistance:

“A new volunteer coordinator should get to know the staff who are least resistant and get them good volunteers, because then other staff will start to get interested. One way to eliminate resistance is to have a senior staff person work with a volunteer and then report to other staff about what they were able to accomplish because of that volunteer (a report, a special project, etc.). A senior staff’s praise of a volunteer, plus the results, can have a great deal of influence. Also, if an employee is evaluated on their ability to work with volunteers, then you better believe they start working with volunteers. Organizations can add it to performance reviews, or if organizations have a point evaluation system, people who work with volunteers can get extra points. Also, have the volunteer coordinator take a few minutes in orientations to new employees to say, ‘Here’s what the volunteer program does, here’s how you get a volunteer, and here’s

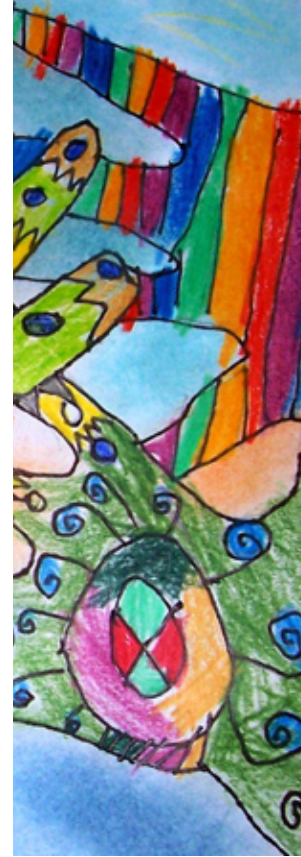
how the volunteer program can support you,’ so that new employees are on board from the beginning.”¹⁹

She points out that volunteers also can be unusually rich resources for adolescent clients:

“Young people respond to volunteers differently than staff. If you have a volunteer coming on a consistent basis, building a relationship, it might be the only person in that child’s life who’s not getting paid to be their ‘friend’. They realize the volunteer is coming because they want to—not because they’re getting paid—and that can be dramatic for the child. If you have a group of 8-10 young people with one paid staff person, versus a group with 8-10 young people with one staff person and five volunteers, which is better? Which has the greater capacity to develop better relationships and outcomes for the kids? If you define volunteers as a quality enhancement to an agency to help serve clients much more effectively, then how can an agency be resistant?”²⁰

Volunteer manager Stephanie Bolson says overcoming the doubts of staff is a slow process; you shouldn’t pressure individual staffers if they’re not ready or don’t yet see the value of volunteers.

“If staff haven’t asked for a volunteer, I don’t give them a volunteer. It might be written into their job description, it might be something that senior leadership is really pushing, but if they don’t identify the need, they’re not going to be successful with a volunteer. The least successful placements I’ve had



‘If an employee is evaluated on their ability to work with volunteers, then you better believe they start working with volunteers’

¹⁸S. Bolson (personal communication, Oct. 21, 2009).

¹⁹S. Elliston (personal communication, Sept. 4, 2009).

²⁰Ibid.



are when staff are reluctant to take on a volunteer and only do it because they're being pushed. That's not a good experience for anyone—not the staff, not the volunteers, not the people being served, and the volunteer will disappear when that happens. It's a slow process to get staff keyed into the volunteer program. There is a lot of work at the front end, but at the back end it provides staff with more time. If staff are saying, 'I'm so busy I can't deal with a volunteer,' then they need help. There are probably tasks that they're doing that a volunteer could help them with, which would alleviate that time constraint. If staff or agencies say they're too busy for volunteers, that means they need the help of volunteers."²¹

In the next section we highlight youth-serving agencies across the country with innovative and successful volunteer programs. In searching for such examples, we were particularly interested in agencies that have developed unusual opportunities for volunteers and could attest to their value in those roles. The programs we discovered are described below, along with additional commentary from our experts.

'The least successful placements I've had are when staff are reluctant to take on a volunteer and only do it because they're being pushed'

Susan Ellis also acknowledges that managing volunteers takes time and effort, but thinks most agencies are capable of doing it. She says:

"If no one at an agency wants volunteers and they're not willing to spend time on them, then they shouldn't start [a volunteer program]. An organization that says,

'We have no money, let's do everything with volunteers'—they shouldn't have a volunteer program. But in terms of the kind of agency that can have a successful volunteer program, there's no limit. If an agency has a genuine desire to serve their clients in the widest possible way, and they welcome different points of view and varieties of people, they're going to be successful with volunteers."²²

²¹S. Bolson (personal communication, Oct. 21, 2009).

²²S. Ellis (personal communication, Aug. 28, 2009).

ROLES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Mentoring

Mentoring is one of the most popular ways of connecting volunteers with clients. Three million youth in the U.S have formal mentors and the numbers are still growing.²³ According to research, there are significant correlations between positive developmental outcomes for youth and their participation in a mentoring relationship.²⁴ But just what does mentoring entail? The Big Brothers/Big Sisters model is well-known, but Susan Ellis encourages organizations to think more broadly, saying:

“You can match someone with a young person, based on what he or she says they are interested in doing. If they really love cars, get an auto-mechanic to come talk with them and spend some time working on cars to see if they like it. Volunteers can do outings, really expand a kid’s worldview and help them explore resources that are available to them that they never had a chance to experience. Volunteers can also help them understand how to find work, even part-time work like delivering pizza, and really mentor them through that process. Also, there’s nothing that says you can’t have a volunteer mentor with three kids. It can be less pressure for the volunteer and more fun for the kids.”²⁵

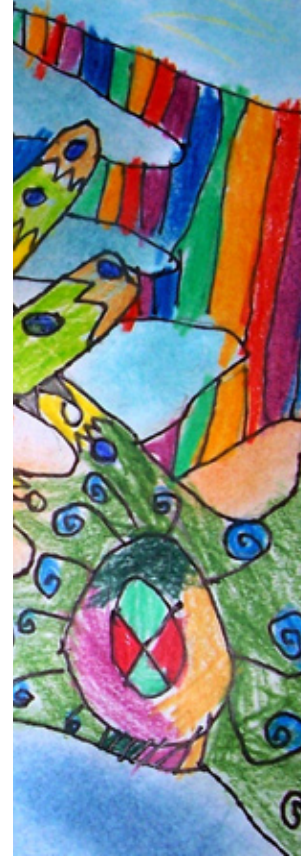
Prominent national organizations like Big Brothers/Big Sisters and CASA have used mentoring models for decades. Smaller, local agencies also use mentors with children, parents and families. At Albertina Kerr Centers, for example, volunteers serve as mentors through a program called “Visiting Friends.” Kerr Centers volunteer manager Stephanie Bolson elaborates:

“A visiting friend is just that: They come once a week for at least nine months and visit a youth each week. They do whatever the youth wants to do, maybe basketball, watching videos, arts and crafts, whatever they want. The positive thing about that is that the youth gets to see that there is someone who wants to engage with them other than a staff member, who is an adult and successful and who cares. The volunteer feels good because they are building a relationship with a youth who really needs someone in their life, a positive influence. A good number of the youth in our programs do not have family involvement, so it’s really nice for them to have a caring adult in their life that’s not being paid to care.”²⁶

A detailed report by Public/Private Ventures assessing the effectiveness of mentoring programs provides some useful takeaways for agencies with those types of programs. The research indicates that positive relationships are best achieved by mentors and mentees mutually engaging in social activities and spending regular time together.²⁷

Mentors who share similar interests with mentees feel the most connected, and the strongest relationships are built when mentees and mentors share in the decision-making process about how to spend time together. In addition, mentors who attend orientation and training devote more hours to mentees and report having the strongest connections with them.²⁸

‘If they really love cars, get an auto-mechanic to come talk with them and spend some time working on cars to see if they like it’



²³Rhodes, J., & DuBois, D. (2006). *Understanding and facilitating the youth mentoring movement*. The Society for Research in Child Development. Retrieved from http://www.srkd.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=232&Itemid=1

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵S. Ellis (personal communication, Aug. 28, 2009).

²⁶S. Bolson (personal communication, Oct. 21, 2009).

²⁷Herrera, C., Sipe, C., McClanahan, W., Arbretton, A., & Pepper, S. (2000). *Mentoring School-Age Children: Relationship Development in Community-based and School-based Programs*. Public/Private Ventures and The National Mentoring Partnership. Retrieved from http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/34_publication.pdf

²⁸Ibid.



‘Volunteers come to us through word of mouth; some come to us through senior centers, others through banks. We look for people with an interest or professional background in financial services’

Financial Mentoring

Economic recession obviously hits poor and middle-class families hard, and for that reason many nonprofits have recently added financial mentoring to their roster of services. The Women’s Center in Chapel Hill, N.C., has been providing financial advice to clients for several years and has a great deal of experience in recruiting and managing volunteers to help. Tarin Washington, the director of financial and housing programs at the agency, says:

“Volunteers come to us through word of mouth; some come to us through senior centers, others through banks. We look for people with an interest or professional background in financial services. I interview them first, then the volunteers shadow me and observe financial mentoring sessions. Then

I observe them doing the mentoring sessions, and then they can do all aspects of the financial mentoring on their own.”²⁹

Those duties can be considerable, and include not just financial advice but also other types of support. During mentoring sessions, Washington says:

“We ask what their goals are for a budget, and then we go line by line through what they spend monthly to see if there is a surplus or deficit. If there is a deficit, we try and focus on where they can cut down, cut back and cut out. We try to get them to decide that for themselves, so instead of saying, ‘you need to cut cable,’ we’ll say, ‘is there anything you can do without?’ That goes on an action plan—everyone gets an action plan. We can call

a bank together to see if they’ll lower an interest rate, or call a utility company to see why a bill is so high. We’ll have four to five things in an action plan and that’s what clients take home with them. We provide referrals, but a lot of what we do is reassurance; sometimes people just need to vent.”³⁰

Some agencies have developed opportunities for youth-specific financial mentoring. For instance, the Economic Mentoring Program, a collaborative project of the Chicago Department of Children & Youth Services, local universities and several community-based nonprofits, recruits professionals to support young men involved in the juvenile justice system as they participate in financial education and do such tasks as open a bank account and create an investment portfolio.³¹

Fundraising

Clients are not the only ones facing economic hardships—the downturn in the economy has meant reduced state and federal funding to nonprofits and a decline in private giving. This revenue decrease is a recent development for some nonprofits, while others have seen their state and federal funding diminish or remain stagnant for several years.³² Fortunately, volunteers can and do make excellent fundraisers. Indeed, a 2002 Urban Institute survey found that three out of four charities use volunteers for fundraising, and nearly one quarter of charities use volunteers to raise at least half of their overall contributions.³³

One such agency is Doorways for Women and Families, in Arlington, Va., which provides shelter, support and advocacy to women and their children who are homeless or escaping domestic violence situations. Doorways for Women and Families uses volunteers in several development capacities including direct mail solicitations, e-solicitations, donor research and donor database management.³⁴

²⁹T. Washington (personal communication, Nov. 5, 2009).

³⁰Ibid.

³¹UCAN. (n.d.) Retrieved from http://www.ucanchicago.org/site/epage/84249_682.htm

³²Perry, S. (2008, July, 24). Struggling to Stay Afloat. *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, 20(19), 16. Retrieved from http://www.rockinst.org/newsroom/news_stories/2008/2008-07-24-struggling_to_stay_afloat.pdf

³³National Center for Charitable Statistics. (2004, July). *Who Raises Contributions for America’s Nonprofit Organizations?* Retrieved from <http://nccsdataweb.urban.org/kbfiles/312/Brief%202.pdf>

³⁴Doorways for Women and Families. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.doorwaysva.org/volunteer/>

Another agency that utilizes volunteers in fundraising efforts is the FAIR Fund, a Washington, D.C. nonprofit that works to prevent sexual violence, human trafficking, and dating violence in the lives of young people, especially girls. FAIR Fund volunteers assist with fundraising through marketing, donor relations and fundraising event planning.³⁵

Homeless Youth Outreach

Studies estimate that approximately 1.5 million youth under age 18 experience at least one period of homelessness each year.³⁶ The “hidden” nature of youth homelessness means that youth-serving agencies need to expend considerable resources simply to identify homeless youth and convince them that help is available. Some agencies depend on volunteers to do this outreach work. The Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth (NPHY), for example, has developed several opportunities for volunteers who want to work with distressed young people. Volunteers can participate in “Feel Good Fridays” where they run tables with homemade baked goods while also handing out toiletries, food, other basic necessities and information about community resources. Volunteers also canvass neighborhoods to hand out informational flyers describing available services. The NPHY also has a program called “Grandparents in the Audience” for volunteers who want to reach out to youth who lack family support systems. Volunteers attend sporting events, concerts, art shows and graduations, and can make a big difference in the lives of homeless youth by simply being there to support them.³⁷

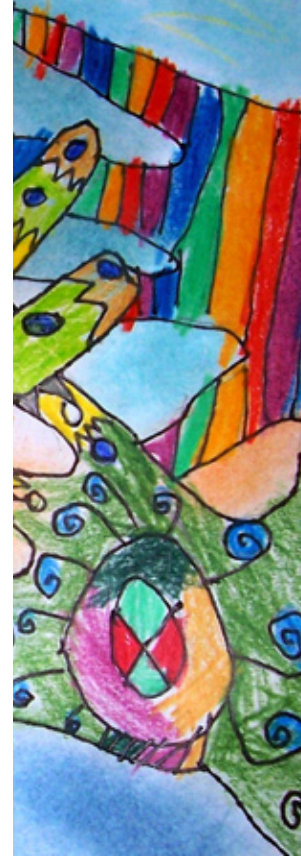
Panhandle Community Services, a transitional living program for youth in Nebraska, also uses adult volunteers in their street outreach program for homeless youth. Volunteers work in rural communities to find and connect with homeless youth, establish support groups for youth, and distribute educational materials to young people.³⁸ Northeast

Kingdom Community Action, Inc., which runs a transitional living program for homeless youth in Newport, Vt., uses volunteers in its life-skills education program for youth. The multi-week program engages volunteers from organizations like the fire department, health department, and culinary arts school to come in and provide information and training to clients. Youth can, for instance, demonstrate their ability to put out a fire started by a firefighter, or get tutoring from a bank clerk in how to open a bank account or start a savings plan.³⁹

Another organization offering interesting service opportunities is Iowa Youth and Shelter Services, Inc. in Ames, Iowa. Volunteers can “Adopt-A-Youth” and purchase items that clients need and request on an ongoing basis. They also take shelter residents to the grocery store to assist them with budgeting and meal planning, tutor homeless youth in preparation for GED exams, and perform street outreach, canvassing streets for homeless youth and getting them assistance. The agency also runs a late-night coffee shop that doubles as a safe place for homeless youth to congregate. Volunteers can host “A Night at the Coffee Shop,” and arrange for entertainment, games, refreshments and transportation for homeless youth.⁴⁰

Residential Treatment

Adolescent residential treatment centers that provide therapeutic care, addiction counseling, education, life-skills and independent-living training to youth and their families also use volunteers. Volunteers in residential centers work as tutors, activity aides, kitchen helpers and in many other



‘Volunteers can participate in Feel Good Fridays where they run tables with homemade baked goods while also handing out toiletries, food, other basic necessities’

³⁵VolunteerMatch. (n.d.). *FAIR Fund Fundraising and Communications Advocate Volunteer*. Retrieved from <http://www.volunteermatch.org/search/opp610276.jsp>

³⁶National Alliance to End Homelessness. (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/policy/focusareas/youth>

³⁷Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.nphy.org/our_programs-volunteer_opportunities.html

³⁸Wilson (2008). *Surviving to Thriving: How Communities Can Help Vermont's Rural Homeless Youth and the Agencies That Serve Them*. New England Network for Child, Youth and Family Services. Retrieved from http://www.nenetwork.org/publications/surviving_to_thriving.pdf

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Iowa Youth and Shelter Services, Inc. (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.yss.ames.ia.us/index.cfm?nodeID=20796>



capacities. Youth Villages at Inner Harbour, an adolescent residential treatment center in Douglasville, Ga., uses volunteers in a variety of ways. As Kari Lensing, volunteer coordinator at Inner Harbour, says:

“We have volunteers that come in and do groups with kids to teach them life skills, because a lot of kids are missing that. Volunteers come for an hour a week and teach the kids anything from money management to table etiquette to cooking and learning about healthy food; it’s unlimited. We also have a staff member on campus who specifically teaches life skills, so we send our volunteers to him to get ideas, so there are a lot of resources for our life skills coaches. We’re able to offer youth skills that they are going to need in the future and the

life skills piece wouldn’t be here without our volunteers. We have activity facilitator volunteers who meet with the kids every week and play basketball or kickball or do arts and crafts—any activity that the volunteer likes to do. We also have lots of different therapies here, so we have a volunteer yoga therapy assistant, an art therapy assistant volunteer, and equine

therapy volunteers. Because of the volunteers in our equine therapy program, we are able to reach more kids and have them work up to riding at a much quicker pace. We are able to accomplish a lot more because volunteers are here.”⁴¹

The New Hampshire Department of Juvenile Justice Youth Services Center in Manchester, N.H., also utilizes volunteers in a number of capacities. The center uses volunteers as spiritual mentors for Bible study groups, as tutors, and as life-skills and career-planning instructors. In addition, the center has volunteer-led alcohol and drug addiction groups and has used volunteer “foster grandparents.”⁴²

Germaine Lawrence, an adolescent girls’ treatment center in Arlington, Mass., has numerous opportunities for volunteers who want to work with at-risk girls. Volunteers at the agency teach a wide variety of classes to girls, including knitting, ballroom dancing, photography, yoga, exercise and fitness classes, poetry workshops, cooking classes for girls with diabetes and eating disorders, and voice and piano lessons.⁴³ The agency also recruits both Spanish- and English-speaking mentors to spend time with girls one-on-one. Nyasha Pfukwa, Germaine Lawrence’s development and volunteer coordinator, says:

“Two of our most successful volunteer opportunities are dorm volunteers and Amigas. Dorm volunteers talk with the girls, play games, read to them, help prepare dinner; they are almost like a dorm mother and do whatever needs to be done. Going to the grocery store is a privilege for the girls, so they will budget, come up with a grocery list, and dorm volunteers help with that, too. Also what happens is that, for example, someone comes in as a dorm volunteer, but talks and becomes pals with one of the girls and ends up being her tutor. Maybe that girl was struggling with school and before would have said, ‘I don’t want a tutor,’ but now, since she developed a relationship with the dorm volunteer, she accepts having a tutor because they have a connection.

“The Amiga program is like Big Sisters. The screening and training of the Amiga volunteers is more intense—the therapist works closely with them and does the training. For the first couple visits the Amiga and girl meet under supervision, then the next few times they walk around campus, so they are not directly supervised, but are still monitored since they are on campus. Then as they get more comfortable, and the girls show that they can follow rules, they can go out on their own with their Amiga.”⁴⁴

Pfukwa goes on to describe how she recruits volunteers for more unusual tasks, and how volunteers affect the tenor of the programs:

‘We have activity facilitator volunteers who meet with the kids every week and play basketball or kickball or do arts and crafts’

⁴¹K. Lensing (personal communication, Oct. 26, 2009).

⁴²New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Juvenile Justice Institutional Services, Youth Services Center. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/JJINSTITUTSRVC/ysc.htm>

⁴³N. Pfukwa (personal communication, Feb. 26, 2010).

⁴⁴Ibid.

“When you have happy volunteers they keep referring people [so we treat our volunteers well]. We never only just get one volunteer; they usually tell a friend or two. We only do recruiting when we need something specific. For example, a program director or therapist here will contact me and say, ‘I have a girl who wants to do x.’ So, I email my database of volunteers and say, ‘Does anyone do x?’ and they will say ‘Yes,’ or ‘No, but I have a friend who does.’ Recently, we had a girl who wanted to be a makeup artist so I sent out a request to the database to ask.

“The girls are perfect little angels around the volunteers—the girls will behave like you wouldn’t believe. There is usually no escalation from the girls—in fact, having the volunteers there usually calms things down. I think it’s because the volunteers are not limit-setters, so they are not one more person telling the girls what to do. The volunteer is like the favorite aunt who lets you do what your mom says you can’t do.

“[Developing a volunteer program] is extra work in the beginning, and it’s a new person you’re introducing, but if you put in the work and have the proper training and orientation, the volunteers become part of the fabric and become integrated into the program. Our staff realize that having a volunteer is beneficial; they know they are worth it. Residential life is all about routines, so having volunteers really breaks up the routine [in a good way]. Having volunteers changes the residential feel of the program to more of a home feeling.”⁴⁵

Social Media, Web and IT Volunteers

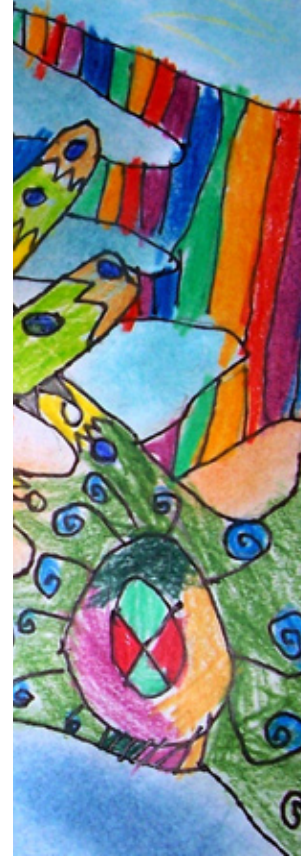
The Internet has become a key resource for recruiting volunteers, so agencies need sophisticated websites and social media connections to maximize their online reach. Agencies that don’t have the staff capacity to maintain websites or to market themselves online can recruit volunteers, especially younger ones, to help. Agencies with IT needs—

network administration, software management and equipment updates, can also find volunteer helpers. For example, one agency in Great Britain, The Women’s Environmental Network (WEN), farms out IT tasks to volunteers. A staffer describes the arrangement this way:

“WEN doesn’t have funding for a network administrator but is totally dependent on its network. Nobody on the staff has the time or IT expertise to take on the role, so volunteers have been incredibly valuable. [My advice for other agencies trying to recruit IT volunteers is] be specific about what you want them to do. Interview them and, if necessary, test them—if they don’t pass, don’t take them on. If you can, get an IT specialist to help draft interview questions and conduct the interview with you. Be prepared to provide intensive management support at the start and to check in with them regularly to see how they are doing, keep them on track, and support them. Be clear with staff about what the volunteer’s role is and how much or little help staff can expect from them. Be prepared to act as gatekeeper for them by filtering staff requests for IT assistance or troubleshooting. Look for volunteers who can give a commitment of at least three months, preferably longer, unless it is for a discrete project.”⁴⁶

Susan Ellis also has recommendations for agencies that are looking for technological help.

“Bring people in to look at how you’re using your computer system, what software you need. Also, nonprofits need more volunteers to advise them on the use of social media and the whole virtual environment. Volunteers can blog on an agency’s behalf, or create online relationships. You can have



‘The girls are perfect little angels around the volunteers—the girls will behave like you wouldn’t believe’

⁴⁵N. Pfiukwa (personal communication, Feb. 26, 2010).

⁴⁶Sutton, L. (2007). Using volunteers for network IT support. *Connecting Up Australia*. Retrieved from <http://www.connectingup.org/ict-recourses/strategy/using-volunteers-network-it-support>



volunteers who are online pen pals, and there are ways to make that safe and use pseudonyms, etc. There's a whole virtual element that volunteers can be really good at."⁴⁷

Recreational Volunteer Opportunities

What about volunteers who don't bring specialized professional skills – or who do, but would rather just do something fun with clients? In that case, volunteers can be activity leaders, chaperones, cooks, facility assistants, and party planners. The St. Joseph Children's Home in Louisville, Ky., for example, uses volunteers in its residential treatment facilities in a variety of ways. The agency's Sewing and Quilting Society has nearly 50 volunteers who create quilts that are raffled off throughout the year, make blankets for the centers' younger clients, and teach clients how to knit.⁴⁸

'We started a volunteer role that people are really excited about—a birthday cake baker'

Albertina Kerr Centers also uses volunteers in a number of creative ways. Says Stephanie Bolson:

"We started a volunteer role that people are really excited about—a birthday cake baker.

We give volunteers a list of our clients' birthdays and they bake birthday cakes. They can make whatever they want, they can deliver them and have a slice of cake if they want, and that's their commitment to volunteering. There are no requirements, no background checks because they don't really have direct client contact, so it skips those hoops and they get to feel like they're doing something positive; and if they already like to bake then it's a win-win. Plus, the staff only have to work with the volunteer for half an hour and they're bringing chocolate! Our most successful opportunity to date has been a Valentine-making party. Last year I provided

volunteers with a list of every single individual served by Kerr and they pumped out nearly 700 Valentine's Day cards, individualized for each person. It's been the most successful opportunity (more than 60 people expressed interest in doing it), but also one of the most expensive since we purchased the supplies. This year we asked volunteers from last year to host a Valentine-making party at their home so they do it with their friends and we can have even more people join. They bring their own supplies and we just provide them with the client list."⁴⁹

Skill-based Volunteering

A growing trend in the field of volunteerism is 'skill-based' volunteers. Similar to the idea of lawyers providing pro bono work, skill-based volunteering matches individuals with specific skills in fields like finance, marketing, technology or human resources, with agencies in need of these services. For example, a corporate human resources manager could volunteer his time to a local nonprofit to help them develop their employee policy and procedure manual, or a professional accountant could volunteer her time to helping a non-profit with an audit.⁵⁰ A 2006 Points of Light/Deloitte study revealed that while more than 75% of nonprofit managers believe that skilled volunteers can significantly improve their organizations business practices, only 12% of nonprofits actually use volunteers in those ways.⁵¹ The same study also found that less than 20% of surveyed volunteers said they actually used their skills in volunteer assignments.⁵²

The research seems to indicate that skill-based volunteers are eager and available, but it is up to agencies to decide if they are ready to work with them. Says Susan Ellis:

"People can be asked to donate their professional skills, and they do. Let's say you are a small agency

⁴⁷S. Ellis (personal communication, Aug. 28, 2009).

⁴⁸S. Walko (personal communication, Nov. 5, 2009).

⁴⁹S. Bolson (personal communication, Oct. 21, 2009).

⁵⁰Pfeiffer, S. (2008, April 12). More than a helping hand for charities. *The Boston Globe online*. Retrieved from www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2008/04/12/more_than_a_helping_hand_for_charities/?page=2

⁵¹VolunteerMatch. (2008). *VolunteerMatch at Work March Newsletter*. Retrieved from <http://www.volunteermatch.org/corporations/resources/newsletter.jsp?id=221#4>

⁵²Deloitte/Points of Light. (2008). *Deloitte/Points of Light IMPACT study*. Retrieved from

https://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-UnitedStates/Local%20Assets/Documents/us_pointsoflight_executivesummary.pdf

and you need a new brochure. Recruit a marketing person who does brochure design to sit down with you and advise you, so it's a short-term project. You're asking that person to donate their expertise to help build the capacity of your organization; and capacity-building can also include things like bringing somebody in who does surveying, questionnaires, or who gathers client feedback for you.”⁵³

Skill-based volunteering can be mutually beneficial for volunteers and non-profits—volunteers gain personal satisfaction and often develop new business contacts or resume-building skills, while agencies improve services for clients. But it is important for nonprofits to remember that pro bono volunteers are donating their time just like other volunteers and should be recognized in the same ways. Additionally, agencies should be clear about what they are looking for from pro bono projects, set firm deadlines and provide feedback.⁵⁴

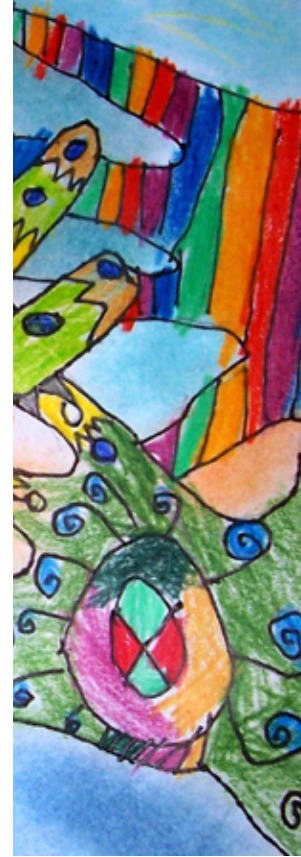
Several New England organizations are actively involved in providing skill-based volunteers. Harvard Business School has a program called Community Action Partners that pairs Harvard alumni with nonprofits in need of business consulting; Executive Service Corps of New England matches senior executives and professionals with nonprofit organizations needing affordable management consulting; and community organizations receive pro bono work from architects, urban planners, and interior designers through Community Design Resource Center of Boston.⁵⁵ Websites like Smart Volunteer and Common Impact also facilitate skill-based volunteering.⁵⁶ SmartVolunteer is geared toward individual volunteers and has a database of volunteer opportunities submitted by nonprofit organizations around the country, while Common Impact consults with nonprofits, assesses their volunteer needs and matches them with corporate volunteer programs.⁵⁷

Volunteer Lobbyists

Nonprofit organizations generally aren't very successful at lobbying their state and federal governments for legislative changes or extra funding. That's understandable; untangling the nuances of fast-changing and competing bills requires time and expertise that many agencies feel they simply don't have. Thus, lobbying done by corporations and industries motivates most legislative decisions—including decisions affecting the nonprofit sector.⁵⁸ A small percentage of nonprofits do hire lobbyists, but the costs can be prohibitive, so instead, some agencies use professional lobbyists who volunteer to work on their behalf. Pro bono lobbyists have secured funding for substance abuse treatment; won Congressional support for programs providing extracurricular activities for the children of active-duty military personnel; and helped asylum-seekers secure citizenship.⁵⁹

With proper training and supervision, citizen lobbyists are a good alternative for agencies that can't afford professionals, or that are concerned about staying within federal limits on the amount of money they can spend on lobbying. Says Michael S. Duncan in *Volunteer Lobbyists: Utilizing Nonprofits' Advocacy Assets*,

“Once an organization decides to use volunteer lobbyists they should assign a staff member (or a dedicated and capable volunteer) to be the lobby team manager and recruit members for the team. Recruitment mailings can be sent to local agency supporters and followed up with interviews to screen potential lobbying volunteers. In both the



‘Let’s say you are a small agency and you need a new brochure. Recruit a marketing person who does brochure design to sit down with you and advise you’

⁵³S. Ellis (personal communication, Aug. 28, 2009).

⁵⁴Cravens, J. (n.d.). Pro Bono/In-Kind/Donated Services for Mission-Based Organizations When, Why & How? *Energize, Inc.* Retrieved from <http://www.energizeinc.com/art/donser.html>

⁵⁵Pfeiffer, S. (2008, April 12). More than a helping hand for charities. *The Boston Globe Online*. Retrieved from http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2008/04/12/more_than_a_helping_hand_for_charities/?page=1

⁵⁶SmartVolunteer. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.smartvolunteer.org/UI/NonMembers/AboutUs.aspx>

⁵⁷Common Impact. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.commonimpact.org/nonprofits/services>

⁵⁸Nelson, F., Brady, D., & Snibbe, A. (2007). Learn to love lobbying. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Retrieved from http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/learn_to_love_lobbying/

⁵⁹Lerer, L. (2007, July 16). Lobbyists feel good by doing good. *Politico*. Retrieved from <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0707/4968.html>



‘The lobby team manager should ask about any prior personal relationships the prospective volunteer may have had with a legislator which could be helpful’

mailings and the interviews, the lobby team manager should ask about any prior personal relationships the prospective volunteer may have had with a legislator which could be helpful (or detrimental), as well as past experience lobbying legislators. Once the volunteer lobbying team has been selected, the lobby team manager should disseminate biographical, professional and contact information about the legislators to each team member who then begins establishing a personal relationship with their legislator through letter-writing campaigns, phone calls and meetings The lobby team manager should consistently update volunteers on the progress of their legislative lobbying and the organization should remember to recognize its volunteer lobbyists.”⁶⁰

Large organizations like Planned Parenthood, Amnesty International and AARP use volunteers as advocates for legislative change, but smaller nonprofits can also effectively utilize volunteer lobbyists. Strengthen Our Sisters, a domestic violence center in New Jersey, recruits volunteers as “legislative liaisons” to legislators working on bills that protect families and nonprofit organizations.⁶¹ The AIDS Policy Project, a Philadelphia

and San Francisco-based advocacy organization, uses volunteers as lobbyists to write editorials and letters to the editor, and to lobby legislators about HIV and AIDS-related issues.⁶² And in the New York chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, a volunteer Government Relations Committee conducts letter- and email-writing campaigns and attends meetings with legislators to increase their awareness of MS advocacy, policy, and legislative issues.⁶³

⁶⁰Duncan, M. (2003). *Volunteer Lobbyists: Utilizing Nonprofits' Advocacy Assets*. ServiceLeader. Retrieved from <http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/rgk/serviceleader/instructors/studentpaper10.php>

⁶¹Strengthen Our Sisters. (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.strengthenoursisters.org/volunteer.html>

⁶²AIDS Policy Project. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.aidspolicyproject.org/ideas/index.html>

⁶³National Multiple Sclerosis Society New York Chapter. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.nationalmssociety.org/chapters/NYN/Volunteer/index.aspx>

SPECIAL VOLUNTEER GROUPS

One-time Volunteers

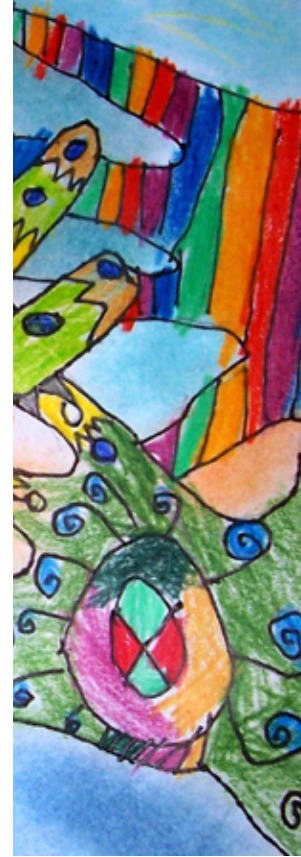
Increasingly, volunteer managers say they find it easier to recruit people for one-time or episodic volunteer opportunities than for ongoing commitments. In fact, a recent Points of Light Foundation survey of more than 15,000 volunteerism professionals asked respondents to rank important changes to the field of volunteerism and the trend toward episodic volunteering was the most frequently mentioned one.⁶⁴ According to a 2010 AARP report, the overall amount of time that individuals spend volunteering has declined over the past five years due to the recent preference for episodic work.⁶⁵

Some critics of one-time volunteering argue that volunteers can't be expected to make much difference with such short-term bursts of work, and that promoting such opportunities may do lasting damage to volunteerism itself. They say that the field has worked hard to convince the public that long-term commitment is necessary to make real social progress, and that the new one-time volunteering trend merely panders to the popular notion that individuals are too busy to make meaningful contributions.⁶⁶ Yet proponents suggest that episodic volunteers wouldn't give any time at all if not for short-term opportunities. Thus agencies should embrace such volunteers rather than pushing them toward longer-term commitments or turning them away. One recent Australian study on episodic volunteering found that episodic volunteers were flexible, giving time when they had it; occasionally they were even willing to take on long-term assignments. The authors also found that when it came to the challenge of retention, short-term volunteers responded positively to being personally asked to serve again. Like other volunteers, they also wanted to be recognized for their efforts and feel like they made a difference.⁶⁷

In any case, it seems clear that at least some short-term or one-time volunteers can indeed be useful resources for nonprofits. Among other things, short-term service can lead, like other kinds of volunteerism, to an increase in contributions.⁶⁸ Stephanie Bolson at Albertina Kerr Centers says she's begun to tailor activities with just this sort of volunteer in mind:

"Group and one-time volunteering is very popular right now, so we have at least one one-time group volunteer activity each month. January's activity was a 'new start' opportunity. A lot of Kerr youth are aging out of group homes, and there is a need to prepare them for independent living. So, we have professionals come in to help the youth practice interviewing, fill out applications, and make résumés. Volunteers come in, we set up mock interviews and the youth bring their applications and really dress the part. It's a skill that a professional can provide just one time and really feel like they're making a direct impact. Another one-time opportunity is with our group homes, which have a lot of wear and tear. Volunteers come and we don't ask the staff to supervise them—the facilities staff do it—and work on painting. It's a great group project; volunteers love labor-oriented opportunities. There are also a lot of local events here—an air show, a golf tournament—that are geared toward providing funding for children's nonprofits. I approach the people running the events and say, my organization will provide you with the volunteers you need if we get a portion of your proceeds in return. These are always really great opportunities for volunteers, because they get to participate in the event and feel like their contribution is going to financially benefit both agencies."⁶⁹

Critics of one-time volunteering argue that such volunteers can't be expected to make much difference



⁶⁴Points of Light Foundation. (2004, June). The changing nature of the volunteering field. *Observations from the Volunteering Front Line*. Retrieved from <http://archive.pointsoflight.org/downloads/pdf/resources/research/Frontline1.pdf>

⁶⁵Williams, A., Fries, J., Koppen, J., & Prisuta, R. (2010). Connecting and giving: A report on how mid-life and older Americans spend their time, make connections and build communities. *AARP Knowledge Management*. Retrieved from http://www.aarp.org/research/surveys/life/lifestyle/volunteer/articles/connecting_giving.html

⁶⁶Ellis, S. (2009). *Days, Hours and Minutes of Service: Enough is Enough!* Energize, Inc. Retrieved from <http://www.energizeinc.com/hot/2009/09jun.html>

⁶⁷Bryen, L., & Madden, K. (2006). Bounce-back of episodic volunteers: What makes episodic volunteers return? *The Centre of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies*. Retrieved from http://eprints.qut.edu.au/4450/1/CPNS_Working_Paper_No_32.pdf

⁶⁸Fidelity Investments. (2009). *Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund and VolunteerMatch Form Alliance and Release Landmark Study on Volunteering*. Retrieved from <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20091203005609/en/Fidelity%20AE-Charitable-Gift-Fund-VolunteerMatch-Form-Alliance>

⁶⁹S. Bolson (personal communication, Oct. 21, 2009).



The second most-popular activity for boomers, after volunteering with a religious organization, was volunteering for educational or youth-service organizations

Because one-time volunteers may not have established relationships with a specific organization or staff person, it's important to make sure that logistical details are clearly communicated with volunteers. For example, agencies may want to send out written directions to the agency, give a phone number for volunteers to call in case they need to cancel (with 24 hours notice, for example) and set the start time of a volunteer activity a half hour early to allow for mini-orientation on the same day.⁷⁰ Finding a way to capture contact information and get feedback from one-time or episodic volunteers can also help agencies determine whether some volunteers may be interested in longer-term commitments in the future. And since agencies will likely not put the same resources into volunteer recognition for one-timers, making

volunteer opportunities fun and engaging and thanking people on the spot is key.

Baby Boomer Volunteers

The numbers are impressive: approximately one-third of all baby boomers volunteered in 2005. Boomers have the highest volunteer rate of any age group and the number of volunteers aged 65+ is expected to increase from nearly 9 million in 2007 to approximately 13 million by 2020.⁷¹ Furthermore, boomers seem to make dedicated volunteers. A 2007 report by the Corporation for National and Community Service showed that boomer volunteers who were actively recruited by nonprofits had the highest rates of retention (approximately 70%), and that the more hours a boomer volunteer gave in the first year, the more likely he or she was to volunteer a second year.⁷² The research also showed that the second most-popular activity for boomers, after volunteering with a religious organization, was volunteering for educational or youth-service organizations.⁷³

A comprehensive 2004 Harvard School of Public Health report, *Reinventing Aging: Baby Boomers and Civic Engagement*, also examined boomers and volunteerism. One of the most relevant findings for youth-serving agencies is that boomers are increasingly interested in intergenerational volunteering activities, which studies show benefits both youth and adults.⁷⁴ Additional research indicates that agencies are most successful with boomer volunteers when they treat them as part of their regular staff; provide a variety of opportunities, including one-time and ongoing jobs; offer incentives such as social interaction, advancement and public recognition; and ensure that volunteers are well-trained, organized, and managed. Boomers want their time and skills to be valued and appreciated.⁷⁵

Singles Volunteers

Another recent volunteering trend is the marketing of volunteer opportunities as singles events. Several singles volunteering websites have emerged in recent years, including Single Volunteers, Inc., which has a number of chapters around the country.⁷⁶ The singles approach emphasizes putting teams of singles together for specific assignments. Agencies also sometimes bring lone-serving volunteers, like adult mentors, together for group events. Volunteer management consultant Sam Elliston has seen such efforts succeed, and says:

“One really successful volunteer opportunity I know of was at an agency where volunteers came once a week and did homework with the kids or played a game or watched a movie. It was very popular for people who were 25-35, and since they were showing up every week, it became a social thing for the adults. It was pretty incredible. Another successful model was with an organization for young people who look like they're going to fall through the cracks, but have the wherewithal to go to college. The agency provides mentors for each child to connect with each week, either with

⁷⁰ *Singles Volunteers, Inc.* (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.singlevolunteers.org/index.shtml>

⁷¹ Foster-Bey, J., Grimm, R., & Dietz, N. (2007). Keeping Baby Boomers Volunteering: A research brief on volunteer retention and turnover. *Corporation for National and Community Service*. Retrieved from http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/07_0307_boomer_report.pdf

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Gerteis, M., Winsten, J., Moses, S., Mendoza, T., & Roberts, M. (2004). Reinventing aging: Baby boomers and civic engagement. *Harvard School of Public Health-MellLife Foundation Initiative on Retirement and Civic Engagement*. Retrieved from <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/chc/reinventingaging/Report.pdf>

⁷⁵ Litch, C. (2007). *Is Your Organization Ready for the Boom?* GuideStar. Retrieved from

<http://www2.guidestar.org/rxa/news/articles/2007/is-your-organization-ready-for-the-boom.aspx?articleId=1171>

⁷⁶ *Singles Volunteers, Inc.* (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.singlevolunteers.org/index.shtml>

activities, or calling, or sometimes just texting. Some of the mentors are in their 40's and 50's, but a lot are young professionals. They also do group activities like going to a ballgame or to the circus, so they can be with their young person, but also be with other volunteers. Again, it becomes a social thing for the adults, and that aspect seems to be very successful."⁷⁷

The guidelines put forth by Single Volunteers chapters may offer some practical advice for agencies wishing to attract this type of volunteer. According to SingleVolunteers.org, it should be made clear to participants that the program is not a dating service but rather is about volunteering for a good cause with a group of like-minded singles. Volunteer opportunities geared for singles should be group activities, with a minimum of twelve people working together as a team for any given task (an ideal project would be building a playground or painting a building, or any other activity where team members can chat while working). Agencies that arrange volunteer crews through a service like Single Volunteers, Inc., should expect to get mostly one-time or episodic volunteers because there is no guarantee the group will send the same crew to subsequent events. Another aspect to bear in mind is that singles volunteering events may be best if scheduled during what are typically social times for single people; in other words, evenings, nights or weekends. Making an effort to balance singles volunteer crews by gender is also important to ensure singles enjoy the experience. Depending on the volunteer task, some groups even target singles in specific age ranges.⁷⁸

AmeriCorps Volunteers

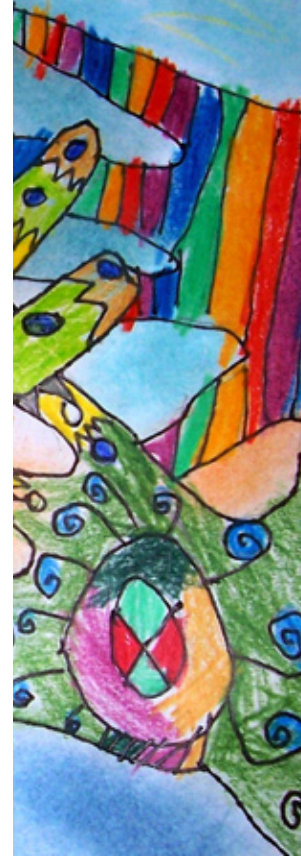
Another special group of volunteers is AmeriCorps members, who serve as tutors and mentors, health care advocates, after-school program managers, volunteer managers, and in countless other roles. Agencies apply for and are awarded AmeriCorps grants and are then responsible for recruiting AmeriCorps volunteers to serve in their organization for a set term, usually of one year.

AmeriCorps members receive training support from the Corporation for National and Community Service and work as full-or part-time staff at a nonprofit in return for small stipends or educational awards. While AmeriCorps grants partially cover the expense of operating the program, they do not cover general organizational costs, and agencies must match the grant funding they receive for AmeriCorps volunteers.⁷⁹

As noted, AmeriCorps volunteers work in many capacities, including helping agencies institutionalize their own volunteer programs. Kari Lensing, from Youth Villages at Inner Harbour in Georgia, says that AmeriCorps volunteers have been instrumental in expanding and improving her agency's volunteer program:

“We were granted a stimulus package grant and we have four AmeriCorps members with us. They aren't staff, but they are here to help create this volunteer program. [To create our volunteer program] we recruited a staff member to be a volunteer liaison in each of our programs, then met with each liaison to find out what they liked and disliked about volunteers, and what they wanted and needed from the volunteer program. Using their feedback, we came up with volunteer positions and wrote descriptions for each one. Next, we developed a training manual, which we based on a manual from an agency similar to ours. We also have a volunteer handbook, which has in-depth position descriptions and resources. For instance, if you're a mentor, there are many types of resources for mentors. Another part of the handbook describes the types of kids we work with and ways to work with them. We also came up with a flowchart for what steps should be followed when we have a new volunteer, including things like form

‘The AmeriCorps volunteers helped create this whole model and it has come so far because we have so many people working intensively on it’



⁷⁷S. Elliston (personal communication, Sept. 4, 2009).

⁷⁸Single Volunteers, Inc. (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.singlevolunteers.org/index.shtml>

⁷⁹Corporation for National and Community Service. (n.d.). *How Can AmeriCorps Help Our Organization?* Retrieved from http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/how/index.asp



emails so the look of the program is the same. The AmeriCorps volunteers helped create this whole model and it has come so far because we have so many people working intensively on it.”⁸⁰

Another group that works with AmeriCorps members is the Sea Mar Community Health Centers, a network of health centers in Washington State. AmeriCorps volunteers serve as pediatric literacy coordinators as well as diabetes management and tobacco cessation educators. Volunteers work as life-skills trainers in public schools focusing on building self-esteem, alcohol and drug use prevention, communication skills, anger and stress management, and as arts educators in youth residential treatment facilities. Sea Mar also uses an AmeriCorps

volunteer as its volunteer coordinator, performing outreach, recruitment, and placements, and organizing volunteer appreciation events.⁸¹

Faith-based Volunteers

A 2004 Urban Institute report on the state of volunteer management in United States charities found that nonprofits with ties to religious organizations reported significantly greater benefits from their

volunteers than nonprofits without these ties.⁸²

And indeed churches, synagogues and other religious organizations can be excellent recruitment locations for volunteers, with some caveats for nonprofits. Susan Ellis recommends that agencies be realistic and organized in their approach to faith-based organizations:

“Most faith communities are struggling themselves to have people be active in the life of their congregation, so when an agency comes in and says, help us, they’re diverting them. If an agency doesn’t have a volunteer coordinator, and goes to a faith community and asks for help, I’m not

surprised that nothing is happening. They’re asking that faith community to do the whole project—figure it out, recruit people, and there’s really no support from the organization. If you want to involve a faith community, what you can say is, ‘We would like to have an activity every Sunday afternoon; would you adopt one Sunday afternoon?’ [Perhaps it] could be a Sunday school project, so you’re giving them something that they can integrate into something they’re already doing. If they can double up and have a good Sunday school program and do something for you, that becomes appealing. Similarly, an agency can say, ‘We would like to do something special for the members of your congregation who have just had kids go away to college and may be at a point in their lives where they might want to do something with youth.’ So you’re giving them an angle that meets their needs as a faith community as well as your needs.”⁸³

Volunteer consultant Sam Elliston, who manages a large volunteer program in her own church, recommends that agencies be proactive and creative when approaching faith-based organizations:

“If there is a church on the corner, go to your donor list and see if any of them go to that church. Or go to the church for a couple of Sundays and see if there is anyone you know, because that person will be a much more influential spokesperson for you. The most powerful recruitment tool an agency has with a church is to have someone in the congregation talk about his or her experience volunteering with the organization. An agency can set up a display after a service, or put opportunities in the church bulletin, but that’s only useful if it’s mentioned during the service. Sometimes churches have specific missions, so a volunteer project that is connected to a mission might be more successful. An organization needs to go to a church and say, ‘Here’s what we do; can we find a way to work together?’ If they come in saying, ‘Help us, what can you give us?’ it’s not going to work. Organizations should make opportunities available to groups if possible, so four or five people can show up and help together.

⁸⁰K. Lensing (personal communication, Oct. 26, 2009).

⁸¹Sea Mar Community Health Center. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.seamar.org/volunteers/AmeriCorps/positiondescriptions.html>

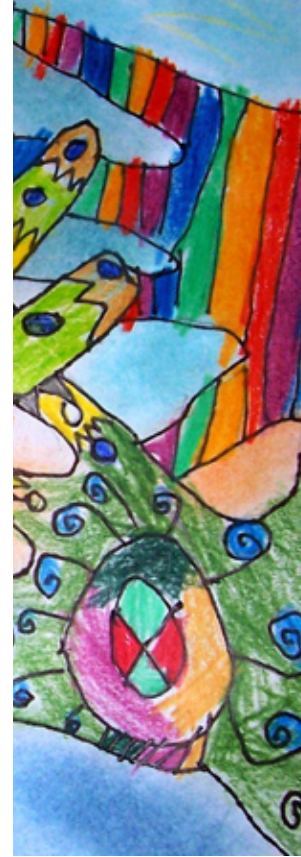
⁸²Urban Institute. (2004). *Volunteer Management Capacity in America’s Charities and Congregations: A Briefing Report*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/410963_VolunteerManagement.pdf

⁸³S. Ellis (personal communication, Aug. 28, 2009).

Also, if the young people from an agency come and do service at the church, the church will be appreciative and that's how you start to build a relationship."⁸⁴

Stephanie Bolson at Kerr points out that faith-based organizations can contribute in other ways as well:

"I've noticed that faith communities are really driven to do supply drives, [for clothes, food, school supplies, household goods, etc.] because there's no up-front cost for them. I provide them with a barrel and the promotional materials and people drop things off. It has been very successful for us."⁸⁵



‘Faith communities are really driven to do supply drives, because there’s no up-front cost for them. I provide them with a barrel and the promotional materials and people drop things off’

⁸⁴S. Elliston (personal communication, Sept. 4, 2009).

⁸⁵S. Bolson (personal communication, Oct. 21, 2009).



MANAGING VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

The research is clear and the experts concur—if an agency wants to have a successful volunteer program, someone must manage it. But this poses a challenge for agencies with limited budgets and already-overwhelmed staff. Fortunately, there are options for agencies looking for alternatives to hiring full-time volunteer coordinators. As discussed earlier, many agencies bring in AmeriCorps members to manage their volunteer programs. Sam Elliston points out that AmeriCorps volunteers aren't permanent staff, however, and suggests an alternative:

“An organization I worked for had a board member who was really committed [to the idea of having volunteers] and paid for the agency to consult with someone to design a strategy. Then she went out and did a fund-raiser to fund the position. That's pretty unusual, but it doesn't hurt to have a volunteer involved in the development of the opportunities. There are usually one or two board members who are really committed to having a volunteer program, and a good development director can work with them to develop a position. [If an agency can find funding for it], I advocate for a new part-time position, rather than adding it to someone who is already working there. And if it's part-time then they [don't have to pay] benefits.”⁸⁶

Susan Ellis also has recommendations for agencies that cannot afford to fund a full-time volunteer coordinator.

“Not every agency is large enough to warrant full-time staff on this, so there are possibilities. There is a model whereby a few small organiza-

tions in the same geographic area and with some commonalities might be able to jointly hire someone who can run a volunteer program. There is room for it, particularly with smaller organizations, and in rural communities. They could do joint recruiting, things like that. Let's say it's one person for three agencies, perhaps someone is on-site one day at one agency, and another day at another place. There would still need to be someone to be in charge of the volunteers when the coordinator isn't there. Places like residential centers that are staffed 24 hours a day sometimes want volunteers in the evening, when the person who coordinates volunteers isn't around. In that case, what works is to have a volunteer who is the shift leader who everybody knows is the person who takes questions and reports to the volunteer coordinator. Nevertheless, the [volunteer coordinator] needs to be part of the team at all three agencies. If they are seen as an outsider it won't work, because they need to be involved in the discussion of why volunteers are involved at the agency.”⁸⁷

Another option is the regional volunteer coordinator model utilized by organizations such as ACT Volunteer Center, a full-service volunteer center in western Massachusetts. The ACT Center is a partner program of DIAL/SELF Youth and Community Services, a community-based nonprofit that fosters youth empowerment and promotes community service.⁸⁸ David Voegelé, executive director of DIAL/SELF, says ACT connects volunteers with 250 organizations in the region.

“The volunteer coordinators send us their opportunities to publicize, so we have the most extensive database of volunteer opportunities in the area. We do a lot of volunteer recruitment—grassroots marketing with flyers, we use listservs, and people go to our website because we are the only volunteer center for the region. We now have a database of close to 1,000 volunteers in our

‘There is a model whereby a few small organizations in the same geographic area and with some commonalities might be able to jointly hire someone who can run a volunteer program’

⁸⁶S. Elliston (personal communication, Sept. 4, 2009).

⁸⁷S. Ellis (personal communication, Aug. 28, 2009).

⁸⁸D. Voegelé (personal communication, Feb. 22, 2010).

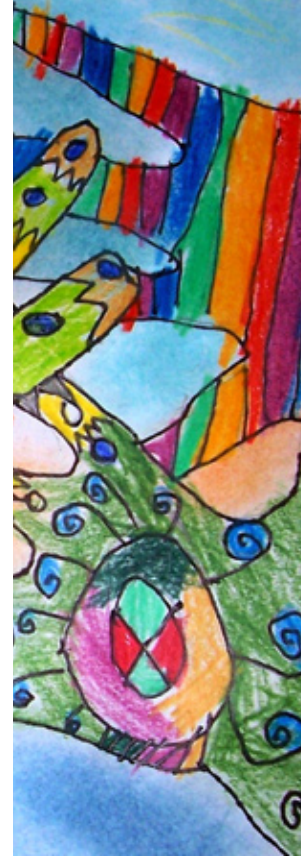
system. Potential volunteers contact us, and we do a brief, general screening and discuss what particular opportunities they are interested in. We talk about their skills, their needs, and see if it's an appropriate match. For example, if they want to volunteer as a grantwriter, we want to know what experience they've had doing that work, and if they haven't had any, then we suggest a different opportunity. We refer them to the volunteer opportunities that are the most relevant for their experience. We do the initial screening and refer them to the agencies, who do the additional work of determining if a person is an appropriate match. We follow up and track our placements and are also available to organizations if problem-solving is needed.”⁸⁹

As noted earlier, another volunteer management alternative is to use a volunteer to coordinate other volunteers. That arrangement is inexpensive, but unless a single volunteer has large chunks of time to give, it can be impractical. Says Susan Ellis:

“You can find somebody who has the skills, but I can't think of an organization that only needs a volunteer coordinator two hours a week, so you're going to have eight people job-share being the coordinator of volunteers. It's not a matter of whether or not unpaid people can do it; it's a matter of time available.”⁹⁰

A few of the agencies described in this report have addressed the problem by breaking their volunteer management duties among several staffers. For example, the Women's Center in North Carolina has written into each department head's job description that he or she will manage the volunteers working in his or her department. Tarin Washington, director of financial and housing programs, says this approach has been successful. “Each program manager at the Women's Center manages their own volunteers, so we don't just have one volunteer manager. We each recruit and train and supervise our own volunteers. It's been that way for a while and it works really well.”⁹¹

Nyasha Pfukwa at Germaine Lawrence, the adolescent girls' residential center in Massachusetts, said that directing volunteers is also institutionalized into her agency's management structure. “Each one of our dorms has a volunteer coordinator who is also a residential counselor at that dorm,” she said. “It's in their job description to manage the volunteers in their dorm, and then I manage all of the volunteer coordinators.”⁹²



‘We do the initial screening and refer them to the agencies, who do the additional work of determining if a person is an appropriate match. We follow up and track our placements and are also available to organizations if problem-solving is needed’

⁸⁹D. Voegle (personal communication, Feb. 22, 2010).

⁹⁰S. Ellis (personal communication, Aug. 28, 2009).

⁹¹T. Washington (personal communication, Nov. 5, 2009).

⁹²N. Pfukwa (personal communication, Oct. 26, 2009).



RETAINING VOLUNTEERS

Once an agency has recruited volunteers and integrated them into their organization, it may seem like the job is finished, but that's not the case. Retaining volunteers is an ongoing challenge. Recent research from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) revealed just how difficult retention is: of the more than 60 million people who volunteered in 2006, over one-third (more than 21 million people) did not donate any of their time again in 2007.⁹³ The CNCS investigated why volunteers failed to donate time again and found these key explanations: volunteers did not feel their skills were being utilized; were not adequately trained, and/or worked with staff not adequately trained to manage them; and felt like their efforts went unrecognized by the organization.⁹⁴

Another retention method is increasing responsibility as volunteers ask for it—it keeps them keyed in. If they feel like they have a say in how things are going then it's like ownership. Staying in constant communication with volunteers is so important.⁹⁵

'If volunteers have positive experiences they're much more likely to stay. If they don't have that or if it's not there in spades, then I step in and say, How can we make sure this volunteer sticks around?'

Stephanie Bolson says:

“Retaining volunteers is something we're continuously working on. A lot of it has to do with the experience that they have here—if it were up to me, I would thank and hug them every day! But that's not always the case with the staff. It really makes a difference if volunteers have staff who make them feel special and part of the team. If volunteers have positive experiences they're much more likely to stay. If they don't have that or if it's not there in

spades, then I step in and say, 'How can we make sure this volunteer sticks around?' I also check up on volunteers with surveys several times a year. I ask questions like, 'How comfortable are you in your placement, how can we better support your volunteer efforts?' so volunteers feel they are really involved in the decision-making about their roles and responsibilities, which helps them think about the future. Then I follow up with the volunteers.


⁹³Eisner, D., Grimm Jr., R., Maynard, S., & Washburn, S. (2009). The new volunteer workforce. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Retrieved from http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_new_volunteer_workforce

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵S. Bolson, (personal communication, Oct. 21, 2009).

TOOLS

We've seen how agencies around the country are utilizing volunteers, and have heard from experts and professionals in the field regarding the best practices for developing and managing volunteer programs. How can agencies apply these ideas to their own work? How does an organization determine if it is 'volunteer-ready,' and then write a policy manual, job descriptions, screening questions and training curricula to undergird its volunteer program? The following tools can help. Feel free to print them out and use them as templates for developing or expanding your own volunteer program.



How does an organization determine if it is 'volunteer-ready,' and then write a policy manual, job descriptions, screening questions and training curricula to undergird its volunteer program? There are many simple tools that can help



Before Implementing & Designing a Volunteer Program

1. In what areas are volunteers needed?
2. What tasks specifically would volunteers do?
3. What skills are needed for these tasks?
4. What are some of the short-term goals of having a volunteer program?
5. What are some of the long-term goals of having a volunteer program?
6. What would be some of the benefits of volunteering at your agency?
7. Who would coordinate the volunteer program?
8. How much money should be budgeted for the volunteer program?
9. What are some foreseeable problems, and potential solutions?
10. What are your personal feelings about working with volunteers?
11. What do you think are the attitudes of other staff when it comes to working with volunteers?
12. What are some strategies of promoting positive staff/volunteer relationships?

Organizational Volunteer Readiness Assessment

- Why should we involve volunteers?
- How can volunteers help further the mission of our organization?
- What will the future be like because of the volunteer program?
- Where do we need volunteers to serve in our organization?
- What tasks/roles would be good for potential volunteers?
- What skills and knowledge do volunteers need to take on these tasks/roles?
- Is it appropriate for volunteers to do these tasks/roles rather than staff members?
- What meaningful opportunities are there for volunteers to engage in our organization?
- What benefits are there for potential volunteers?
- What benefits are there for the organization to gain from involving volunteers?
- Does the organization have the infrastructure to support and provide guidance to volunteers? Has the organization designated a volunteer management professional to oversee the program? How will volunteers and staff work together?
- What additional staff resources are available to the volunteer program?
- What fiscal resources are available to the volunteer program?
- What are some of the problems one should expect in the future as well as possible solutions to these problems?



Creating Sound Volunteer Program Policies

- All organizations make policy decisions regularly, though they may not call them policies and often do not write them down. Often, writing your policies down has the effect of simply formalizing decisions that have already been made.
- Writing decisions in the form of policies and distributing them to paid and volunteer staff can lend them greater importance and perhaps ensure better compliance.
- Many policies are developed because of crises or problems. When something goes wrong, it becomes apparent that a position or policy is needed, either to decide what to do, or to prevent the situation from recurring. Thus policies determine action and set boundaries beyond which one cannot go.
- Policies clarify responsibilities and define lines of communication and accountability.
- Policies provide a structure for sound management. Since they often identify the ‘what’ and sometimes even the ‘how,’ they can bring about program improvements and increase effectiveness.
- Policies ensure continuity over time and from staff to staff. In this sense, policies endure. They promote equity and standardization.
- Policies establish values, beliefs and directions for volunteer involvement. They connect the volunteer program to the larger organization and its mission.
- Policies can be a source of pride and satisfaction for managers of volunteers in a well-run program. They articulate the importance of volunteers and form an important, concrete, ongoing element of volunteer recognition. Policies thereby contribute to increased volunteer satisfaction and productiveness, and enhance volunteer retention.

Volunteer Policy Manual Outline

The following outline will help your organization organize its volunteer policy manual.

1. Introduction to Agency
 - 1.a: History of agency
 - 1.b: Agency's mission statement
 - 1.c: Purpose of agency
2. Preamble: Volunteer Program
 - 2.a: Purpose of volunteer program
 - 2.b: Definition of a volunteer
 - 2.c: Volunteer rights
 - 2.d: Volunteer involvement
3. Volunteer Recruitment and Placement
 - 3.a: Volunteer recruitment
 - 3.b: Volunteer application process
 - 3.c: Volunteer screening
 - 3.d: Volunteer orientation and training
 - 3.e: Volunteer placement
 - 3.f: Position descriptions
 - 3.g: Maintenance of volunteer records
 - 3.h: Trial period
4. General Policies
 - 4.a: Employees as volunteers
 - 4.b: Confidentiality
 - 4.c: Representation of the agency
 - 4.d: Codes of conduct
 - 4.e: Insurance
 - 4.f: Universal safety precautions
 - 4.g: Smoking
 - 4.h: Drugs and alcohol
5. Specific Policies
 - 5.a: Accidents and injuries
 - 5.b: Illness
 - 5.c: Expenses
 - 5.d: Absenteeism
 - 5.e: Evaluation
 - 5.f: Resignation
 - 5.g: Discipline and dismissal



Volunteer Risk Management

Work Descriptions. Wherever possible, you should develop work descriptions for volunteers. Like a job description, a work description should describe the requirements for the volunteer who will perform the work, and the expectations the nonprofit has for the volunteer. Absent such a work description, it will be difficult to screen, place and evaluate volunteers in a fair, reasonable, and defensible way. Work descriptions are also helpful in establishing statutory immunity under the federal Volunteer Protection Act.

Mandatory Screening. If your organization provides services that brings its employees and volunteers into regular contact with minors, you may be subject to mandatory screening procedures. In the case of programs using federal funds or under federal contracts, criminal background checks for employees and volunteers are mandatory.

Documenting Your Actions. It's hard to overstate the importance of documenting your volunteer screening and placement activities. Keep written records and documents; you must be able to prove later, sometimes years later, that you took these steps.

Education. The most important single technique for nonprofit risk management is education. The nonprofit should provide for the education of the employees and the volunteers who deliver services. Most lawsuits and liability arise from mistakes of ignorance. Develop orientation programs for new employees and new volunteers that include the mission statement, policy, goals, procedures, culture and a thorough discussion of risk management. An increasing number of liability insurance carriers are requiring orientation programs as a condition to issuing an insurance policy. Nonprofits should implement programs that orient, develop, update, and refresh the skills of volunteers. As the laws change or the nonprofit enters new areas of activity, or simply because of the passage of time, continuing education programs should address and expand the knowledge of volunteers. By assuring that a volunteer not only has skills but refreshes and refines those skills, you help assure the volunteer's abilities and commitment, all of which reduce the chance of a claim being brought.

Insurance. Remember that insurance is just one form of risk management. All the insurance in the world will not protect you from intentional actions, and every insurance policy limits its coverage. Furthermore, insurance is expensive for the kinds of risks that will concern you most. Therefore it is imperative that you consult a competent insurance agent for advice on what coverage you need for your particular situation.

Myths About Nonprofit Liability and Risk Management

Myth #1 — Buying insurance is practicing risk management

For many nonprofits, insurance is a critical component of a risk management program, but buying insurance is no substitute for engaging in the practice of risk management. Risk management incorporates strategies and techniques for recognizing and confronting any threat or danger that may cause harm and hinder the organization from fulfilling its mission. When losses do occur, organizations must pay for them somehow. Insurance is one of many methods available for financing losses. However, insurance does nothing to prevent a loss from occurring. The least costly accident in terms of time, money, and morale is the one that never happens. Any misstep — an auto accident, the abuse of a service recipient, theft of the agency's funds by an employee or volunteer, or other event that brings negative attention to the organization — can have a lasting impact on an organization's ability to fulfill its mission. The success of most nonprofits depends on the support of the public (donors, members, volunteers), and risk management is an effective way to help maintain the public trust.

Myth #2 — Lawsuits against nonprofits are common

A popular belief is that the legal system is running amok. Sometimes it seems that everybody's suing somebody and that multi-million dollar awards are common. The facts reflect a different reality. According to a 1988 study by the Insurance Services Office, lawsuits represent less than a third of total liability claims. Approximately 32 percent of all liability claims involve a lawsuit, and only 2 percent of all claims are settled by a jury or judicial verdict. Also, consider the 80-20 business rule. For an insurance company, the 80-20 rule holds that 80 percent of its losses come from 20 percent of policyholders. In the nonprofit sector, this means that up to 80 percent of all organizations may never suffer a loss. Unfortunately, no organization knows whether it will be a part of the 20 percent that has a claim. And although lawsuits are not very common, when they do occur, they can be devastating to an organization's finances and credibility. One way to reduce the chance of being sued is to recognize and manage your organization's risks. When organizations strive to protect their people and conserve their resources, they also reduce their chance of being on the wrong side of the 80-20 rule.

Myth #3 — Volunteers are more likely to suffer injuries than clients or employees

Anecdotal evidence suggests that volunteer injuries are infrequent and minor, and that volunteers don't appear to get hurt any more often or severely than actual employees. The low cost of volunteer accident insurance supports this premise. The perception of a high accident rate may exist because the number of volunteer claims against nonprofits may be higher than employee claims; but since the number of volunteers greatly exceeds the number of regular staff at many nonprofits, a lopsided number of claims is to be expected. So while any volunteer can suffer a debilitating or permanent injury while performing his or her volunteer activities, a greater risk may be that the volunteer harms another person, such as another volunteer, an employee, or a client. In fact, the risk of client injuries requires greater vigilance than the possibility of injuries to volunteers. Of course, nonprofits can be held liable if they are deemed negligent in an injury to a client, and claims arising from such circumstances can be very costly. Therefore, it is important to keep the risk associated with injury to volunteers in perspective.



Myth #4 — A “hands-off” approach to managing volunteers provides the best protection against liability

The basis of this myth is, first, the belief that a nonprofit organization is not responsible or liable for the actions of its volunteers, and second, that by managing its volunteers, an organization accepts responsibility for their actions. Like all myths, these beliefs contain a grain of truth. Under the legal theory of vicarious liability, nonprofits can be found responsible for the actions of a volunteer (or employee) acting within the scope of his or her duties, even if the nonprofit is faultless. The courts and society justify vicarious liability on the grounds that the entity that directs and benefits from an individual’s actions should bear the costs of any resultant harm. The legal doctrine is *respondeat superior* (“the master will respond”). The doctrine provides that if a “servant” acts negligently and causes some damage while performing his or her assigned work, the “master” is legally liable for that damage. Society imposes the liability whether or not the “master” was negligent or at fault in any way. In order to determine (a) if a “master-servant” relationship existed and (b) if the servant’s negligence caused the harm, the courts consider the following factors:

- the degree of control the organization can exercise (whether it exercises this control or not) over the volunteer;
- the scope of the volunteer’s position; and
- the benefit the organization derives from the volunteer’s services.

Whenever a volunteer is deemed to be a “servant,” the nonprofit will be vicariously liable for his or her actions. But a hands-off management approach does not nullify the “master-servant” relationship. If anything, the doctrine of *respondeat superior* underscores the need for the organization to oversee and manage the work of volunteers in order to reduce the chance of a serious incident ever occurring.

Targeted and Non-targeted Volunteer Recruitment Strategies

There are two basic recruitment strategies: the targeted and non-targeted methods. Non-targeted recruitment is a mass appeal for any type of person who is available, and is generally most effective for jobs that require little skill, such as special events, house painting or park clean-up. Most volunteer programs need a more sophisticated approach that involves recruiting people who have a specific interest in the work of the agency and have the skills to perform a specific job needed by the agency. This is called targeted recruitment.

Non-Targeted Recruitment

Consider these recruitment methods:

- Ask people to volunteer. It sounds obvious, but in fact many nonprofits never take this one simple step. And in surveys, people say they don't volunteer simply because no one asks.
- Place a newspaper or website ad.
- Create a public service announcement.
- Get media coverage of your volunteers or volunteer program.
- Post flyers with a general message to distribute at supermarkets, senior centers or schools.
- Put requests in church bulletins and company or organizational newsletters.
- Speak at community organizations or volunteer fairs.
- Contact college or university departments about internship programs.
- Ask current volunteers, staff and board members to spread the word.
- Register with online volunteer databases, local volunteer centers, corporate volunteer councils, Junior League, Executive Service Corps or school community service programs.

Targeted Recruitment

Before designing an effective targeted recruitment campaign, ask these questions:

- Who might want to do the job and have the skills?
- What is their age and income range, gender, or personal situation?
- Where do they live, work, shop, play or socialize?
- Why would someone like this want to volunteer? Understanding motivation is key to developing an effective message. What message would motivate your target audience? How should that message be delivered?
- How would such a person benefit from doing the job?
- Why is this job important? What kind of impact can a volunteer make?



Tips for Using Online Recruitment

- Do not recruit volunteers online (or offline, for that matter) until you have well-defined, written opportunity descriptions, and you have an immediate next step for people who call or e-mail about these opportunities (a date for a face-to-face meeting or orientation, for instance, even if it is several weeks away). Asking for volunteers but not responding to them immediately or not having a method to immediately place them into your volunteer program is like advertising a product you don't really have, and it can cause hard feelings about your agency on the part of potential supporters.
- If your organization cannot or does not answer e-mail within 48 hours of receipt (two business days), don't include your e-mail address as a way for potential volunteers to contact you. Instead, in your online announcements, direct volunteers to call. Researchers recount many stories of people who read about an agency's volunteer opportunities online and e-mailed their interest in helping; these potential volunteers were never contacted, and after weeks of waiting, went on to other volunteer assignments with bad feelings toward the original agency they had wanted to assist.
- Make sure those who answer your agency's phone know you are posting information to the Internet, in case there is an increase in phone calls regarding volunteer opportunities or calls about "that e-mail you posted."
- Do include the organization's name, physical address, phone number, e-mail address (if this is an acceptable way for potential volunteers to contact you), and Web address (if you have one) in online ads.
- Provide information about specific volunteer opportunities (an overview of the kinds of service opportunities available will do).
- Provide information that will educate potential volunteers about the organization's mission, program focus, and value to the community, as well as the value of volunteers to this organization.

How to Interview Potential Volunteers

- Thank the applicant for his or her interest in your organization.
- Let the applicant know the purpose of the interview and the topics to be covered.
- Provide a brief background of your organization.
- Clarify information from the application and let the applicant discuss his or her background.
- Explain your organization's expectations of volunteers (some of this discussion may need to occur after you've identified the specific position for the prospect).
- Ask about the applicant's interests and aspirations in volunteering.
- Ask about the necessary skills needed for the position.
- Ask the applicant any questions that will help you make an appropriate placement.
- Ask the applicant about any activities in which he or she would not like to be involved (e.g., public speaking).
- Ask the applicant if he or she has any questions or concerns.
- Agree on the next steps (e.g., review credentials and references and call back).

Sample Interview Questions

- What would you like to know about our organization?
- What attracted you to our organization?
- What types of work have you done before? What did you like best about it?
- What type of experience have you had that would help you contribute here?
- How do you deal with situations that don't go as planned?
- Would you rather work on your own, with a group, or with a partner? Why?

Adapted with permission. (2005). *Successful Strategies for Recruiting, Training and Utilizing Volunteers: A Guide for Community and Faith-Based Service Providers*, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. Retrieved from http://www.samhsa.gov/FBCI/Volunteer_handbook.pdf

Sample Volunteer Application

Full name: _____ Birth date: _____

Phone Number: (Home) _____
(Work) _____ May we phone you at work? _____

Mailing Address (including postal code): _____

Email: _____

What is your education background?

What is your employment history?

Have you had any other experience as a volunteer? If so, where and what did you do?

Why, at this particular time in your life, have you chosen to volunteer with our organization?

What do you hope to gain from being a volunteer?

What clubs, organizations, or associations are you involved with?

What are your hobbies and interests?

What life experiences have you had that might be useful to you working here?

What would you say are your strengths? What would you say are your weaknesses?

Do you anticipate any changes in your residence, business or domestic situation in the next year that would affect your volunteer commitment? If yes, please explain.

On average, how many hours could you commit each week? Are there any days/time slots that you prefer to volunteer?

Do you speak any languages other than English? If yes, please specify.

Do you have access to a car?

A security check is required for all volunteers. This involves a check of police records. Would you be willing to have a security check completed?

Is there any other information that you would like to provide?

Volunteer Interview Record

Potential Volunteer's Name: _____ Contact Information: _____

Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

Why are you interested in volunteering with our agency?

What are you looking for in a volunteer experience?

Previous volunteer experiences (where, when, and doing what?).

What were your reasons for leaving?

What are your interests, hobbies?

Special skills, qualifications?

What would you enjoy doing most in a volunteer capacity?

What would you enjoy doing least?

What is your preferred work style?

What would you say are your strengths?

What would you say are your weaknesses?

Do you have any limitations?

What is your availability?





Background Screening of Volunteers

Criminal Background Check Options

Fingerprint-based Checks. Fingerprints are the only absolutely certain way to verify a person's identity, and to ensure that the criminal records found are matched to the right person. SafetyNET, at (<http://apps.mentoring.org/safetynet/>) is a fingerprint-based search of the FBI's nationwide criminal database.

State Background Checks. These background checks are obtained through a state agency (the relevant agency varies from state to state). These checks will uncover only crimes committed within that state. Costs and response times vary widely from state to state. Some states do allow fingerprint-based checks, some only allow name-based checks, and some offer both types for different fees. Most state checks include an arrest record, but a few include only convictions.

FBI Checks. The FBI maintains the most complete criminal database in the United States. All records are fingerprint-based. The database is made up of all federal crimes plus approximately 70 to 90 percent of each state's criminal databases. Low-level misdemeanors and citations are generally not included in the FBI database. Therefore, programs that use an FBI check may wish to supplement it with a driver's license check or a state background check to access such information. To obtain an FBI check, you must go through your state background check agency. Many states have strict eligibility requirements for FBI checks, and when they are allowed, they may be very costly or have a lengthy turnaround time.

DMV Check. Provides information about an individual's license records, including license convictions, reportable accidents, license expirations, suspensions or revocations, license restorations, DUIs and point/insurance reduction completion. Depending on state rules and regulations the prospective volunteer may need to submit the check instead of the organization. This is particularly important if volunteers will be providing transportation.

State Sex Offender Registries. Most states now maintain online sex offender registries, making it easy to search several states at a time for any given individual. Any crimes serious enough to warrant being put on a state registry show up in a state or FBI criminal background check, but the registries are a good double check. However, because sex offender registries rely on the listed individuals to report their new address every time they move, their information is often dated and they should not be relied upon as a sole source of information about an applicant.

Sample Volunteer Orientation Checklist

- Application form completed
- Introduction to agency: history, mission statement, and future goals
- Agency programs and specific services outlined; referral protocols, etc.
- Discussion of agency's philosophy
- Organizational structure and staff presented
- Introduction to volunteer program: volunteer positions, expectations, procedures and policies
- Specific volunteer duties discussed
- Volunteer records, scheduling, expenses explained
- General policies (confidentiality, in the event of an emergency, etc.) discussed
- "A Typical Day at the Agency" explained
- Tour of facilities
- Instruction on how to use equipment (i.e. phones, faxes, computers, etc.)
- Basic agency information (hours open, parking, where to store belongings, etc.)
- Insurance/liability discussed
- Review/evaluation process
- Review of major points (i.e. confidentiality, scheduling, etc.)
- Sign of confidentiality/volunteer agreement



Key Factors in Retaining Volunteers

Skill Development. Some volunteers want to bring their expertise, whether it is their marketing background or people skills. Others may volunteer to enhance certain skills, maintain ones they already possess, or learn something new. It is crucial to gather information from a newly recruited volunteer. Find out not only his/her current skills but also what skills he/she wishes to develop through volunteer activities. This is a valuable means of evaluating the tasks that should be assigned to maximize retention.

Personal Growth. Many volunteers come to an organization hoping to expand their horizons. Some feel that their volunteer experience will help them advance in their careers. Others want to use their volunteer service as a way to cultivate new interests. Others will use their volunteering to aid them in making career or education choices.

Challenge. Volunteers enjoy challenging tasks and look for chances to step up to the next level. If this sense of challenge is lacking, volunteers often leave an organization. Make sure you give your volunteers some interesting, challenging activities along with more “routine” assignments.

Contact with Clients. Some of the most rewarding work for volunteers can be direct contact with the individuals an organization serves. They can see the direct benefits of their work in their role as a mentor or helper. Sometimes a volunteer’s greatest motivation to continue his or her service is a heartfelt “thank you” from a client.

Recognition of Service. Another integral part of volunteer retention is recognizing and appreciating the time and effort volunteers bring to your organization. Emphasize to volunteers the importance of their contributions; volunteers who stay are the ones who feel they are making a significant impact. It is important not only to recognize volunteers within an organization but also to promote their accomplishments in the community. You can use the same methods you already use to publicize programs to acknowledge volunteers’ work and accomplishments. You can ask volunteers if they would also like their employers to be made aware of their volunteer efforts.

Rewards. Even though volunteers are not compensated monetarily, your organization should reward them in other ways. Effective rewards can include things like reserving parking spaces for volunteers or giving them their own desks or workspaces. As far as actual tasks are concerned, volunteer jobs can be designed in hierarchical levels, allowing a volunteer to advance over time and acquire a higher “job status.” Within each level, an organization can allow for increases in self-direction and decision-making. Not only will the added responsibilities make the volunteer feel “promoted” but he or she will also feel more engaged. Volunteer coordinators may also want to reward well-proven volunteers by letting them train/mentor new recruits or by assigning them special tasks.

Tips for Recognizing the Efforts of Volunteers

- Deliver the recognition in a personal and honest manner. Avoid recognition that is overproduced or rehearsed.
- Tailor recognition and reward to the unique needs of the people involved. By having various recognition and reward options, you can acknowledge accomplishments in ways appropriate to a given situation or volunteer.
- Give rewards on an ongoing basis and close in time to the contribution you're recognizing.
- Say thanks. Doing so is cheap and easy, and the results can be pure magic.
- List new volunteers and volunteer service anniversaries on your organization's website or in your organization's newsletter or bulletin.
- Surprise your volunteers. Deliver some gesture of appreciation they don't expect. For example, send cards on their birthday and holidays.
- Organize a volunteer-of-the-month program with special recognition and benefits.
- Pay personal attention to volunteers. Take time to get to know what is happening in their lives, and then make an effort to ask them about it next time you see them.
- Offer small rewards, such as soft drinks, a box lunch, a t-shirt, or tickets to a movie, concerts or sporting events.
- Give volunteers written testimony from clients, staff, and important people in the community who have noticed their contributions.
- Consider ways to recognize volunteers publicly within community newspapers or house of worship bulletins. Media coverage spreads the word about the good work of your volunteers and your organization. You can arrange newspaper interviews or stories or write letters to the editor. A good time for coverage is during National Volunteer Week, which generally occurs the third week of April, from Sunday to Saturday.
- Hold annual recognition events, such as receptions, luncheons, dinners, and award ceremonies.
- Giving t-shirts, coffee mugs, and other items displaying your organization's logo helps encourage a feeling of belonging.
- Special celebrations. You can create your own celebration scheduled to recognize birthdays, special milestones, and holidays.

Adapted with permission. (2005). *Successful Strategies for Recruiting, Training and Utilizing Volunteers: A Guide for Community and Faith-Based Service Providers*. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. Retrieved from http://www.samhsa.gov/FBCI/Volunteer_handbook.pdf



Evaluating the Performance of Volunteers

Ideally, a system for evaluating volunteers should have:

1. A policy on performance appraisal and review.
2. A trial period before volunteers are a part of the organization officially.
3. A regularly scheduled meeting to discuss job performance and satisfaction.
4. A method for reviewing commitments to change made during the evaluation meeting. The evaluation system should be explained to volunteers during their orientation session and should be reviewed with each staff person who will be supervising volunteers.

Some volunteers may have performance problems that require attention. If so, follow these guidelines:

- Keep the tone serious.
- Remember to give feedback on an ongoing basis so that the evaluation is not a surprise.
- Be specific about the areas in which the volunteer needs improvement.
- Let the volunteer know that you and the program expect quality performance.
- Include any positive information to balance with the negative.
- Set mutually agreed-upon goals for improvement.
- Offer additional training if appropriate and available.
- End the session on a hopeful note.

Volunteer Performance Evaluation

Date: _____

Name of person being assessed: _____

Job title: _____

Number of years/months with the agency: _____

Name of person completing this form: _____

In what capacities have you seen this person work?

Review volunteer job description. Does the written description accurately represent the work of this person? What differences are there, if any?

What would you say are the strengths of this person?

How would you rate this individual's ability to perform prescribed duties?

What are some challenges, or possible areas of improvement? Be specific and provide examples.

Do you have any suggestions regarding these areas of improvement?





Evaluating Volunteer Programs

- State the purpose of the evaluation, such as improving the program, assessing effectiveness, or demonstrating accountability for resources.
- Define the users of the evaluation results, such as clients, staff, volunteers, or funders.
- Define the uses of the evaluation results, such as identifying areas of improvement, deciding how to allocate resources, assessing community needs, or mobilizing community support.
- Develop evaluation questions:
 - Use process evaluation questions to document program implementation, such as number of people receiving services, amount of money used, funding sources, staffing and use of volunteers, and number of events.
 - Use outcome evaluation questions to document short-term and long-term results, such as changes in knowledge and behavior.

Sample Evaluation Plan

Evaluation design. Describe the program (goals/objectives) and then identify measures or indicators to determine whether and to what extent the program met its goals and objectives. Process evaluation can be used to describe key players, activities, accomplishments, and lessons learned from implementing the program. Outcome evaluation can be used to assess the effects of the program on the target population (clients) using a pre-program, post-program, and follow-up design (6 months to 12 months after program completion).

Data collection. Identify data sources and instruments for collecting information. Primary sources include the people you'll interview or mail a form to (surveys or in-person interviews) or talk to in a focus group. Secondary sources include written materials, such as client records and reports.

Data management and analysis. Enter data into a database and perform quantitative analysis and qualitative (content) analysis.

Reporting. For the process evaluation, use case studies—stories or histories of the program that describe key players, activities, accomplishments, major assets and challenges, and important lessons learned. These stories will highlight volunteer involvement and achievements. For the outcome evaluation, use tables to present results and highlight the most important findings. Interim reports (e.g., every 6 months or year of the program) and a final report would be helpful for both the program director and staff, and any funding organization.

Comprehensive Volunteer Program Evaluation

Appreciation and Support

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
Volunteer input is encouraged; there is a formal means of receiving feedback.				
Volunteers are encouraged to try new things.				
Volunteers are provided with letters of reference.				
Volunteers are appreciated regularly.				
There are regular volunteer meetings, in-services, or training sessions.				

Board/Collective

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
Activities of the volunteer program (including volunteers and staff) are regularly reported to the collective/board of directors.				
There are written policies and procedures concerning the volunteer program from the board of directors.				

Budget

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
Money allotted for volunteer recruitment (i.e., advertising, posters, brochures).				
Money allotted for volunteer supplies (i.e., manuals, orientation supplies).				
Money allotted for reimbursement of expenses (i.e., driving, parking, childcare).				
Money allotted for volunteer recognition or celebration.				

Coordination/Facilitation

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
There is an individual designated to coordinate the volunteer program.				
There is a written job description for the Volunteer Coordinator.				
The Volunteer Coordinator serves as a liaison for volunteers, staff and administration.				

Evaluation

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
Volunteers are evaluated after their 'probationary period' and on an annual basis after that.				
Volunteers participate in the assessment process.				
Staff participate in volunteer program evaluations.				
The volunteer program as a whole is evaluated annually.				
The ability of the volunteer program to meet client needs is assessed (client satisfaction).				
The ability of the volunteer program to meet volunteer needs is assessed (volunteer satisfaction).				
Areas of evaluation include: training/orientation, volunteer recruitment, volunteer support and recognition, staff/volunteer relations, screening procedures and risk management, volunteer placement, and job descriptions.				
Areas of strength and weakness are identified.				

Liability

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
Screening tools are utilized.				
Adequate documentation of volunteers and staff exists.				
Agency has sufficient insurance regarding on-site accidents, etc.				
Agency has sufficient insurance covering volunteers and board.				
Information about insurance is provided to all staff and volunteers.				
Incident/emergency procedures are known by all staff and volunteers.				
Incidents are documented and kept on file.				

Networking

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
The agency keeps the community advised of its activities through participating in events, committees, community initiatives or via newsletters, etc.				
When appropriate, volunteers are included in networking opportunities.				

Placement and Orientation

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
Potential volunteers are given information on all available volunteer positions.				
There are clear job descriptions for each volunteer position.				
Volunteer input is used in the placement process.				
There is a formal placement process (i.e., interview, etc.).				
Volunteers are provided with a comprehensive orientation/training prior to volunteering.				
The orientation includes information on the agency's mission statement, philosophy, values, goals and services. Programs, clients and policies, including personnel, confidentiality, conduct, and dress code are described. Volunteers are oriented to the facility. Safety procedures are reviewed, as are volunteer rights and responsibilities, grievance processes, and the roles of volunteers and staff.				
Orientations include a variety of techniques.				

Policies

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
Policies regarding board/collective rights, expectations and responsibilities.				
Policies regarding volunteer rights, expectations, and responsibilities.				
Policies regarding confidentiality.				
Policies regarding safety.				
Policies regarding volunteers' representation of agency.				
Policies regarding minimum/maximum volunteer hours.				
Policies regarding staff and volunteer behavior, attire, etc.				
Policies are accessible to all staff and volunteers.				

Record-keeping

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
Volunteer applications are kept on file.				
Volunteer hours are recorded and kept on file.				
Volunteer evaluations and interviews are recorded and kept on file.				
Personnel files are maintained for each volunteer.				
There are policies regarding confidentiality of volunteer files.				
There is emergency contact information for volunteers on file.				

Recruitment

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
Volunteer recruitment is non-discriminatory (unless necessary, i.e., women's or men's center).				
Recruitment strategies seek diversity in volunteers.				
Recruitment strategies are defined.				
Recruitment goals are defined.				
The recruitment plan employs several methods.				
A variety of recruitment material is available.				
Recruitment materials clearly explain the needs and expectations of the agency.				
Staff are informed of upcoming recruitment plans, trainings, etc.				

Space and Supplies

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
There is physical space (i.e., office) for volunteers to work.				
Volunteers are given adequate supplies (i.e., computer or phone) to complete their duties.				

Screening

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
Risks are assessed prior to program implementation.				
Potential volunteers fill out an application form.				
Volunteers undergo a formal screening process (i.e., reference checks, etc.).				
Screening practices are written in policy.				
Volunteers are made aware of reasons for acceptance or rejection.				
The agency makes a policy on whether screening method expenses are paid for by the volunteer or the agency (i.e., Criminal Record Checks).				
References are examined and results are documented, and kept on file.				
Police record checks occur when the volunteer may be working with children, individuals with special needs, the elderly and any other 'high risk' population.				

Staff, Volunteer, Agency Relations

Item	Not in place	Somewhat in place	In place	N/A
Effective communication is promoted and presented during training, etc.				
Conflict resolution strategies and policies defined.				
Roles of staff, volunteers, board/collective are clearly defined (i.e., job descriptions).				
Agency goals, vision, mission statement, and values are clear and all know of them.				
The volunteer program has written goals and objectives, which reflect those of the agency.				
Staff are trained and encouraged to support the volunteer program.				
Staff are involved in the planning and development of the volunteer program.				
Volunteers are not substituted for budgeted staff positions.				
There is a written policy for volunteers regarding protocol during strike action by staff.				
Volunteers are included in staff meetings relevant to their job responsibilities.				
Staff are included in volunteer meetings relevant to their job responsibilities.				
Staff partake in volunteer recognition and celebration activities.				

Adapted with permission. Penner, M. (2001). *Kelowna Women's Resource Centre Tool Kit*. Retrieved from http://www.kwrc.net/old_site/toolkit.htm

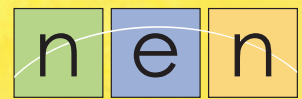
Additional Online Volunteer Resources

Volunteer Recruitment Websites:

1. Volunteers of America: www.voa.org
2. United Way's Volunteer Solutions: <http://volunteer.united-e-way.org/>
3. VolunteerMatch: www.volunteermatch.org/
4. Corporation for National and Community Service: www.serve.gov/
5. Smart Volunteer: www.smartvolunteer.org/
6. Volunteer opportunities in NH: www.volunteernh.org/html/home.htm
7. YouTube VideoVolunteers: www.youtube.com/videovolunteers

Volunteer Management Websites:

1. EnergizeInc.: www.energizeinc.com
2. Idealist: www.idealist.org/en/vmrc/index.html
3. Points of Light: www.pointsoflight.org
4. Service Leader: www.serviceleader.org
5. Developing/Managing Volunteer Programs Library:
<http://managementhelp.org/staffing/outsrcng/volnteer/volnteer.htm>
6. Charity Village: www.charityvillage.ca/cv/research/rvol.html
7. Nonprofit Risk Management Center: <http://nonprofitrisk.org/>
8. Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration: www.mavanetwork.org/
9. CyberVPM: Networking for Volunteer Managers: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cybervpm/>
10. The Foundation Center: <http://foundationcenter.org/>
11. Our Shared Resources: www.oursharedresources.com/
12. Corporation for National and Community Service Resource Center:
www.nationalserviceresources.org/topics/service-activities



New England Network for
Child, Youth & Family Services