Everyone Ready®

An online volunteer management staff development plan

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Focus on the Volunteer Program Manager:

A Task Analysis of the Role and its Significant Issues

By Betty B. Stallings

Self-Instruction Guide

for Individuals and Teams

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More Questions?

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IDEAL AUDIENCE FOR THIS GUIDE

Focus on the Volunteer Program Manager primarily speaks to the person who leads a volunteer program or supports staff in working with volunteers including:

- Volunteer program directors, managers, and coordinators (full-time or part-time, salaried or non-salaried) in their organization, unit, branch, etc.

In addition, other roles in the organization would benefit greatly and help to strengthen organizational commitment to the volunteer program by demonstrating competency about what is required to lead a volunteer program successfully. Those roles include:

- Anyone who is in a position to hire and/or supervise a volunteer program manager.
- Executive, administrative, fund development, program, and personnel staff as well as board members and lead volunteers who need/desire a better understanding of this role.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This Guide is meant to be an introduction to the role of volunteer program manager and should be approached as an overview. Read alone or with a team to learn about the responsibilities, functions and tasks involved in leading today's volunteer programs. Because the position is often unclear, overwhelming and insufficiently supported by all members of an organization, you are guided to:

- Educate others about the full nature of the position;
- Delegate some of the responsibilities and tasks to appropriate staff or volunteers;
- Analyze factors such as job title and organizational placement that impact effectiveness; and
- Evaluate the set of skills needed to carry out the role.

HOW TO USE THESE SELF-INSTRUCTION GUIDES

- *Everyone Ready*® selects a several-page chapter, excerpt, or article from a respected source, often fresh material just published or newly revised, to become the "Featured Reading" on the chosen topic for each Self-Instruction Guide.
- Read or complete each section of the Guide *in the sequence presented* – the order of the elements matters to the success of the learning experience. First, you will find preparatory information that sets the topic into context and a pre-reading self-assessment. Then the Featured Reading(s) are presented.
- The material following the Featured Reading(s) updates and expands the original writing and has been developed specifically for *Everyone Ready* participants. It includes further resources, ways to test your understanding, and a post-reading self-assessment.
- Recommendation: Consider forming a study group or learning team so that you benefit from the synergy of discussing the material with others in your program. Sharing your ideas aloud reinforces the learning and lays the groundwork for actually implementing many of the ideas developed.

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PRE-READING ASSESSMENT

Before you begin reading this Guide, ask yourself the questions below to determine your response to key questions/issues relevant to this topic. This is more of a "reflection" than a "quiz."

1. I feel that our organization's job description for the manager of volunteer programs (or other title) adequately reflects the nature of the work involved in that position.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Needs Review ☐ Have plans to review ☐ Don't know anything about it

2. I believe that staff, administrators and volunteers in my organization are clear about the role and responsibilities of the manager of volunteer programs.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Some yes/some no ☐ We need to clarify the role

3. The manager of volunteer programs directly delegates and supervises some volunteers to carry out a portion of his/her responsibilities.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Considering it ☐ Will Do!

4. I (we) are satisfied that the title and position of the manager of volunteer programs maximizes his or her potential to lead the organization's volunteer program.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Needs Attention ☐ Plan to propose changes

5. The position of manager of volunteer programs involves building organizational commitment, capacity and competency to ensure a successful volunteer program.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Plan to evaluate/assess

6. The manager of volunteer programs is aware of the knowledge and skills needed to perform this challenging position and:

   a. Has a *plan* to increase professional competency and job skills.
      ☐ Yes, plan in place ☐ Aware, but no plan ☐ Not aware/no plan

   b. Has *support* from the organization (mutual vision, budget, etc.) to increase competency.
      ☐ Yes, support is evident ☐ No support ☐ Have not sought support

7. The leader of the volunteer program needs to develop the following three skill areas:

   _____

   _____

   _____

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UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

To ensure that *everyone* in your organization shares in the collective responsibility for developing and sustaining a successful volunteer program, it is imperative that the role of the person designated to lead that effort (volunteer program manager or other title) be clearly understood and supported.

The Featured Reading for this Guide, "Task Analysis and Delegation" from the book, *The (Help!) I-Don't-Have-Enough-Time Guide to Volunteer Management,* presents a *full* position description of volunteer program manager as compared to some generally-accepted responsibilities of that role. Use the reading as an opportunity to share this information with supervisors and other key staff who may not be aware of the full nature of the position or the support needed to be successful. Other issues surrounding the role include:

- A successful volunteer program manager (whatever the assigned title) promotes having effective and clear position descriptions for volunteers. Often, however, the job description for the person leading the volunteer program is unclear, overwhelming or insufficiently supported. Work toward clarifying the role in writing and gain approval from supervisors and executives.
- If paid staff and leadership volunteers are unclear about the role of volunteer program manager, each person will act on distinctly different interpretations of that role. This makes it very difficult to ensure agreement and consistency in working with the volunteer program manager, which ultimately undermines the entire volunteer program. Once you have worked to define the volunteer program manager's role with the top decision makers, work to educate all staff about what the role entails.
- In recent years, the title and role of people who lead their organizations' volunteer programs have gradually changed. Formerly, the volunteer program manager was considered to be the key person in the organization who directly managed/supervised *all* agency volunteers. More recently, the volunteer program manager role has evolved into an internal consultant: the person who builds commitment, capacity and competency to ensure the effectiveness of the volunteer program, while *sharing* the responsibility of supervising volunteers with staff from various departments throughout the agency. If your volunteer program leadership role is headed in this direction, begin to make plans to educate all staff in the organization to work with volunteers (especially those who will be "front-line" supervisors of volunteers.)
- Research is discovering (not surprisingly) that organizations with trained, designated volunteer program managers are far more successful in designing and maintaining an effective and well-respected volunteer program than those without that staff position. (See the Resources section in this Guide for the reference to the 2004 UPS Study that documents this.) Volunteer program managers should include professional development (whether through courses, reading materials such as this, or professional seminars) as part of their job description.

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THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AS YOU READ

As you read the Featured Reading, you may feel a bit of paralysis at its seemingly complex and lengthy Task Analysis. It is not intended to scare you! Rather, the complete list of functions of the role of volunteer program manager should help you to:

- **Compare and analyze your organization's understanding** of what constitutes the role of a truly effective volunteer program manager. You may want to refine the items, tailoring them to fit the role that a volunteer program manager has in your organization.

  Pay attention to any tasks that are not currently included as responsibilities of the volunteer program manager. The questions to ask are: "Is someone else assigned to do this or is it not being handled at all?" "What impact is this lack having on our program?" For instance, if a function, such as "offer staff development," is not considered part of the responsibility of the volunteer program manager, there is a strong chance that this omission negatively impacts your program. As well, anyone hired to be volunteer program manager may lack the competency to perform this task because it was not identified as a need.

- **Educate others in your organization** about the complexity and responsibilities inherent in the position. Very few people, including those who supervise volunteer program managers, know what it takes to lead a successful volunteer program.

- **Separate the functions, responsibilities and tasks** so that you can determine which you may want to delegate to volunteers or other staff who can assist you in coordinating the volunteer program. Realize that the full extent of responsibilities is not possible for one person to do alone (at least not well!). The manager of volunteer programs is responsible for seeing that everything is done, but obviously must assign some of the tasks to appropriate volunteers and staff.

- **Effectively delegate** some of the functions/tasks of the manager of volunteer programs to another volunteer or staff person to *model* good volunteer supervision consciously and visibly. This is critical since effective delegation is what other staff must do well to engage volunteers most successfully.

- **Recognize that leading a successful volunteer program involves a team effort**. Many of the tasks that must be done in a well-run program must be supported by and/or acted on by others in the organization. The volunteer program manager cannot make overall policy decisions or determine procedures in each department. Therefore, your executive director, board of directors, development and personnel staff, leadership volunteers, and others directly responsible for the work must be substantially involved. Appropriate questions to ask as you review the Volunteer Management Task Analysis are:

  1. ***Who needs to take the lead on this responsibility, function or task?***
  2. ***What support do you/they need to be successful?***

  For instance, if staff development about leading volunteers is considered an appropriate role for the volunteer program manager, then:

  - S/he will need access to staff. Who in the organization can help them gain this staff access?
  - Employees will need clear expectations to do volunteer supervision as part of their job descriptions. *Who can add that expectation to existing and new job position descriptions?*

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  - Staff must know that they will be trained to supervise volunteers and will be held accountable and rewarded for this work. *How will this happen? What is needed, and from whom, to have staff uniformity in this critical area?*
  - Adequate resources must be allocated to accomplish staff training. What information do board members/staff need to make good fiscal decisions on the costs/benefits of training?

- **Understand that the functions and tasks of this position are challenging in themselves but are overlaid with the fact that a volunteer program manager *generally does not have authority over the staff who must be influenced*.** Thus, there is an even greater need for upper management to understand what it takes to have a successful program. This includes the establishment of a shared philosophy of volunteer engagement and clear standards and expectations to implement the volunteer program effectively.
- **The advantage of being a manager of volunteer programs/resources today is that there are numerous external resources to support you in your role**. Conducting online research for any skill or topic in volunteer management using any online search engine will surface numerous sites that share resources. There are also numerous local groups of administrators/leaders/managers/coordinators of volunteer programs that meet regularly to provide network support for those serving in this role. Currently there is no national organization supporting the profession since the demise of AVA (Association for Volunteer Administration), but grassroots efforts are mounting efforts to establish a new organization focusing on support to those serving in this capacity in organizations. It is an excellent time to become involved in building new networks of support to serve those serving in this position.

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Featured Reading

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT TASK ANALYSIS

The following is an excerpt from Chapter 3 of The (Help!) I-Don't-Have-Enough-Time Guide to Volunteer Management *by Katherine Noyes Campbell and Susan J. Ellis, © 2004 (electronic ed.), Energize, Inc., pages 21-33.*

When you [the volunteer program manager] are asked to lead a volunteer program, you are given a mandate to utilize people creatively—whether they come from the community at large or from within the organization itself. You need to cultivate the ability to recognize the full range of possible ways people can become involved in all aspects of your organization. The same imagination you show in developing direct-service volunteer assignments should extend to developing new ways for people to participate on your management team. Since you do not have the time to do everything yourself, you must delegate specific parts of your job to others.

It is critical that you fully understand the various elements of volunteer program management before asking others to help with specific pieces of the job. It is therefore helpful to consider all the possible activities that contribute to the effective utilization of volunteer resources, and analyze how they relate to your particular situation.

The following Task Analysis is designed to help you with this process. The *functions*, designated by Roman numerals, are major cluster areas of the job of running a volunteer program. The *responsibilities* outlined A, B, C, etc. are the key activities in each function (and are what would usually appear in a regular job description). The *tasks* listed under each responsibility as 1, 2, 3, etc. are just *some* of the basic steps necessary to accomplish each responsibility. It is precisely these tasks which need to be identified both to understand your job and to select assignments to delegate to team members. Despite its length, this is a generalized Task Analysis, and details will vary depending on your organization and setting….

I. PROGRAM PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

A. Assess/analyze agency and client needs for assistance.

1. Design questionnaires, survey forms, etc. to determine areas where assistance is needed.
2. Interview (or otherwise contact) employees, administration, volunteers, clients/consumers, etc.
3. Tabulate results of interviews/surveys; summarize findings.
4. Research models of other volunteer programs in similar settings.

B. Articulate a vision for volunteer involvement in the organization.

1. Develop a philosophy statement clarifying why the organization values volunteers.
2. Identify the key values guiding the volunteer program: diversity; mutual respect; confidentiality; etc.
3. Determine the organizational definition of "volunteer" in terms of the scope of community resources available, such as: student service-learning programs; alternative sentencing programs; corporate employee programs; etc.
4. Consider the range of ways volunteers can be asked to participate, including: assisting paid staff; working independently; as technical advisors, etc.

Featured Reading

C. Develop program goals and objectives.

1. Determine possible long-range and short-range program goals, using data from the needs assessment.
2. Develop measurable goals for what volunteers will accomplish and criteria for evaluating effectiveness.
3. Review these with administration and integrate into overall agency planning.

D. Design volunteer assignments.

1. Determine volunteer job categories based on needs assessment and program goals.
2. Work with paid staff to develop volunteer job descriptions.
3. Write job descriptions for volunteers who will be helping to manage the volunteer program.
4. Review set of job descriptions periodically with supervisors and volunteers carrying those responsibilities, and revise as necessary.
5. Write function descriptions for committees and organized groups.
6. Define the role of program advisors.

E. Develop risk management procedures and strategies.

1. Understand legal and insurance issues as they relate to volunteers.
2. Obtain adequate insurance coverage for volunteers.
3. Identify specific areas of potential risks and develop policies, training, and other strategies to limit such risks.

F. Coordinate schedules.

1. Plan overall work schedule for volunteer assignments.
2. Coordinate with salaried staff as needed.
3. Track attendance patterns with sign-in sheets and other systems of monitoring volunteer services. (See Function VIII. Recordkeeping and Reporting.)

G. Set policies and procedures.

1. Review agency policies and procedures; consult with administration and supervisory staff about any requirements and rules affecting volunteers.
2. Draft overall volunteer program policies and procedures; obtain approval.
3. Determine policies and procedures for specific volunteer assignments.
4. Develop and maintain a volunteer program procedures manual.

Featured Reading

H. Manage budget.

1. Determine annual budget needs and convey them to administration.
2. Authorize budget expenditures.
3. Develop a petty cash system, a system for reimbursing volunteers, and any other necessary fiscal procedures.
4. Solicit in-kind donations for the volunteer program.
5. Plan and implement fundraising events for the volunteer program.

I. Direct operations.

1. Arrange for adequate space, furniture, equipment and supplies to support volunteers.
2. Meet with supervisory staff to determine where (space) volunteers will work.
3. Order uniforms, nametags, etc., as appropriate; develop distribution system.
4. Develop support services for volunteers as necessary, such as car pools, child care, etc.

J. Advocate for volunteers.

1. Inform agency staff about issues related to volunteers, such as insurance coverage, tax deductions, enabling funds.
2. Initiate action on such issues, both within the organization and in support of community efforts or legislation.
3. Represent the volunteers' point of view to the organization.

K. Develop new projects.

1. Participate in agency-wide program planning to assure proper involvement of volunteers.
2. Gather ideas for new volunteer projects and program expansion.
3. Propose and justify such ideas.
4. Initiate pilot projects to test ideas.
5. Participate in related resource finding and funding activities.

L. Develop professional skills.

1. Read professional volunteerism books and periodicals.
2. Attend volunteer management workshops and conferences.
3. Network with other directors of volunteers through professional associations.

M. Other:

II. RECRUITMENT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

A. Plan recruitment strategies.

1. Identify the types of volunteers and/or skills needed for each volunteer job.
2. Brainstorm (and then prioritize) available sources of potential volunteers suited to each job description.
3. Solicit suggestions and contacts from employees, present and past volunteers, family and friends, consumers, etc.

B. Develop recruitment and media relations materials.

1. Write wording for a range of general and targeted flyers, posters, brochures, etc.
2. Work with a graphic artist to design recruitment materials; coordinate printing.
3. Write and schedule (request) public service announcements on radio and television.
4. Write and send press releases.
5. Distribute/post materials at appropriate public sites, including electronic networks and Web sites.
6. Develop slide shows and other audio-visual materials to support oral presentations.

C. Handle public speaking and personal contacts.

1. Contact leaders of groups of potential volunteers and arrange to speak to members.
2. Accept speaking engagements requested by community groups.
3. Seek out and do local radio, television and newspaper interviews and talk shows.
4. Explain program needs in one-to-one meetings with key resource people.
5. Develop corps of "program representatives" trained to speak on behalf of the program.

D. Manage ongoing recruitment efforts.

1. Maintain regular contact with frequent sources of volunteers (e.g., schools, churches, civic groups).
2. Register volunteer opportunities with all referral sources such as Volunteer Centers.
3. Work with staff to insure that all agency public relations includes mention of volunteer opportunities.
4. Enlist the help of salaried staff and current volunteers in locating new volunteers.

E. Other:

III. INTERVIEWING AND SCREENING

A. Prepare for applicants.

1. Design application form to be used by all prospective volunteers.
2. Develop interview format appropriate to staff schedules, program setting and agency needs.
3. Brief switchboard, receptionists, and secretaries that members of the public will be calling and coming in for appointments.

B. Conduct interviews.

1. Schedule interviews with all prospective volunteers.
2. Obtain and review completed application forms.
3. Describe various volunteer opportunities, using job descriptions, and discuss performance expectations.

C. Screen.

1. Screen out candidates inappropriate for the organization or having skills that could be better used in another setting by referring them to other community volunteer programs.
2. Adapt job descriptions to unique skills of prospective volunteers.
3. Create special assignments when feasible.
4. Develop procedure for accepting an applicant conditionally (such as probationary period), if not certain as to her/his appropriateness.
5. Conduct background checks as required or desired.

D. Assign volunteers.

1. Tentatively match appropriate applicants to currently available assignments and time slots.
2. Arrange for further screening, if necessary, by immediate supervisors of the assignment being considered.
3. Make final decision to accept and schedule starting date.

E. Facilitate group volunteer involvement.

1. Identify potential projects/assignments for organized groups of volunteers to handle independently.
2. Meet with leaders of prospective groups of volunteers and speak with members.
3. Establish written guidelines for supervising work and communications.

F. Other:

IV. ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

A. Develop an orientation program for all volunteers, regardless of assignment.

1. Plan agenda.
2. Arrange for tour of facility.
3. Invite or videotape speakers (including key salaried staff, administration, board).
4. Prepare informational materials to distribute to new volunteers.
5. Schedule and conduct sessions as needed.
6. Design individually-tailored orientation for specialized (one-shot or short-term) events or group projects.

B. Offer staff development.

1. Identify level of expertise among salaried staff in working with volunteers; identify positive and negative attitudes.
2. Meet individually with any staff resistant to volunteers, in an attempt to discuss the situation and resolve it.
3. Offer periodic staff seminars on volunteer management.
4. In staff meetings, report on volunteer program progress and concerns.
5. Participate in the orientation of new employees so that they learn about the organization's volunteers.

C. Design initial training plan.

1. Work with supervisors to design specific training for each volunteer assignment.
2. Assist with the scheduling of training.
3. Monitor that each volunteer receives training.
4. Develop and conduct initial training for volunteers directly working under volunteer office supervision.
5. Involve experienced volunteers in assisting newcomers.

D. Develop in-service training options.

1. Solicit interest in and needs for in-service training from volunteers and salaried staff.
2. Plan annual training schedule.
3. Prepare for sessions; invite speakers and resource people.

"Volunteer Management Task Analysis" from Chapter 3 of *The (Help!) I-Don't-Have-Enough-Time Guide to Volunteer Management* by Katherine Noyes Campbell and Susan J. Ellis, © 2004 Energize, Inc.

4. Conduct or moderate sessions.
5. Evaluate training plan and results.
6. Arrange for volunteers to attend special events, workshops, tours, etc.

E. Prepare manuals and handbooks.

1. Gather information for inclusion in manual.
2. Review sample manuals from other programs.
3. Discuss possible contents with volunteers and agency staff.
4. Write manual.
5. Design appearance and arrange for printing.

F. Other:

V. SUPERVISION

A. Handle direct supervision.

1. Meet regularly with members of volunteer management team.
2. Establish supervision plan for volunteers assigned directly to the volunteer office.
3. Maintain regular contact with off-site or off-hour (evening, weekend) volunteers.
4. Supervise any paid staff directly assigned to the volunteer program.

B. Handle indirect supervision.

1. Communicate regularly with those staff who directly supervise volunteers.
2. Monitor that volunteers are utilized appropriately, with tasks suited to abilities.
3. Assure that supervisors are accessible to volunteers and are maintaining a regular schedule of supervisory contact.

C. Be a liaison.

1. Serve as "third party" moderator to resolve any problems arising between volunteers and salaried staff members, or among volunteers themselves.
2. Be available to all volunteers and salaried staff as next step in the "chain of command."

D. Manage individual volunteer performance assessment.

1. Develop a plan for periodic assessment of volunteers' progress, achievements, areas requiring further training, etc.
2. Train supervisors to conduct periodic, mutual evaluations in a constructive way with all volunteers assigned to them.
3. Review all such evaluative reports.
4. Evaluate performance of volunteers assigned directly to the volunteer office.
5. Insure that volunteers do self-evaluation and have the opportunity to evaluate their training and supervision.

E. Other:

VI. MOTIVATION AND RECOGNITION

A. Assure ongoing volunteer motivation and appreciation.

1. Promote agency-wide atmosphere of welcome, courtesy, motivation and productivity.
2. Help salaried staff demonstrate appreciation of volunteers on a day-to-day basis.
3. Establish methods for volunteers to express concerns and offer suggestions.
4. Promote communication among program participants through such devices as a program newsletter, bulletin boards, and staff meetings.

B. Conduct recognition activities.

1. Plan formal recognition of all volunteer services, such as annual events or awards.
2. Identify those volunteers eligible for special recognition.
3. Thank those employees who contribute to the volunteer program.
4. Write letters of reference for volunteers when requested.
5. Involve top agency personnel in recognizing volunteer contributions.
6. Assure ongoing, informal expressions of appreciation to volunteers.

C. Develop "career ladders" for volunteers.

1. Review all assignments regularly to see that volunteers continue to be challenged and enjoy their activities.
2. Design advanced-level tasks for those volunteers earning and desiring more difficult (responsible, sophisticated) work.

3. Utilize experienced volunteers in special projects, in program evaluation and planning, and as trainers of new volunteers.

D. Other:

VII. PROGRAM EVALUATION

A. Conduct regular program evaluation.

1. Develop a plan for program evaluation; form an evaluation team.
2. Design questionnaires, surveys, etc.; recruit and train interviewers.
3. Solicit input from all program constituents.
4. Analyze data and develop concrete plan of action based on evaluation results.
5. Report evaluation results to all program constituents and integrate into agency planning.

B. Assess ongoing progress in all program components.

1. Keep informed about progress in all areas.
2. Track pilot projects carefully; review at scheduled intervals.
3. Conduct "exit interviews" with volunteers leaving the organization to gain insights into areas for improvement in assignments and management.

C. Other:

VIII. RECORDKEEPING AND REPORTING

A. Develop a comprehensive volunteer recordkeeping system.

1. Determine data needs for program management, risk management, and to document the accomplishments of volunteers.
2. Review agency records and reporting systems, to see where volunteer data could be integrated.
3. Design forms and develop procedures to gather data, including computerization as feasible.
4. Train volunteers and salaried staff to provide data accurately and on time.

B. Maintain system.

1. Record data in an accurate, up-to-date and accessible manner.
2. Follow up forms or reports not turned in.
3. Keep records on own activities as Director of Volunteers.

C. Develop reports.

1. Write monthly and annual reports, giving both statistics and descriptive narratives.
2. Distribute reports to all program constituents, as well as to administration.
3. Prepare special reports upon request.

D. Other:

IX. OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Participate in agency fundraising events, coordinating volunteer assistance.

B. Solicit in-kind donations to assist agency services.

C. Represent the organization at community functions; represent the organization to visiting community members.

D. Provide technical assistance to other agency volunteer efforts, such as board development, working with auxiliaries, etc.

E. Other:

ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Organizational Commitment, Capacity and Competency

Katie Campbell and Susan Ellis, authors of the Featured Reading excerpt, were among the first to attempt to analyze this complex role, but there are additional ways of viewing the position of volunteer program manager. I like to cluster the work of the volunteer program manager under the three categories of building ***Organizational Commitment, Capacity and Competency***:

1. **Commitment**

   Helping the organization to develop a vision of the ideal volunteer program and developing "buy-in" by administration, staff and volunteers to work as a team to develop and maintain the best possible volunteer program – a commitment to support creative engagement of volunteers at all levels of the organization. Often volunteer program managers have developed excellent systems and recruit high-level volunteers. But the outcome is compromised if paid staff are not fully committed to providing the support to ensure that volunteer contributions are effectively utilized. What part of your volunteer program manager's position deals with building staff commitment?

2. **Capacity**

   Refers to all of the systems, policies, planning, job design, recordkeeping, recruitment, materials development, risk management, budgeting, etc., that give the program a smooth foundation and effective operational procedures. This is frequently where volunteer program managers spend most of their time. But, without the commitment and the competency of the organization's employees and volunteers, the capacity, structures, procedures, and manuals will not insure a successful program. What part of your volunteer program manager's position deals with building organizational capacity to utilize volunteers?

3. **Competency**

   Refers to making certain that employees who interface with volunteers are trained in supervision, delegation, interviewing and other skills that will facilitate their work with volunteers. Also, volunteers placed within the organization need to be recruited and screened to be competent to carry out the functions they have agreed to do and/or have a training or coaching program available to make certain they gain sufficient tools and skills to perform those jobs/tasks. What part of the volunteer program manager's position deals with building competency?

Needed Skills

Another way to look at the volunteer program manager position is by the skills sets and knowledge needed to perform the role. You may wish to review essential areas of expertise, skills and knowledge and use the information in two ways:

- Determine which of the skill/knowledge areas you wish to improve and then develop a professional development plan.
- Identify skill/knowledge areas where you need volunteers to augment your ability to carry out this complex role. If volunteers have specific skills or knowledge, they might be useful in carrying out several functions/tasks. For instance, if they come with speaking or training skills, they might be interested in running volunteer orientation sessions, designing staff supervisor training, or giving recruitment talks in the community.

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Here is a starter set of skills and knowledge areas to consider as you develop your own list:

- Planning
- Group Dynamics
- Computer and Internet Technology
- Training Design and Delivery
- Recordkeeping
- Written Communication Skills
- Budgeting and Fiscal Management
- Public Relations
- Organization/Scheduling/Coordination
- Event Planning
- Resource Development
- Media Relations
- Recognition
- Interviewing
- Recruitment
- Public Speaking
- Influence/Persuasion
- Conflict Management
- Graphic Arts
- Statistics
- Program Assessment
- Job Design
- Supervision
- Delegation
- Risk Management
- Coaching
- Community Resources
- Coalition Building
- Change Management
- Time Management
- Volunteer Trends and Their Impact
- Diversity Sensitivity/Knowledge/Experience
- What is pertinent to the position of volunteer program manager in your specific organization?

Position Title

The title of the person who leads the volunteer program should reflect the nature of the work to be accomplished in that role. If the position mainly involves oversight of people and activities, then the term "coordinator" may be appropriate. If the position is responsible for all the administrative aspects of the program (planning, budgeting, supervision, etc.) then "manager," "director" or "administrator" is an appropriate title. The title should also be comparable to those of other department or unit heads at the same level of authority.

One tip that cannot be repeated too often: Be careful to use the word "volunteer" as *a noun* and not as an adjective. Any title like "volunteer coordinator" leaves people unsure of *what* the person is coordinating and wondering if s/he is a volunteer coordinating something. Also, be careful when putting the word "volunteers" at the end of the title alone, as in "coordinator of volunteers." This can lead people into thinking that the coordinator is responsible for each and every volunteer. In fact, in many cases the person is coordinator/manager/administrator of the *volunteer program*, which recruits and places volunteers throughout the organization.

Also consider the use of the word "program." Today many organizations are broadening the title to become "manager of volunteer services" or "director of community resources."

The majority of people who manage volunteer programs do so on a part-time basis, juggling the tasks with one or more other work roles. When a person handles both volunteer-related and non-volunteer-related work for the organization, it is best for that person to distinguish between the roles consciously with such tools as different business cards reflecting each different title. Then, when functioning as volunteer program manager, s/he can represent her/himself to the community and to volunteers that way.

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Placement in the Organization

Where the volunteer program manager is placed in the organizational hierarchy frequently impacts the person's potential to lead a successful program. In some organizations, the volunteer program is seen as a separate department and the manager answers to the top executive level, or the program is placed directly in an "executive office." This sends a powerful message about the value the organization places on volunteer engagement.

Some volunteer program managers find success being placed in the human resources or personnel department, through which they have access to all other departments and staff. In other organizations, they work within the resource development department, or public relations, or a client-service program.

Every organization is different, so there are no "right" answers to where the volunteer program manager should be positioned. However, there ought to be a clear, logical reason for any placement. The more visibility and broad-base access a volunteer program manager has, the more effective and inclusive the volunteer program can be. Those who find themselves buried in a department that has little to do with volunteer engagement generally discover that their role does not get the widespread recognition, respect, or support it needs to be successful – and volunteers wonder what the organization thinks of them, too.

Something else to consider: It is becoming more evident that using the words "volunteer program" immediately gives one the sense that it is a separate project or aspect of the organization that may well be compared to other programs when determining budgeting and staffing factors. It may be advisable to drop the use of the word "program" and begin to position volunteer services as personnel support for all unpaid staff, thus serving the entire organization and not being seen as a separate entity.

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL OR TEAM USE

1. Compare your job description with the items listed in the task analysis of the position of volunteer program manager. Which basic functions are the same or similar to your written job description? Which items do you notice are missing from your job description and are not assigned to anyone else to handle? How does that void impact the functioning of the volunteer program?
2. What responsibilities and tasks could be developed into volunteer positions reporting to the volunteer program manager to assist in accomplishing the role? What leadership-level volunteer positions might be developed to engage volunteers with the volunteer program manager in developing and managing a stronger volunteer program – resulting in more volunteer "ownership," too?
3. What assistance/support is needed from the executive director, program administrators, supervisors, or other staff or specific volunteers to be effective in carrying out the position of volunteer program manager? Has this need been shared with appropriate people? Have you explained to them the benefits that their support would have on the volunteer program and ultimately on the organization's mission?
4. In an annual review session, how might this task analysis be utilized to adapt the job description of the volunteer program manager to more fully reflect the functions of the position?
5. If you suspect that there is confusion about your job description (for you, for paid staff, for upper management, for volunteers, or for the board), what steps do you need to take to bring greater clarity of the job to all who must understand your role?

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6. Does your title accurately reflect the work you do and is your placement in the organization an effective location from which to operate? What is your strategy to request a review of your title and location of operation?
7. If you are discussing this with several volunteer program managers within your organization, consider: What can we do ***collectively*** to request a new look at the role, title, skills required, placement of the position within the organization, and compensation relative to comparable positions within the organization?
8. What skills and tasks of this position do you need/desire to gain more proficiency? Where can you find the resources (books, seminars, conferences, networking opportunities) to enhance these deficiency areas? What professional goals have you established for yourself and what plan do you have to achieve them?

TRY-THIS EXERCISES

As a result of reading and reflecting on the role of the leader of volunteer programs within your organization, here are some exercises to reinforce some key principles.

- Review your current job description and update/add aspects of your work or activities that are missing. These are tasks that you are doing now but are not mentioned, or there is no mention of them and they are critical to ensure the success of the volunteer program.
- Ask a person(s), not involved in your organization, to briefly interview a number of paid staff, volunteers and board members, asking them to explain their understanding of the nature of the position of volunteer program manager (or other title) in your organization. Then discuss:

  -Were there inconsistent responses? What were they?

  -Were people confused about the position?

  -Did people have concerns about the position?

  With the information gained, determine action steps needed to clarify the role within the organization.
- Identify ways that paid staff and volunteers can assist you with or independently carry out some of the tasks in the volunteer program manager's job description and how you can assist them in roles they undertake. (For example, if you do not have a written philosophy statement about the agency's engagement of volunteers, ask for help and support from your top administrator and board to develop and promote it. You can assist them by sharing examples of excellent philosophy statements from other organizations.)
- Using the skills/knowledge list in the Additional Perspectives section of this guide, determine your job/professional development plan (skill and knowledge areas to improve upon) and indicate skill and knowledge areas where you will be delegating tasks to volunteers.

RESOURCES ON THIS SUBJECT

Online Sources

- **Profession/field of volunteer management**, *e-Volunteerism* Archive topic
  Access through the ***Everyone Ready*** Main Page and go to:
  e-Volunteerism>Archives>Profession/field of volunteer management.

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- **Director of Volunteers, role of** http://energizeinc.com/art/subj/role.html
  Section in the Resource Library on the Energize, Inc. Web site.
- **Map of the Volunteer World** http://energizeinc.com/volunteer-map.html
  Energize Inc.'s organized list of the different arenas (grassroots activism, agency-related volunteer programs, faith-based service, etc.) which rely on voluntary involvement. See where you fit in and what resources speak specifically to you and your organization.
- **Developing and Managing Volunteer Programs**
  http://www.managementhelp.org/staffing/outsrcng/volnteer/volnteer.htm
- **Volunteer Management as a Career**
  http://www.idealist.org/en/vmrc/vmcareer.html
  Includes "A Day in the Life" of several volunteer management professionals.
- **Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration**
  http://www.cvacert.org
  Advances the profession and practice of volunteer resource management by certifying individuals who demonstrate knowledge and competence in the leadership of volunteers.

Books and Reports

Campbell, Katherine Noyes and Susan J. Ellis. *The (Help!) I-Don't-Have-Enough-Time Guide to Volunteer Management,* Energize, Inc., paper 1999, electronic 2004. Purchase using your *Everyone Ready* discount code in the Energize, Inc. online bookstore at: http://www.energizeinc.com/store/1-139-E-1.

Ellis, Susan J. *From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success.* Energize, Inc., 1996. Purchase using your *Everyone Ready* discount code in the Energize, Inc. online bookstore at: http://www.energizeinc.com/store/1-102-P-1.

Hager, Mark and Jeffrey L. Brudney. *Volunteer Management Practices and Retention of Volunteers.* Urban Institute, 2004. (Free download) http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=411005.

McBee, Shar. *To Lead Is to Serve: How to Attract Volunteers and Keep Them*, revised edition. SMB Publishing, 2002. http://www.joyofleadership.com/products/index.htm.

McCurley, Steve and Rick Lynch. *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing All the Resources of the Community, 2nd edition.* Johnstone Training and Consultation, 2006. Purchase using your *Everyone Ready* discount code in the Energize, Inc. online bookstore at: http://www.energizeinc.com/store/5-224-E-1.

Noble, Joy, Louise Rogers, and Andy Fryar. *Volunteer Management: An Essential Guide, 2nd edition.* Volunteering SA, Inc., 2003. Purchase using your *Everyone Ready* discount code in the Energize, Inc. online bookstore at: http://www.energizeinc.com/store/5-210-E-1.

UPS Foundation, Urban Institute, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the USA Freedom Corps. *Volunteer Management Capacity in America's Charities and Congregations: A Briefing Report.* 2004, (34 page PDF). http://www.nationalservice.org/pdf/vol_capacity_brief.pdf.

Vineyard, Sue. *New Competencies for Volunteer Administrators,* Heritage Arts, 1996.

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POST READING SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the questions below again to see if your reflections have changed and if you've moved forward on developing a plan to make the position of volunteer program manager more successful.

1. I feel that our organization's job description for the manager of volunteer programs (or other title) adequately reflects the nature of the work involved in that position.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Needs Review ☐ Have plans to review ☐ Don't know anything about it

2. I believe that staff, administrators and volunteers in my organization are clear about the role and responsibilities of the manager of volunteer programs.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Some yes/some no ☐ We need to clarify the role

3. The manager of volunteer programs directly delegates and supervises some volunteers to carry out a portion of his/her responsibilities.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Considering it ☐ Will Do!

4. I (we) are satisfied that the title and position of the manager of volunteer programs maximizes his or her potential to lead the organization's volunteer program.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Needs Attention ☐ Plan to propose changes

5. The position of manager of volunteer programs involves building organizational commitment, capacity and competency to ensure a successful volunteer program.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Plan to evaluate/assess

6. The manager of volunteer programs is aware of the knowledge and skills needed to perform this challenging position and:

   a. Has a **plan** to increase professional competency and job skills.
      ☐ Yes, plan in place ☐ Aware, but no plan ☐ Not aware/no plan

   b. Has **support** from the organization (mutual vision, budget, etc.) to increase competency.
      ☐ Yes, support is evident ☐ No support ☐ Have not sought support

7. The leader of the volunteer program needs to develop the following three skill areas:

   _____

   _____

   _____

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ASK THE TRAINER

Now that you've read this Guide, you can interact with the author! Ask questions to get advice for applying the information to your own setting.

Discussion Board with Betty Stallings

Submit questions through the link on the Web page where you downloaded this Guide.

Ask whatever is on your mind by posting your question in the discussion board and Betty will respond via the board within 48 hours. (You are given an option to remain anonymous when posting your question.) You can also exchange comments and ask questions of other participants.

ABOUT THE TRAINER

Betty B. Stallings

Betty Stallings, M.S.W., is an international trainer, consultant, author and keynote speaker specializing in volunteerism, nonprofit fundraising, board development and leadership. She has written many popular books including: *Getting to Yes in Fund Raising*, *A Resource Kit for Managers of Volunteers*, *How To Produce Fabulous Fundraising Events: Reap Remarkable Returns with Minimal Effort* and the electronic/adaptable *Training Busy Staff To Succeed With Volunteers: 55-Minute Staff Training Series*. She has also authored, "Families as Volunteers", a chapter from the book, *Managing Volunteer Diversity*. She has 4 training videos: *Volunteer Trends*, *Recruitment*, *Recognition* and *Risk Management*. She has been the training design editor for the on-line journal *e-Volunteerism* for 6 years where she has contributed numerous articles and training designs.

In 2005, Betty did research on the impact of upper management support to volunteer programs and produced the booklet: *12 Key Actions of Volunteer Program Champions: CEOs Who Lead the Way*. She is currently writing resources on the significance of executive level support of volunteer programs and on the *Team Approach to Enhancing Volunteer Programs*.

Formerly, Betty was the founder and 13-year executive director of the Valley Volunteer Center in Pleasanton, California. While at the Center she initiated such programs as the Women's Re-entry Internship Program, Career-Links, Borrow-An-Expert, Project Manage, The Corporate Volunteer Council and others which served as national models of volunteer utilization. While directing the Center, Betty obtained funding and supervised innovative research on volunteer management, which resulted in the publication of the book, *At the Heart —The New Volunteer Challenge to Community Agencies* by Nora Silver.

Currently, Betty is an instructor in university nonprofit and extension programs, is a popular trainer, keynote speaker and facilitator for state, national and international conferences on volunteerism and

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fundraising. She consults with many nonprofit organizations, corporations, churches, foundations and public sector programs around the U.S. and Canada.

Betty received the prestigious AVA Harriet Naylor Award for Distinguished Service to the field of volunteerism in 1999 and has received numerous awards for her extensive volunteer work and her professional contributions to the field. Her rich background in human services and volunteer management, her broad based experience as a volunteer and fund raiser, and her humor, vitality and inspiration have made her a sought-after trainer, consultant and speaker throughout the U.S. and beyond.

E-mail: **BettyStall@aol.com** Web site: **www.bettystallings.com**

Books by Betty in the Energize Online Bookstore

How to Produce Fabulous Fundraising Events
Training Busy Staff to Succeed with Volunteers: The 55-Minute Staff Training Series

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Everyone Ready is a staff development training plan produced by Energize, Inc. to sharpen volunteer management skills. The plan includes online training materials provided throughout the year on basic and advanced volunteer management subjects. There are individual and organizational memberships, the latter designed to allow organizations to share the content with volunteer and paid staff at every level and geographic location across their networks.

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5450 Wissahickon Avenue
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Featured Reading
Excerpt from Chapter 3 of *The (Help!) I-Don't-Have-Enough-Time Guide to Volunteer Management* by Katherine Noyes Campbell and Susan J. Ellis, © 2004 (electronic ed.), Energize, Inc., pages 21-33.

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