

## Supporting Volunteers

1. Establish a good open working relationship with volunteers.
2. Let volunteers feel needed, wanted, useful, and important.
3. Be sure communication is open and that both the sender and the receiver understand. Answer questions and assist in solving problems the volunteers are experiencing. Inform volunteers of changes and new procedures.
4. Have regular personal contact, at least 3-4 times per year, even if the volunteer doesn't request help.
5. Have a specific goal and solution.
6. Realize that working together is a must!!
7. Provide a friendly atmosphere for the best request.
8. Recognize that how you treat a volunteer will determine the type of working relationship you have with that person.
9. Be receptive of other's viewpoints.
10. Keep in mind that good relationships evolve by:
  - a. letting the volunteer know how he/she is getting along.
  - b. giving credit where credit is due.
  - c. telling people in advance about changes that will affect them.
  - d. making the best of each person's abilities.
11. Encourage volunteers to try new methods or approaches and support them in the risk-taking. Share ideas that have worked for others.
12. Give individualized, personal recognition for positive leadership behavior.
13. Provide moral support.
14. All efforts should be made to maintain the local volunteers' integrity in their own program. Assist them, talk through solutions to problems, demonstrate techniques and help them practice, but don't take over for them in their own program.
15. Develop and practice good counseling techniques. Try to keep an open mind while you gather information – listen, ask questions, observe the situation – then help the leader find a solution for his or her problem.
16. Keep a written record of the interaction with the volunteers including:
  - dates of contact, (Don't forget to keep notes on informal interaction at meetings and when you meet a volunteer on the street.)
  - topics discussed,
  - questions or concerns raised,
  - program goals
  - program progress, and
  - your observations.
17. Give a status report to your own supervisor on your interactions with leaders. Discuss needs to be addressed by the county program.
18. Maintain confidentiality.

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*Volunteerism for the Next Generation*

