

STATE OF NEVADA AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DIVISION PAC UNIT

ADSD VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM GUIDE
**FOR VOLUNTEER HOST
ORGANIZATIONS**

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**Nevada Aging and Disability
Services Division
Volunteer Programs**

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Introduction

The State of Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division Planning Advocacy and Community Services Unit (ADSD) Volunteer Management Program Guide for Volunteer Host Organizations (Guide) was created to assist third-party organizations, with managing volunteer driven programs that are under ADSDs purview. Third-party organizations that operate volunteer driven ADSD programs are known as Volunteer Host Organizations (VHOs). VHOs may be formally contracted to deliver Volunteer Host Organization Volunteer Programs (VHOVPs) or may be doing so through informal partnership arrangements with the ADSD. The Guide will assist VHOs in enhancing their capacity to provide timely, quality ADSD services to Consumers across the State of Nevada. Contained in the Guide is information from a variety of sources including empirical research on the topic of volunteer management, the Volunteer Collaborative, the Corporation for National and Community Service, VolunteerMatch.org, and others. Additionally, the Guide incorporates feedback from a statewide survey of Care Connection sites, as well as ADSDs State Health Insurance Assistance Program, (SHIP) and Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) programs.

Section 1: Volunteers – Assets or Liability

Having volunteers assist with day-to-day operations can be a huge benefit to programs and organizations, but the question becomes: *“How do we make sure volunteers are an asset and not just another liability?”*

There are three (3) key principles to consider with volunteers, which include:

1. Volunteers should be recruited to enhance a service, not to replace paid staff
2. Provide clear written task outlines for the volunteer, which are skills based – meaningful tasks with opportunities for personal development.
3. Make sure the volunteer has appropriate line management and knows whom to contact about problems or difficulties.

Benefits of Volunteers

Beyond the value to programs, volunteers bring other benefits, particularly when you consider that for example, retired older Americans may possess many skills that can enhance your organization. Do you have a staff person who is spending a lot of time on fiscal matters? What if you could recruit a retired CPA to assist with some of those duties? How could your organization benefit? We often think of volunteers in terms of simple tasks – filing, folding papers, stuffing envelopes, etc. However, when a comprehensive volunteer management program is in place, the benefits of having volunteers can outweigh the liabilities when you consider what volunteers can bring to your organization. The following are some of the benefits that organizations enjoy when they utilize volunteers. Volunteers:

- Enhance community outreach, relationships, and knowledge about programs by supporting fundraising activities, outreach events, conferences, etc. and sharing the information.
- Increase the amount of services available while reducing overall costs with special projects, general assistance – filing, data entry, stocking, etc.
- Use of skills and knowledge that can enhance programs/services. For example, a retired or prospective social worker could be available to assist with case management, advocacy, and follow-up with the Consumer.
- Assist Federal and State governments with providing social services to the broader community, thus, increasing capacity to reach people, meet individual needs, and make positive impacts on people’s lives.

Value of Volunteers

There are tens of millions of volunteers across the nation providing billions of hours of service through organizations. The latest information available shows the average value of a U.S. volunteer’s time is **\$25.43 per hour**, while Nevada’s rate is **\$22.61 per hour**.¹ According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, approximately 77.4million Americans gave a total 6.9 billion hours of volunteer service worth \$169 billion² nationwide.

¹ http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time

² Corporation for National and Community Service <https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve/via>

Liability of Volunteers

Let's be clear, as there are two sides to every coin. A good volunteer program is an undertaking that takes resources. The key to ensuring that volunteers are a benefit to your organization is ensuring that they, like paid staff, have the support and structure necessary to be successful. What considerations do we have to make to prevent volunteers from being a "liability?" Here are just a few:

- Training volunteers to be knowledgeable and passionate about the programs
- Supervising and engaging volunteers to participate.
- Reliability and availability can vary.

While the Guide will cover pertinent aspects of training, supervising, and retaining volunteers, VHOs will also need to take into consideration additional factors, including costs associated with volunteers.

Costs to Consider with Volunteers

There are certain cost considerations that need to be made when working with a volunteer staff. The good news? The costs of working with volunteers are typically considerably less when compared to costs associated with paid staff. Beyond standard overhead costs such as office space, utilities, telephone service, etc., other costs can include:

- **Supplies:** Volunteers that are part of your organization are going to need supplies. Think about supplies/equipment your volunteer will be using and determine an average cost per volunteer to aid in your budget process. Also, within this category, we include volunteer recognition (recognition). Any comprehensive volunteer program has a recognition component. It may be as simple as developing a reward system based on hours/length of time of service, or it may be a quarterly or annual program. There are a lot of options and flexibility here, so be creative and work within the confines of your budget.
- **Administrative:** To protect your organization and your volunteers there are administrative costs to consider. Some of these costs include background and reference checks, liability coverage, staff salary for management/oversight, etc. You will need to check with your organization's current insurer to determine what additional coverage beyond workers' compensation and liability (see Insurance) will be required for volunteers. It is also beneficial to check with your accountant to learn about any tax implications associated with volunteers. Please refer to the ADSD Service Specifications General Requirements for more information on background and reference checks and liability coverage.
- **Travel:** Are your volunteers going to be using their personal vehicles? Mileage reimbursement is a cost that should be considered. While not every volunteer may expect mileage reimbursement, it can often be a nice perk to offer your volunteers. And remember, just because the federal mileage rate is set at a specific level, does not

mean you have to offer the same rate. As an organization, you can adjust the rate if necessary.

These are core cost considerations you need to make when planning for volunteers. By considering these items and planning you can keep costs low and still have a productive volunteer program to supplement the services of your paid staff.

In the next section, we will look at nine (9) key components of a volunteer program, which include: recruitment; screening; training and development; evaluation; leading, mentoring and developing role models; managing diversity; valuing volunteers; (retention and recognition) responding to volunteer questions, concerns and needs; and stakeholder involvement.

Section II – Volunteer Program Components

There are nine components of any volunteer program:



Note. Adapted from Coleman (2017)³

³ Coleman, C. (2017). Volunteer Management in Faith Based Organizations. Retrieved from <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3963&context=thesedisserations>.

Recruitment

The initial task to volunteer management, after you have determined what the volunteer roles in your organization will be, is recruitment. Recruitment of volunteers always involves designing a plan to bring volunteers into your organization. Volunteer opportunities should be publicized broadly, and through a variety of methods, so that no group of people is excluded because of limited access to information. As such, VHOs will strive to develop a volunteer population that mirrors the diversity of the community in which it operates. Indications of diversity may be obtained from data reflected in the most recent census.

Volunteers volunteer for various reasons for both the short-term and the long-term, so, volunteer recruitment should be an ongoing process toward maintaining, broadening and extending VHOVP services to Consumers.

The following are recruitment methods that can be used to bring volunteers into your organization:

- 1. Volunteermatch.org**

This website can be an excellent resource for recruiting and communicating with potential volunteers. Volunteermatch.org is a fee-based service, which costs \$99 annually.

Payment of Subscription

The premium subscription is paid annually.

Guides and tools to learn to use VolunteerMatch effectively are available here:

<https://vmhelp.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/categories/201877757>

Posting for Volunteer Information Sessions (VIS) (see definition of terms) will go inactive once the date in an advertised volunteer opportunity has passed. As such, it will be necessary to access VolunteerMatch.org and change the date for ongoing VISs. VISs should be scheduled on an ongoing basis, with at least two per month. Care should be given to periods where volunteer recruitment efforts tend to taper off, such as during holidays, and summer vacation.

- 2. AARP Create the Good**

This is a free site that can be used to promote volunteer opportunities.

- 3. Justserve**

This website is administered by the LDS church to involve more of their members in service.

4. Allthegood

A website sponsored by Points of Light organization to promote volunteer opportunities.

5. United Way of Southern Nevada

United Way of Southern Nevada operates a website that will promote volunteer opportunities and community events. Register at:
http://www.volunteercentersn.org/About_Partnership/index.html

6. OLLI – Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

OLLI chapters operate both out of University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) and University of Nevada Reno (UNR). OLLI offers courses to semi-retired or retired adults who are attracted to the joys of life-long learning, on a variety of topics. OLLIs are located on the campuses of more than 120 colleges and universities in the US; and offers non-credit courses and activities tailored for adults, age 50 or older. Email the contact person and ask that they share volunteer opportunities with their members as it is not unusual for OLLI members to also be seeking volunteer opportunities.

UNLV – OLLI contact info

Website: <https://olli.unlv.edu/>

Email: veronica.carrillo@unlv.edu

UNR – OLLI contact info

Website: <http://www.olli.unr.edu/>

Email: olli@unr.edu.

7. Community Calendars

Many local television stations have free community calendars that will post volunteer opportunities and events, such as the VISs:

NAME	WEBSITE
KNPR Radio Community Connections	http://www.knpr.org/common/community/
8newsnow community calendar	http://www.8newsnow.com/category/111634/las-vegas-events
fox 5 community calendar	http://www.fox5vegas.com/category/210087/community-calendar
mylvtnv community calendar	http://www.mylvtv.com/sections/community/

8. Email Blast

Periodically email a flier, brochure, or announcement for upcoming VIS's to potential volunteers. Often, timing is important when recruiting volunteers and a "no" today, may be a "yes" tomorrow. Email individuals who did not follow through on an inquiry to a volunteer opportunity until they indicate they are no longer interested in volunteering. Emailing various professional societies and faith-based organizations, etc., can also be useful for finding volunteers.

9. Exhibits/Health Fairs

Volunteers attending community events and health fairs should include for display, brochures and fliers that describe volunteer programs and opportunities. Additionally, volunteers will have a contact form available to collect contact information from individuals who are interested in the work of the VHO and the VHOVP. Volunteers will in turn, share contact information with the respective staff member in the VHO or VHOVP. VHOVP staff are encouraged reach out to individuals who inquire about volunteering by phone or email on the next business day.

10. Volunteer Information Session (VIS)

Volunteer Information Sessions (VISs) are scheduled by VHOVP staff to give potential volunteers a view of the programs contained in the VHOVP. VISs outline information about the VHO hosting the VHOVP, training requirements, benefits of being a volunteer, etc. VISs are conducted in with the use of a PowerPoint presentation, as well as a video(s) that provides visuals of volunteer opportunities and benefits. VISs should be conducted wherever volunteers are being recruited, including when necessary, with the use of teleconferencing and other viable technology.

11. Care Connection Website

Individuals can inquire about a program contained in the VHOVP on the Care Connection Site, where ADSD volunteer programs are outlined.

Website: <https://www.nevadaadrc.com/>

When on the site navigate to the volunteer section as follows:

>>About Us

>>Volunteer Opportunities

12. Taproot+

This website is helpful to recruit for skills-based volunteers, technology professionals. If there is a need for a specific skill, post a notice on Taproot+ and they will promote it to find volunteers who seek to share their time and skills, on a pro-bono basis.

13. Community Outreach

Local libraries, community centers and residential areas, etc. typically have designated space for fliers and brochures that announce community events. This can include information on volunteer opportunities and upcoming VISs. A stack of fliers and brochures should be taken to these locations at least once every five to six weeks.

NOTE: Volunteer Inquiries and Data Management

Volunteer data should be tracked in a volunteer management database, and where required by the grantor(s). In the VHOVP database, you should be able to create records for individuals who inquire about volunteer opportunities, as well as track volunteers who have entered a program. The volunteer management database should have sections to record conversations with individuals; schedule future contacts; track the number and value of hours individuals volunteered; which programs volunteers are interested in; their knowledge, skills, abilities and interests as a volunteer, etc. Volunteer records should also include:

- application and related information gathered in the screening process
- dates of service
- positions held
- training and orientation received
- duties performed and achievements attained
- performance records including appropriate documentation of any performance issues
- awards received
- record of exit
- current contact information
- emergency contact information

When a potential volunteer has expressed interest in volunteering but has not yet been recruited into a role, the VHOVP staff should follow up with the individual on regular occasion, until the prospect has indicated they are no longer interested in volunteering, or they have been recruited into a volunteer position. As such, the VHOVP staff will make every reasonable effort to keep interested prospective volunteers engaged, until they are recruited into the program of their choice.

On an ongoing basis, designated VHOVP staff will respond to volunteer inquiries made during the week. As such, it may be helpful for designated VHOVP staff to

schedule time to follow up with inquiries on their calendar. Once confirmation of a role within the VHOVP is made, follow a standard volunteer recruitment procedure.

Responses to individuals who express interest in a program contained in the VHOVP is timely. A response protocol exists to prevent undue delay and ensure that prospective volunteers receive a welcoming and effective recruitment message.

Wait List

A wait list of individuals who are at various levels of the recruitment process should be created and maintained in the volunteer management database. Individuals should be scheduled for follow up, until the relevant steps in the recruitment process is complete. The VHOVP will make every effort to keep the new recruits and interested prospective volunteers engaged with the organization in a viable, and agreed upon capacity, until such time that the gap in the recruitment process is filled.

Screening

Volunteers working with vulnerable Consumers, as well as being exposed to sensitive Consumer data is a standard practice in ADSD VHOVPs. For example, volunteers can be exposed to an individuals' money or other valuables or have access to their personal and confidential information. As such, it is very important to scrutinize and follow a screening process for potential volunteers. The screening process can simplify the placement of volunteers and help ensure that you are placing the best and most appropriate volunteer candidate in each position. It is therefore recommend that you develop a basic Screening Matrix to help reduce risk and protect the organization's reputation, Consumers, Consumer's data and staff. The decision to accept (or not) accept a volunteer applicant is based on careful consideration of all relevant information gathered in the screening process.

VHOs should strive to maintain a safe and productive service environment with honest, trustworthy, reliable and qualified volunteers, who do not present a risk of harm to themselves, others, or the reputation of the VHOVP and related entities. Screening processes should be clear and comprehensive, and standards are never waived, including for persons known to the screener. Screening inquiries are limited to collecting information directly connected to the ability of the applicant to effectively perform volunteer service in the VHOVP. The screening process is made up of four elements: screening and application form, interviewing, background checks, and reference checks:

Screening and Application Forms

A standardized screening, as well as application form is completed by all prospective VHOVP volunteers.

Interviews

All prospective volunteers are interviewed to ascertain their interest and suitability for a role contained in the VHOVP. And to maintain consistency and equity during the interview process for all volunteers, standardized interview questions should be asked. During the interview process, just like paid staff members, volunteers should also be viewed as if they are going to be part of your organization's staff and team.

During the interview, questions asked should be directly related to the prospect's ability to perform the volunteer position. It is also important to avoid asking any questions related to age, birthplace, height and weight, marital status, national origin, arrest record, race or sexual orientation.

Background Checks

All volunteers in a VHOVP undergo background checks that may include, but not be limited to verifying:

1. identity
2. volunteer history and experience
3. employment history and experience
4. education
5. social security number

NOTE: ADSD, as well as all State of Nevada entities and agencies are contracted to use one vendor to conduct formal background checks (including criminal checks) for volunteers. The vendor utilized to conduct background checks for the State is Martin Ross and Associates. State of Nevada agencies or entities that operate a VHOVP will be responsible for background check costs, as ADSD does not pay for background checks for volunteers who serve in a VHOVP. Additionally, Martin Ross and Associates does not provide background check services outside of a contract agreement. Therefore, VHOs that are not State agencies or entities should use their preferred means for conducting background checks for volunteers. The following is the contact for Martin Ross and Associates:

Contact: Dave Ponte (Investigator)
Dawn Barnett (office manager)
Martin Ross and Associates
350 S. Rock Blvd. Suite 200
Reno, NV 89502
Phone: 775-722-2704 • Toll Free: 775-336-4440 • Fax: 775-336-4441
dponte@mranev.com
dbarnett@mranev.com

Reference Checks

It is highly recommended that once you have selected the new volunteer candidate, you take the time to check one or two of their listed references. Background and personal reference checks are especially important when screening potential volunteers who will provide care to vulnerable individuals.

Driver License and Record Checks

All volunteers whose responsibilities involve operation of a motor vehicle are required to sign a certification verifying they have a valid driver's license and automobile insurance.

Once the screening process has been thoroughly completed, VHOVPs should inform the recruit of their acceptance and have the recruit complete and sign a volunteer agreement. The volunteer agreement states the frequency with which, the volunteer is expected to work, attend trainings, and attend monthly meetings; as well as other requirements of the VHO and VHOVP (also see VRPM).

Training and Development

Classroom, as well as on-the-job training are regular elements of volunteer management. Initial and ongoing training occurs to ensure that volunteers know and understand their role in the VHO, as well as how to perform their roles, within the context of the VHOVP. Training should also include instruction and appropriate responses concerning potential risks of hazardous aspects, materials, equipment, or processes the volunteer may encounter while performing their role; as well as training necessary to operate volunteer service-related materials and equipment that paid staff receive and are responsible for.

Volunteers must fulfill mandatory training requirements before roles can be performed. All new volunteers are placed on probation for a period of three months after their initial training; however, VHOVP staff will utilize observation, coaching and corrective action to manage volunteer performance during this time.

Once volunteers are fully trained, keep in mind that they will be representatives of your organization to the public, so the more they know about your VHO and related community services, the more they will be able to contribute to marketing and outreach, public relations, and advocacy.

Orientation

A successful training program begins with an orientation program. Orientation also helps volunteers see how their role fits within the context of the VHO. By seeing how their role promotes the mission of the organization, volunteers will find enhanced meaning and purpose in their assignments that otherwise might seem menial. Orienting volunteers as part of the 'team' within the organization will be a key aspect in their commitment and retention and improve the quality of their

work. Orientation adds to overall training that provides volunteers with the direction and skills they will need to carry out their assigned tasks.

All volunteers receive orientation on topics that include, but are not limited to:

- the purpose and values of the VHO
- the nature and operation of the VHOVP and the activity they have been recruited into
- the purpose, duties and requirements of the role that they are accepting

To ensure the understanding of and compliance with the VHOVP and VHO policies and procedures, it is recommended that you provide each volunteer with a written resource guide such as a volunteer handbook. The volunteer handbook is designed to be specifically customized according to your organization and what services you provide within the local community. The handbook is outlined to include the background and history of the VHO and VHOVPs, an organizational chart, and information on the facilities and organizational protocols. The volunteer handbook will be amongst other documentation included in the orientation packet; and in reviewing the volunteer handbook with volunteers, be sure to emphasize what their responsibilities will be. All resource documentation will be provided to the volunteer during their orientation. During orientation is also a good time to introduce volunteers to the organization’s staff and provide a tour of the facility.

Training

Training can be specific to your organization and your needs. We have provided a **Training Recommendations** list as part of your training materials. In general, training should be:

- ✓ Specific to the requirements of the volunteer position
- ✓ Geared to the skill level of the volunteer
- ✓ Ongoing
- ✓ Specific to the needs identified by both the volunteer and supervisor
- ✓ Periodically evaluated to determine if it is on track

Other orientation and training considerations should include:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Values/Responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of Confidentiality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Diversity |
|--|---|--|

Training is a form of retention and recognition and helps keep a volunteer motivated and committed to your organization. And volunteers will be looking for ways to learn something new, as well as use the knowledge, skills and abilities to help your organization reach its goals. If you notice that the volunteer has a specific strength or skill, seek to engage them in the VHOVP in that capacity. For example, if a volunteer is friendly and a good communicator, it might be wise to offer them a position in

which, they can exercise their people skills, such as by participating in outreach events. If a volunteer expresses interest in a specific role that they are not experienced in, seek to provide additional knowledge and the tools to equip them to perform it.

Credit for Related Training

At the discretion of the VHOVP, credit may be given for training received from another organization that corresponds with training provided in the VHOVP. However, any recommendations and modifications to VHOVP training must be approved by ADSD.

Demonstrating Qualifications

Following training, volunteers are assessed on their knowledge, skill and ability to perform their role to the minimum requirements of the program and role they are assigned to. Minimum requirements to any role, are the ability to perform at basic skill and comprehension levels, based on the criteria and process requirements of ADSD, the VHOVP and the VHO.

Hands on Training

Volunteers receive specific hands-on training which provides the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer role. The timing and methods for delivery of training are appropriate to the complexity of the training, the demands of the role, and the capabilities of the volunteer.

Paid Staff Involvement in Orientation and Training

Paid staff members with responsibility for service delivery may have an active role in the design and delivery of both the orientation, and training of volunteers.

Volunteer Involvement in Orientation and Training

The participation of experienced volunteers is encouraged in the design and delivery of volunteer orientation and training.

Continuing Education

Training updates and recertification training (where required) is administered by the VHOVP, based on ADSD guidelines. Continuing education requirements must be met for volunteers to continue serving in their role.

Conference Attendance

Volunteers are encouraged to attend conferences and meetings that are relevant to their volunteer assignments, including those administered by the VHO, and related entities. Volunteers should seek prior approval from designated staff before attending service-related conferences or meetings, if attendance will interfere with the volunteer's schedule, or if reimbursement of expenses is sought.

Evaluation

Ongoing evaluation to provide feedback on a volunteers' performance is an

essential practice to volunteer management. Although volunteers are not paid, they should be treated like paid staff. Like paid staff, volunteers should be managed, given direction, advice and encouragement, and most of all support, so that they are able to perform their tasks and do well in their role. Support includes providing the volunteers with procedures, training, shadowing staff (as necessary), and giving them feedback.

Evaluation is a two-part process: (1) evaluation of the volunteer by the VHOVP, and (2) the volunteer's evaluation of their experience with the VHOVP (see Respond to Questions, Concerns and Needs).

Feedback is an integral part of the evaluation process where the volunteer's performance is reviewed, and the results are shared with them. Evaluation can be like the paid staff's annual performance reviews, but in the case of the volunteers, this will probably need to occur frequently and informally, depending on assigned tasks and how long the volunteer has committed their time. You can begin with a monthly review, and then eventually work towards performing more formal quarterly reviews.

A volunteer evaluation should consist of: (1) a policy on performance appraisal and review, (2) a trial period before the volunteer officially becomes part of the organization, (3) a regularly scheduled meeting to discuss job performance and satisfaction, and (4) a method for reviewing commitments to changes made during the evaluation meeting⁴. The evaluation includes a review of past performance, the present, and making plans (e.g., more responsibilities, a change of schedule, etc.)

Conversely, volunteers who enjoy their environment and performing their duties are volunteers that feel satisfied and will stay committed to your organization. Their evaluation process is also an opportunity to keep the lines of communication open between the volunteer and the VHOVP.

Here are some ideas on keeping volunteers motivated:

- Make them feel like they belong
- Keep them challenged in tasks
- On-going training
- Open communication
- Encouragement and acknowledgement of their performance

Leading, Mentoring and Developing Role Models

Leading, mentoring and developing role models of volunteers is an activity that VHOVP staff perform toward achieving the VHOVPs goals. Keeping in mind that volunteers are not paid employees, who embody a wealth of knowledge, skills and abilities with no aim toward pay raises and promotions; their contributions of service in the VHOVP is to represent the essence and heart of the VHOVP.

⁴ Ibid

Leading and role modeling by VHOVP staff best occurs through directing and reinforcing volunteers toward the purposes and practices of the VHOVP, all the while modeling it themselves. For example, through their service in a VHOVP, volunteers facilitate the delivery of critical and timely government resources and information that lends to empowering, often vulnerable individuals to live more independent and meaningful lives. Through their interest and participation in a VHOVP, volunteers have found some value in contributing their free labor to such a cause, as they realize that ultimately, they are empowering the public in ways that may not be easily accessible to them. VHOVP staff are constantly on stage before volunteers for them to observe; and they are beholden to follow the VHOVPs same purposes and practices. Leading as a VHOVP staff member is a function that is of major importance because it is the way in which, activities are perceived by volunteers, as well as how efficient and effective volunteers in VHOVPs are replicated and become community and organizational role models themselves.

Managing Diversity

Managing diversity relates to valuing ethnic differences and managing prejudice and discrimination through teaching and education that reflects the nature and essence of the VHOVP. Managing diversity also involves a grievance process that will address and resolve complaints of all occurrences of prejudice and discrimination. Volunteers should be trained in and demonstrate respect and sensitivity to the norms, traditions, lifestyles and beliefs of identified Consumer groups and cultures. Because excellent communication is a key to success in most volunteer roles, volunteers should have the ability to communicate effectively with Consumers and participants from diverse populations.

Retention and Recognition

Retention and recognition are combined concepts toward “developing techniques, events, and programs that acknowledge volunteers’ contributions, as well as ensuring the efficiency and success of the placement” (Forsyth, 1999, para.7).⁵

Retention

Keeping volunteers interested, excited, and motivated about your organization is going to be crucial to retaining them. Allowing for volunteers to provide feedback about their participation and experience with the VHOVP (see Evaluation) is a good way to gauge how dedicated volunteers are to a VHOVP. And understanding and responding to their feedback will be an important factor in retaining them. Retaining volunteers can also be achieved when a VHOVP establishes an ongoing system of responding to volunteer’s questions, concerns and needs (see Respond to Volunteer Questions, Concerns, and Needs).

⁵ Forsyth, J. (1999). Volunteer management strategies: Balancing risk and reward. *Nonprofit World*, 17(3), 40. Retrieved from: <http://www.nonprofitworld.org/>.

Recognition

Recognition is defined and used in many ways, but in the case of volunteers it's to acknowledge an achievement, service, merit, etc.⁶⁷ VHOVPs should have a system for recognizing and rewarding the work done by volunteers both individually and collectively. This system, including criteria, timing, and process, is explained to all volunteers upon acceptance into service. A system for recognition is broadly constructed to allow recognition of all forms of volunteer contribution and achievement, not just quantity of volunteer time donated. Staff and volunteers are consulted to identify those deserving of any special recognition or awards (see Stakeholder Involvement).

One of the most important ways to recognize the volunteer is to treat them with respect and give them support and praise throughout the year. With creativity and effort, there are a variety of ways to celebrate volunteers without slashing into your budget, here are a few:

- Get name badges for the volunteers
- Select "Volunteer of the Month" and post his/her story on your website or in your newsletter
- Saying "Thank you" often
- Celebrating Volunteer Day (April timeframe) – have a luncheon, ice cream social, or potluck
- Small tokens of gift cards, movie passes, etc.
- Share your success with volunteers. They like knowing how their time has made an impact on the business, project, or meeting a goal (i.e., raised \$10,000 during an event).
- Nominations for local, state, and national awards
- Personal notes and verbal greetings from a supervisor and peers
- Annual events (i.e., luncheons, dinners, and award ceremonies)
- National Volunteer Week events – this week is set aside to honor people who donate their time and energy to various organizations and causes. This is an opportunity for you to use this week as a special time to recognize your volunteers.
- Special celebrations – recognize birthdays, milestones and holidays

A simple, yet effective practice for volunteer recognition is "*A Round of Applause*." This simple volunteer recognition activity can be used to acknowledge volunteer support on an ongoing basis. Take a piece of paper in the shape of a small circle with an encouraging photo and list "Date, To, From, and Why." Anytime you want to say thank you to a volunteer, give them a "*round*." After the volunteer collects five (5) of them, give them the opportunity

⁶ Successful-Strategies-for-Recruiting.pdf - <http://agingnetworkvolunteercollaborative.org/resources/1323/>

⁷ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Recognitions=t>

to turn them in for a prize. You can get small prizes such as donated gift cards, gas cards, etc.

Best Practices for Volunteer Recognition

- *Make It A Priority.* Recognizing the work of volunteers is crucial for any organization that wants to retain its volunteers and attract new ones. Designate someone in your organization to be responsible for ensuring that ongoing recognition of volunteers takes place.
- *Do It Often.* Recognition of volunteers should happen on a year-round, frequent, formal and informal basis. Begin by saying “thank you” often!
- *Do It in Different Ways.* Vary your recognition efforts, from the informal thank you and spontaneous treats to more formal events. Here are some examples:
 - Give them the bigger picture: One way to thank volunteers is to give them perspective about what they’re doing. No matter what they’re doing, let your volunteer know the larger context – not just what they’re doing, but why they’re doing it – and you’ll show that you respect them and appreciate their work.⁸
 - Provide food for your volunteers when they work.
 - Check-in with your volunteers regularly.
 - Feature volunteer stories on your blog/website.
 - Provide volunteer awards.
 - Give your volunteers small tokens of gratitude.
 - Send your volunteers a simple, handwritten thank-you card.
- *Be Sincere.* Make each occasion to recognize volunteers meaningful and an opportunity to reflect on the value volunteers bring to your organization.
- *Recognize the Person, Not the Work.* It’s best to phrase recognition to emphasize the contribution of the individual and not the result. “*You did a great job!*” as opposed to “*This is a great job!*”
- *Make It Appropriate to the Achievement.* For example, a paper certificate accompanied by a private thank you may be appropriate for a few months of service but a public dinner and engrave plaque may better suit 10 years of volunteerism.
- *Be Consistent.* Make sure that whatever standards of recognition you establish can be consistently maintained by your organization in years to come. Holding a volunteer recognition dinner one year sets up expectations for future volunteers.
- *Be Timely.* Try to arrange recognition soon after an achievement has been reached – delaying until weeks or months later diminishes the value of your gratitude.
- *Customize It.* Getting to know each of your volunteers and their interests will help you learn how best to recognize each individual and make him/her feel special.

⁸ <http://blogs.volunteermatch.org/engagingvolunteers/2012/04/05/7-ways-to-appreciate-your-volunteers/>

Saying “*Thank you*” can bring results that are pure magic and every volunteer will appreciate the message from your organization. The volunteer will feel completely satisfied that their time donated is not wasted and will make them feel fulfilled.

Respond to Questions, Concerns and Needs

While volunteers are generally more focused on their role in a program contained in a VHOVP, it is important for them to understand how their role affects, and is impacted by factors surrounding them, such as changes that occur in the VHO and VHOVP, as these changes can directly, or indirectly impact their service. VHOs and conversely, VHOVPs that encourage feedback from volunteers and keep volunteers abreast of what is occurring, can enhance the production buy-in from volunteers, towards their aims and best interests. Buy in is enhanced with good two-way communication as volunteers can express what is needed to perform their role more efficiently and effectively. Feedback from volunteers also allows VHOs and VHOVPs better understand and utilize the knowledge, skills and abilities of their volunteers. When volunteers achieve buy-in to an organization’s aims and best interests, they will have a vested interest in how the organization functions, not as bystanders, but as co-members with the VHOVP and the VHO itself.⁹ As such, it is important to keep volunteers in the loop of what is going on in the organization. To do this, VHOVPs can do several things:

- Conduct weekly team briefings to report relevant changes; updates; and gauge volunteer thoughts and experiences collectively, relative to their respective program, as well as their activities in the VHOVP and the VHO
- Display a feedback box to collect anonymous feedback
- Encourage and quickly respond to volunteer questions
- Assess what is needed for volunteers to perform their roles optimally and make efforts to accommodate them
- Thoughtfully address the collective concerns of volunteers
- Compile and disseminate a list of FAQs and responses to anonymous feedback to all volunteer staff

Stakeholder Involvement

Involving stakeholders (such as Consumers and relevant staff) of VHOs and VHOVPs in volunteer management, is an approach by which, VHOs and VHOVPs can improve their chances of meeting strategies and goals, with the use of volunteers.¹⁰ Stakeholders observe volunteers from different angles, so taking into consideration their feedback can help to make improvements to a VHOVP; identify outstanding volunteers for recognition; identify donors for recognition; recommend information and resources that can assist with

⁹ Coleman, C. (2017). Volunteer Management in Faith Based Organizations. Retrieved from <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3963&context=thesisdissertations>.

the VHO and VHOVP mission, etc. Obtaining stakeholder feedback can be achieved by:

- Asking for feedback in mailings
- Soliciting for feedback on website
- Ongoing verbal conversations with others
- Soliciting for feedback in VHO or VHOVP printed materials

Section III: Volunteer Host Organization Volunteer Program Policies

We have developed Volunteer Risk and Program Management Policies (VRPM) for your use in your VHOVP. These policies are classified as 'required' and we highly encourage your site to use them as such, as well as adding additional ones that you deem necessary or appropriate to the VHO. These policies are designed to minimize risk and provide standard and general, volunteer management practices. All are customizable to your organization. The following is merely an overview of the policies, while the full VRPM is a separate document.

Introductory Policies

- *Purpose of the Volunteer Policies* – The purpose of the is to enhance the quality, effectiveness and safety of ADSD services through the provision of guidance and direction to VHOVP staff and volunteers. The volunteer policies are intended to support ADSD and related VHOVP volunteer management.
- *Scope of the Volunteer Policies* – These volunteer policies are designed to establish and organize the structure and operation of volunteer programs that are under the purview of ADSD.
- *Compliance* – Any responsible VHO must strike a balance between respecting the dignity, rights, and comfort of its personnel and Consumer population, along with its legal and ethical obligations to deliver safe, efficient services to fulfill its mission.
- *Volunteer Role Classifications* – These policies apply to all roles undertaken by ADSD volunteers, whether through direct service, or through a VHO.
- *Service at the Discretion of ADSD* – The ADSD accepts the service of volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the ADSD.

Risk Management, Health and Safety

The safety of VHOVP staff and volunteers is paramount. VHOVP staff is responsible for the safety and well-being of volunteers, just as they are responsible for the safety and well-being of their paid staff. The overarching rationale for this section of the Guide is that the VHOVP strives to operate a health and safety-conscious service environment, as well as deliver safe and reliable services to its Consumers.

Risk management is central to the VHOVP. It is, for example, a measurement of effective and safe role development; appropriate volunteer screening and placement; comprehensive volunteer orientation; training; certification; and ongoing volunteer supervision and support. Managing risks is fundamental to the development of all volunteer policies, which govern both the management of the VHOVP and volunteer performance.

Risk Assessment

Every three years the VHOVP staff within a VHO conducts a risk assessment on the roles, service, and activities of VHO volunteers, based on the Guide, and VHO protocols.

Also regularly assessed in relation to risks, are training and qualification procedures; volunteer performance management; volunteer program management processes and activities; and volunteer service site(s).

Risk management strategies are implemented as needed, including local-level procedures that identify, prevent, and reduce the incidence and impact of risk.

Insurance:

VHOs are responsible for providing liability insurance to all volunteers who serve in their organization. Liability insurance is essential for protecting VHOs and volunteers alike, from the risks of liabilities imposed by lawsuits and similar claims. Liability coverage should include:

- physical injury to another
- damage to another's property;
- and defense of an allegation of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct

Workers' compensation insurance will be provided to all volunteers who participate in a VHOVP. ADSD Risk Management will require a comprehensive volunteer roster listing the names of the volunteers who served for the quarter in each individual program contained in a VHOVP. Volunteers in multiple programs are counted in all programs they volunteer for.

Automobile Insurance Coverage – VHO volunteers who drive their own vehicle for VHOVP purposes carry liability coverage on any vehicle so used. The volunteer bears the cost of this insurance.

Safe Work Environment – The VHO complies with all safety and health standards established by relevant local, state, and federal authorities and keeps volunteers informed about these standards as needed.

Working Alone – To protect the safety of VHOVP volunteers, volunteers do not work alone in VHO offices in the absence of at least one (1) supervisor or a VHO paid staff member.

Workplace Violence – The VHO will establish measures and procedures to assess and control identified risks that are likely to expose any of its personnel – paid or unpaid – to physical injury resulting from violence in the workplace.

Reporting of Abuse – VHO volunteers who witness instances of abuse of Consumers while performing their assigned duties report this to their VHOVP supervisor so that appropriate follow-up action may occur.

Home Visits – Home visits by VHOVP volunteers to a Consumers' residence are prohibited for volunteers who serve at ADSD. VHOs will assess the risks of volunteers making home visits to Consumers based on their organizations safety protocols, and the VRPM.

Privacy and Location of Counseling – Face-to-face work with Consumers takes place at VHO offices (or those of partner agencies). Where Consumers are unable to travel to the VHO (or partner's) office, volunteers discuss with their supervisor alternate meeting arrangements. Off-site counseling work is not undertaken by volunteers without prior approval.

Emergency Contact Procedures – The VHO and VHOVP will have emergency contact information on all its volunteers – even short-term and event volunteers – and a procedure that enables volunteers to communicate with VHO or VHOVP supervisory personnel at any time volunteers may be on duty. Response to emergency communications takes place without delay.

Volunteer Program Management

Role Descriptions – The VHOVP will design and define descriptions for volunteers as a guideline to decide what areas would best fit the volunteer within the VHOVP.

Recruitment – Volunteers are recruited by the VHOVP on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and extending VHOVP services to Consumers. From time to time, recruitment campaigns may be launched to attract volunteers who may better serve targeted Consumer populations.

Screening – Volunteer screening is a critical component of both human resources management and risk management. The VHO and VHOVP strives to maintain a safe and productive workplace with honest, trustworthy, reliable, and qualified volunteers who do not present a risk of harm to themselves, other persons, or the reputation of the VHO and ADSD. As such, background checks are required for all ADSD and VHOVP volunteers.

Placement – When placing a volunteer in a role, attention is paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and to the requirements of the volunteer role. Placements are not made unless the requirements of the volunteer, the role requirements, and the supervising staff can be met.

Orientation of Training – All volunteers receive orientation to the purpose and values of the VHO and VHOVP, the nature and operation of the program or activity for which they are recruited, and the purpose, duties, and requirements of the role they are accepting.

Evaluation of Performance – Volunteers receive ongoing evaluation of their work. It is impossible to achieve success without monitoring performance and behavior against established and communicated standards.

Retention and Recognition – The VHOVP will establish a system for recognizing and rewarding the work done volunteers both individually and collectively.

Volunteer/Paid Staff Relationships – Volunteers and paid staff are partners in implementing the mission and programs of the VHOVP, with each having an equal, but complementary role to play. Each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.

Grounds for Dismissal – The VRPM provides a list of acts by volunteers that may result in immediate dismissal of volunteer service. However, the list is not intended to be complete or comprehensive, as individual situations can vary. VHOs and VHOVP staff should use discretion and good judgment in all decision regarding possible volunteer dismissal.

Ground for Immediate Dismissal – There are some behaviors that are so unacceptable that they are simply not tolerate at the VHOVP. These behaviors trigger immediate dismissal of volunteers from all VHOVP volunteer service. When there is no doubt that the unacceptable behavior has taken place, the volunteer is immediately relieved of their duties.

Policies on Volunteer Behavior, Performance, and Roles – Guides and directs the work and behavior of VHOVP volunteers. They apply equally to all VHOVP volunteers, and compliance with these policies is a condition of continued volunteer involvement in the ADSD.

Information Technology

Information Procedures – The VHO has in place an information management protocol that outlines procedures to control volunteer access to and use of Consumer information and the safe operation of computers used to collect and store program and Consumer information.