## Marketing Through Volunteers

Volunteers are vital to a Coalition and can serve as its most effective salespeople in the community. They also bring creativity and new ideas to a program or project.

##### Volunteer Recruitment

A systematic approach should be taken with volunteers. The coordinator must analyze not only the needs of the Coalition, but also those of prospective volunteers.

* Determine your needs and who can best fill them.
* Know the prospective recruits so that you can relate to their interests or goals.
* Be able to explain why your request presents a unique opportunity, and to cite the benefits of affiliating with the Coalition or project.
* Analyze your request to determine whether it is reasonable and necessary.
* Select your means of recruitment, e.g., in person, by letter, by telephone, and/or through the media, or a combination of these.
* Determine the time frame for the length of service. Volunteers must know this.
* Develop a contingency plan, as even volunteers with the best intention or reputation may not always be able to follow through.

##### Volunteer Training

Volunteers must have structured and professional training for their tasks if they are to be effective assets for a Coalition. A structured approach is necessary because volunteer efforts will fail when they are too informally organized.

* EXPERTISE OF VOLUNTEER- Each coordinator should have on file the types of duties a volunteer can best do as well as those they will not do.
* INTRODUCTION TO DUTIES – This process should include an overview of the program or projects and a description of their assignments.
* SCHEDULED TRAINING – This includes workshops, seminars, and other specific training, and is essential for the volunteers to develop or enhance their skills to successfully carry out their assignments.
* JOB ASSIGNMENTS – Assignments should be based upon program needs and a volunteer’s interests, skills and level of commitment. Written descriptions should be provided.

Following is an example of a “Volunteer Data” worksheet to help identify the volunteers’ interests, abilities, and skills.

**VOLUNTEER DATA**

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I can be reached at:

Address:

City, State, Zip

Telephone: Home: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Work:

E-mail:

The best time to reach me is

Why did I decide to volunteer for this organization?

Things I like to do that I believe would help with the program include:

Talents or gifts I have to offer include:

Things I really don’t want to do:

Resources and Networks I’m involved in that could help with this project include:

I am interested in serving on the following committees:

## Maintaining Volunteer Vitality

MCj03908160000[1] Maintaining long-term interest and productivity of the Coalition members and volunteers can sometimes be a difficult undertaking. The coalition must be watchful for certain signals that may lead to a lack of vitality.

* Decline in membership attendance
* Failure to follow through on commitments
* Challenges to authority
* Turf issues
* Inadequate leadership

Early in the coalition development, the coordinator and leadership should develop guidelines to ward off disinterest and conflict. Those guidelines might include:

1. Do not ask more of volunteers than they can deliver.
2. Keep the volunteers fully informed.
3. Provide training and education to build volunteers’ skills and knowledge bases.
4. Give personal and organizational credit to volunteers for achievements.
5. Evaluate success and keep volunteers informed.
6. Allow volunteers to provide input and feedback on projects.
7. When new members are necessary, ask current members for recruitment ideas.
8. Give recognition to volunteers.

9. Present them as spokespeople to the media.

10. Ask them to represent the Coalition at important events and gatherings.

11. Present awards for distinguished service.

## Volunteer Liability

## Coalitions take advantage of a dedicated, unpaid labor force, more commonly known as volunteers. It is important to be aware of how to protect your program and your volunteers from legal claims. The risk of liability to an organization is an important consideration. Many non-profit organizations purchase liability insurance to cover these risks, but it is often incomplete or very expensive.

Liability insurance should cover such things as on-the-job related injuries and accidental death; automobile insurance if a vehicle is owned by organization and the agency is using volunteer drivers: automobile insurance if volunteers use their cars for the organization’s business; personal liability insurance in excess of any other valid and collectable insurance: group insurance. Volunteers should be made aware of the insurance coverage the organization has in place. The organization must ensure that the driver possess a valid driver’s license and proper liability and classification for the type of driving required, and the insurance company must be notified if volunteers are using their own vehicles for organization activities.

A federal law, entitled “The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997” (VPA) removes volunteers from liability for negligent acts or omissions committed while acting within the scope of their duties as volunteers. A volunteer defined under this act is any individual performing services for a non-profit organization or governmental entity who does not receive compensation – other than reasonable reimbursement or allowance for expenses – in excess of $500 per year.

The VPA, however, does not relieve a volunteer from all responsibility for his or her actions. Specifically, the law does NOT protect volunteers if their acts or omissions result from:

* Willful or criminal misconduct
* Gross negligence
* Reckless misconduct
* Conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual the volunteer harms.

In addition, the VPA does NOT cover volunteers if the harm is caused by the operation of a motor vehicle, vessel, aircraft, or other vehicle for which the state requires an operating license or insurance. Also, a misconduct that constitutes a crime of violence, a hate crime, a sexual offense, or violates a federal or state civil right law is not protected by the VPA. Finally, the volunteer is NOT protected if he or she was under the influence of intoxicating alcohol or any drug at the time of the misconduct.

You can help limit the legal exposure of your organization and its volunteers if you follow these guidelines:

1. Treat volunteers like you would treat paid staff.
2. Develop volunteer position descriptions;
3. Use and carefully screen volunteer applications;
4. Train and closely supervise your volunteers.
5. Promptly investigate and respond to any complaints or concerns regarding a volunteer’s actions.
6. Secure insurance protection for your volunteers, as well as make sure some has been secured for any staff paid to conduct the program.

Guidelines for Volunteers to Reduce Liability

Essentially, the VPS exempts volunteer workers of nonprofit organizations and government entities from liability for harm caused by their actions or omissions if:

* They act within the scope of their responsibilities
* The volunteers are properly licensed or certified (if necessary)
* The harm wasn’t caused by willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct or conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the injured party
* The harm wasn’t caused by the unpaid worker operating a licensed motor vehicle

The federal law does not prevent unpaid workers from being sued by an organization. For example, if a nonprofit organization is sued based on the actions of one or more of its volunteers and a judgment is entered against it, the entity may sue the volunteer to recover his or her proportionate share of the financial judgment. While it’s unlikely a nonprofit organization would sue in such cases, and indeed, it has seldom been done, it is legally possible.

SAFEGUARD YOURSELF

Because state and federal laws give unpaid workers an uncertain level of protection, it is best to take precautions when you volunteer in your community.

***Avoid the appearance of impropriety.*** Board members should be very careful about

conducting business of any type with the nonprofit organization. Even when no actual

conflict of interest may exist, the appearance of it in a minor transaction may lead to

charges that board members are improperly receiving personal benefits. Such a

situation can harm the organization or its members’ credibility.

***Educate yourself about how the organization operates.*** Volunteers should learn

where the organization gets its funds and how it operates from day to day. Ask for a list

of revenue sources and a description of how the organization approves and documents

expenditures.

***Examine internal controls.*** The organization should have internal controls in place to

ensure staff people handle business in a consistent manner to minimize any opportunity to misappropriate funds.

***Examine the organization’s bylaws.*** Get answers about bylaws, organizational

guidelines, and articles of incorporation. Find out if attendance is required and whether

members can speak with staff to get or give input for making decisions.

***Understand responsibilities.*** Nonprofit organizations should provide job descriptions

for board members and officers so each will know what he or she is expected to

contribute in terms of time, tasks and financial commitment. The organization should

provide orientation and education sessions for members to ensure they are given the

opportunity to understand the mission, member and volunteer responsibilities, and the

rules and regulations that might apply to the organization.

***Have proper insurance coverage.*** Make sure the organization you are volunteering for protects you with a liability insurance policy. Check the type of coverage and amount.

***Attend meetings and document votes and discussions.*** When you agree to serve

as a volunteer for a nonprofit organization, you essentially are agreeing to help act as a steward for the organization. If you don’t attend meetings, you can be held just as

responsible as those who do attend on a regular basis.

Sample Liability Release and Indemnification Agreement for Volunteers

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have volunteered to assist the (organization

name), located at (address) with a variety of projects and in a variety of capacities.

I have volunteered my time and services because of my support for (the organization) and my

desire to participate actively in the furtherance of its work. I understand that my activities as a volunteer

may entail a certain risk of injury and that I may be exposed to hazards arising from vehicular travel, use of

tools and equipment, and occasional manual labor. I further understand that incidents or injuries may occur

in locations or under circumstances where medical attention is not readily available. I expressly assume all

risks associated with such hazards, as well as all other risks associated with or arising from my volunteer

activities. Because the assertion of claims against (the organization) for personal injury occurring during

my volunteer service would be antithetical to my support of (the organization) and its goals and would

reduce the ability of (the organization) to accomplish its charitable purposes, I grant this release.

I agree to abide by all rules and regulations of (the organization) regarding safety and use of all

equipment.

On behalf of myself, my estate and its personal representative, my heirs and assigns, I hereby

forever release, hold harmless, defend and indemnify (the organization), their officers, directors, employees and agents, from any and all costs, claims, losses, liabilities or damages arising from or in any way related to, my services as a volunteer for (the organization). I intend this release and indemnity to be effective, regardless whether the claim of liability is asserted in negligence, strict liability in tort, or other theory of recovery. For myself, my estate and its personal representative, my heirs and assigns, I covenant and agree to make no claim, nor to institute any suit, action or proceeding against either (the organization) or its officers, directors, employees or agents, relating to any incident or occurrence arising out of, or in connection with, my volunteer activities.

I have executed this release on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Volunteer Application Form

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_City \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_State \_\_\_\_ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Day) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Evenings \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Phone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Past Volunteer Experience** (include organization/agency, position, supervisor phone/e-mail)

**Employment** (include most recent company, position, supervisor phone/e-mail)

**Desired Schedule** (include days and times available)

Monday Friday Morning (9 a.m. to noon)

Tuesday Saturday Afternoon (noon to 4 p.m.)

Wednesday Sunday Evening (4 p.m. to 8 p.m.)

Thursday

## Frequency of volunteer availability (e.g., weekly, semiweekly, monthly) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to volunteer with this organization?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How would you like to help with this organization?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What are your hobbies, interests, and skills?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Education/Credentials** (if over 18 years, start with high school)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **Date** | **Degree** | **Location** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**References:** Give the name, address, and phone/e-mail of three non-family members who can provide references on your ability to perform this volunteer position.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Volunteer Position Description Worksheet**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Component** | **Description** |
| Job Title |  |
| Purpose |  |
| Key Responsibilities |  |
| Location |  |
| Supervision |  |
| Length of Appointment |  |
| Time Commitment |  |
| Qualifications |  |
| Benefits |  |
| Support Provided |  |

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**Volunteer Agreement**

**Volunteer Agreement**

The volunteer agreement is intended to ensure an understanding between volunteer managers and volunteers of the volunteer position description and the organization’s policies and procedures.

**Volunteer Agreement**

**Agency**

We, [agency name], agree to accept the services of [volunteer name] beginning [date].

And we commit

1. To provide accurate information, training, and assistance
2. To ensure supervision and provide job assessment and feedback
3. To respect the skills and individual needs of the volunteer.

**Volunteer**

I, [volunteer name], agree to serve as a

volunteer and commit

1. To perform volunteer duties to the best of my ability
2. To follow agency rules, policies, and procedures, including recordkeeping requirements and confidentiality of agency and client information
3. To meet time and duty commitments or to provide adequate notice so that alternate arrangements can be made.

**Agree to:**

Volunteer Staff Representative

Date Date

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