

**SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT SERIES – TOPIC 1**

## Identifying and Designing Volunteer Positions

The degree of respect your organization shows for volunteers, and the value you place on their gifts and their time, begins with creating meaningful volunteer positions and job descriptions.

Volunteers can quickly assess if the role they have been given is truly beneficial to the organization and in keeping with their skills and abilities. Volunteers are looking for opportunities that are rewarding, engaging and allow them to make use of their natural gifts and abilities as well as those skills they have acquired through a variety of past experiences. They want to know that what they are doing is having a meaningful impact on the mission or goals of the ministry.

Wherever possible, volunteer positions should be clearly defined either through a summary of key responsibilities or a more detailed job description. This not only provides the volunteer with a clear set of responsibilities and expectations, but it also reinforces the organization's commitment to treating volunteers in a professional manner. Job descriptions can be as basic or as detailed as circumstances warrant, but some of the main considerations in developing a suitable description can include:

<b>Job Title</b>	Identify the position in a dignified, respectful way.
<b>Major Objective</b>	A concise summary of major goals and responsibilities.
<b>Qualifications</b>	What are the main skills and abilities needed to perform the tasks?
<b>Responsibilities</b>	A thorough list of all duties and responsibilities associated with this position.
<b>Orientation</b>	Identify what orientation/training is required and who will provide it. Especially important if the volunteer is looking to gain employment skills.
<b>Time/Place</b>	What are the volunteer's expected duty hours, and at what location?
<b>Commitment</b>	What is the length of commitment in order to justify investment in training?
<b>Supervision</b>	Who does the volunteer report to and receive direction from?
<b>Expenses</b>	What is the process for reimbursing out-of-pocket expenses (parking, etc.)?

A well-prepared job description is an important tool for volunteer recruitment, screening, supervision and performance evaluation, and it helps to ensure that the role of the volunteer is understood by all co-workers. The process of designing volunteer job descriptions also allows your organization to do some brainstorming about tasks and projects that you would like to accomplish, but may lack the required time or expertise.

Finally, remember that volunteer job descriptions need to be fluid documents that can be modified and adapted to fit changing circumstances and needs.

## QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES:

- Of all our current volunteer positions, which should have job descriptions and which should not have job descriptions? What is the criteria or determining factor for needing or not needing a job description?
- Do we have any volunteer positions that do not currently have job descriptions but could benefit if such descriptions were developed? What are some of the first steps we can take toward resolving this?
- What are some of the reasons why organizations lack job descriptions for their volunteers? How might this impact the volunteer? What problems or benefits might you experience because of this?
- Are there specific projects or tasks that we would like to accomplish, and could do so if we found the right volunteer and gave them the necessary mandate? If so, what would a Job Description be for such a position?

ServiceLink is proud to offer the following *Volunteer Engagement* workshops:

1. Identifying and Designing Volunteer Positions
2. Recruitment and Marketing
3. Screening and Interviewing Volunteer Applicants
4. Orientation and Training
5. Supervision and Evaluation
6. Discipline and Dismissal
7. Motivation and Recognition

Please contact us to learn more about available training and development opportunities:



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