



BUILDING CREATIVE BRIDGES

paulsignorelli & associates

ps

Staff Training

Mentoring

Volunteering  
& Docents

Writing

### Best Practices: Creating and Managing Volunteer Programs

1. Clearly define all aspects of the program and prepare documentation:
  - Volunteer handbook, including volunteers' rights and responsibilities
  - Application form which matches content management system
  - Assignment /interest sheet to match volunteers with assignments
  - Tracking sheet to document steps in interviewing/placing volunteer
  - Guidelines for volunteers working with children
  - Recruitment plan
  - Screening, interviewing, and placement procedures
  - Orientation/training sessions for all new volunteers
  - Job descriptions/contracts for every volunteer position
  - Conflict resolution/disciplinary procedures
  - Thanks, offered to volunteers as often as possible, including by way of group gatherings held to honor volunteer efforts
2. In preparing volunteer job descriptions, create volunteers assignments which:
  - Support your organization's mission statement;
  - Are clearly defined;
  - Include minimum and special conditions required of volunteers; and
  - Help staff serve the organization's and customers' needs rather than adding to staff's workload.
3. Identify onsite supervisors for each position before placing volunteers in those sites.
4. Develop collaborative relationships with other community organizations which have strong, well functioning volunteer programs. This allows everyone to share resources and serve as sources of referrals (both for those times when you need but cannot find volunteers as well as for those times when you do not have appropriate assignments for talented volunteers and need to help them find an agency which will benefit from what they are offering. Volunteers who are referred to other prospective agencies are much happier than those who are simply turned away or, worse yet, ignored when they are, in essence, trying to offer sometime important—their services—free of charge.

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## **Basic Template, Adapted from Guidelines Prepared for ASTD Mt. Diablo Chapter**

### **Welcome**

As a volunteer-run organization serving workplace learning and performance professionals, we value the efforts of our volunteers. We strive to meet our members' needs through our combined collaborative efforts, and we are dedicated to doing everything possible to making all volunteers' experiences with the organization ones which they will treasure and remember long after assignments have been completed.

Because great volunteer efforts are the lifeblood of the organization, and because less-than-satisfactory efforts are a burden to all involved, we have provided the following guidelines to prepare our volunteers for their efforts on our behalf.

### **Basic Expectations for the Organization and Volunteers**

Volunteers have an absolute right to expect that they will:

Be offered assignments which are clearly defined before the volunteers accept those assignments., and that the assignments will involve an appropriate use of the volunteers' skills and experience.

Be treated professionally and courteously, and made to feel that they are part of a well functioning team throughout the time they are involved as volunteers for the organization.

Have a direct supervisor to whom they will report for the duration of the project with which they are involved.

Receive appropriate orientation and/or training for all assignments they accept.

Receive timely notifications of any changes in the procedures they are expected to follow while volunteering with us.

Be able to report any problems they have with their assignments (change of scope in work, difficulties with fellow volunteers or supervisor, unexpected difficulties in completing the assignment) immediately to the project supervisor or, if the supervisor is part of the problem, to the member overseeing the project or volunteers) for immediate resolution.

Those supervising volunteers have an absolute right to expect that volunteers will:

Discuss any reservations they have about accepting an assignment before agreeing to become part of a project, and will complete the responsibilities of their assignments as defined when they agree to participate.

Act professionally and courteously, as part of a well functioning team, throughout the time they are involved as volunteers for the organization.

Follow the direction and guidance of their direct supervisor for the duration of the project; keep their project supervisor aware of their progress and any difficulties they face in completing assignments within the established deadlines; and notify their project supervisor immediately if they need to withdraw from a project.

Attend any orientation and/or training required for the assignments they accept, and that they will be on time for all meetings and events with which they are involved as volunteers.

Be notified in a timely fashion by project supervisors of any changes in procedures they are expected to follow while volunteering.

Work with project supervisors to resolve any difficulties which arise in the course of the volunteers' work with us.

Unresolved issues between project supervisors and volunteers should be referred immediately to the Chapter President (or, in the Chapter President's absence, to the President-elect) for resolution.

***For more information, please contact Paul Signorelli & Associates  
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