Planning for Volunteers in Family Literacy: A GUIDEBOOK

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About the Authors

**Jane Mencer** is the Project Manager for Verizon Literacy Campus at the National Center for Family Literacy. Her background includes overseeing volunteer programs for several organizations, including a nonprofit with more than 300 volunteers, and facilitating strategic planning processes for three national organizations. Jane was certified as a trainer by the National Quality Academy in Quality Process and Continuous Improvement Strategies in Education. She holds a B.S. in Education and a Master of Public Administration. Jane has worked in post-secondary education, adult education, and family literacy throughout most of her career.

**Susan McShane,** Reading Initiative Specialist at the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), has more than 20 years of experience in adult education and family literacy. She served as a trainer and director of training at NCFL from 1992-1995. Before rejoining the staff in 2003, she spent three years as Executive Director of the Literacy Volunteers of America organization in Charlottesville, Virginia, and four years as Staff Development Coordinator at the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center. Her areas of interest are adult reading instruction, learning disabilities, and learner assessment.

**Amy Wilson** is the Training Coordinator and Administrator for Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. She has worked in adult education since 1988. Her program trains about 1,000 practitioners each year to teach adults and children and to support family literacy programs. She received her undergraduate and graduate education at Penn State University and she participated in the national *Bridges To Practice* dissemination project which specializes in learning disabilities training. She has 10 years of teaching experience with ESL, adult literacy, and GED students. She also designs educational training programs and is a member of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Bureau of ABLE’s leadership team and family literacy management team.

**Johnnie (“Shani”) L. Brown-Falu** is currently the External Coach for Accelerated Schools at the University of Houston. She has a broad background in the development and implementation of a variety of family involvement programs. In her 16 years with the Houston Independent School District she served in several roles including teacher, reading specialist, producer and host of a televised reading program, and coordinator of professional development for Title I specialists and coordinators. In her four years at the National Center for Family Literacy her skills as a trainer were highlighted in her work with the Toyota Families in Schools project in 15 cities across the country. Shani holds a B.S. in elementary education from Texas Southern University and a Master of Science from University of Houston Clear Lake.
Karen Smith is the Family Literacy Program Manager for Pima College Adult Education. Her journey in family literacy began in 1991 when she became a family literacy instructor, a position she held for four years. She has been in coordination and training since then.

Susan Lythgoe has served as Executive Director of The Learning Source for Adults and Families for the past 11 years. The Learning Source is the largest volunteer-based literacy program in Colorado and has stayed true to that for 40 years. Susan and her team of program directors and volunteer recruiters provide volunteer-driven adult and family literacy programs in 17 of their centers throughout metro Denver. On any given day, more than 100 volunteers are helping Colorado’s adults achieve their goals of a better life for themselves and their children.

Noemi Aguilar has worked in family literacy for 14 years in a variety of roles. She has developed curriculum, mentored teachers and served on several advisory councils for local projects as well as on state committees for professional development. As the assistant director of a local adult education cooperative, Noemi was responsible for designing and implementing a professional development plan for the entire cooperative. Prior to joining the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), Noemi was an Even Start program coordinator.
What would help you do a better job of supporting families in your literacy program?

When asked that simple question, teachers and administrators in local family literacy programs have a broad variety of responses. Often the first response is “more time and more money!”

But practitioners then quickly begin to offer details:

- Adult students would benefit from more one-on-one instruction
- An extra adult in the early childhood classroom would help ensure that students receive individualized attention
- Enrollment would increase if someone from the community talked to families about the program
- Clerical support would give teachers and administrators more time to plan

The National Center for Family Literacy has long understood that family literacy is a complex program to implement. With the multi-layered issues surrounding families who participate, it is easy to understand why. Along with the intrinsic rewards for professional staff come the many challenges inherent in initiating and maintaining quality programs. Budgets are stretched. Staff members often are challenged to address a wide range of student abilities. Tasks beyond instruction eat away at valuable teacher planning time.

Yet in every community, there exists a potential resource, often untapped, that can make a difference—volunteers!

All of us in the field of literacy celebrate the success of programs in communities across the country. We have seen adults move from low skills to competency, from economic dependency to independence, and from uncertainty about the school system to active involvement in their children’s education. At the same time, we’ve seen children gain skills that prepare them to be active and enthusiastic lifelong learners. Volunteers, in support of the teaching staff, can help ensure that literacy programs continue to thrive.

Introduction

What’s the difference between a literacy volunteer and a tutor?
The term volunteer applies to anyone who gives his time, talent or expertise without financial compensation (although he enjoys many other kinds of rewards!). Tutors, who are often volunteers, work specifically to support the instruction of adults or children.
With the generous support of UPS, NCFL created the UPS Family Literacy Volunteer Academy to increase the capacity of local programs to effectively use volunteers. This guidebook will assist you in every step of the process.

How do you determine whether volunteers are needed? Is volunteer labor really “free?” What is the best way to recruit and place volunteers in appropriate roles in a family literacy program? What are some tips on training volunteers and involving the teaching staff? What are the important features of managing volunteers? Answers to these questions and more are found in the chapters that follow.

Many of the examples used in this guide are from family literacy programs. In comprehensive family literacy programs, parents and children participate in four integrated components.

- **Children’s Education** is designed to promote the literacy development and learning of children. This component also engages parents in their child’s educational environment to bring about lasting, meaningful involvement.

- **Adult Education** extends the learning experiences for parents as they pursue their educational and career goals, gaining the skills they need to be effective employees, active community members, and leaders and supporters of their families.

- **Parent Time** offers instruction to parents about their children’s literacy development and provides opportunities to explore strategies to support that development.

- **Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time** is a regularly scheduled time for parents and their children to participate in interactive literacy experiences in a supportive environment. As parents become more comfortable in their role as their child’s first teacher, PACT Time helps foster skills to support education in the home.
CHAPTER 1:
Assessing Program Needs

Contributing Author:
Jane Mencer
Introduction

You want to use volunteers—or, perhaps, use them more effectively—in your program, but you’re not certain where to begin. Planning is a wise place to start! Planning for volunteers takes into consideration your program’s needs. It is only through assessing your program’s needs that you can identify where and how volunteers will best fit into your program.

How your program determines its need for volunteers can be as complicated or as simple as you choose to make it. Completing a needs analysis is often part of a much larger and comprehensive strategic planning process, which may include developing a mission and vision for your organization and completing a situational or environmental analysis. This chapter, however, will present a simple process for completing a needs assessment for the purpose of examining how and where volunteers can be used to enhance program services for families.

The following story exemplifies how a family literacy program in Christian County, Kentucky, used a program needs assessment in evaluating the role volunteers play.

Program Description

Christian County’s Family Literacy Program is a part of the Christian County Adult Education Program (CCAEP). The family literacy program operates in two locations, serves 65-70 families per year, and employs three full-time equivalent staff. Funding for the family literacy program comes from private funding, federal Even Start monies, state grants, and additional monies via the local Housing Authority.

How the program uses volunteers

Christian County uses volunteers in a variety of ways. Volunteers provide direct instructional support, working one-on-one with learners most in need of individual assistance. In addition, 15 community leaders volunteer as advisory board members. The majority of the program’s volunteers are actually managed by other agencies, such as local churches, health departments, the Christian County Cooperative Extension Services, the local community college, Head Start, and the local Business and Professional Women’s Club, but they perform tasks for the benefit of and at no charge to the program.

Christian County’s needs assessment

In 2003, the program staff began a fruitful strategic planning process to assess their program’s needs. The Leadership Team met to consider two conditions of their program: “what is” and “what should be.” Any gaps between these two
conditions helped the team identify their top priorities for program improvement. At this point, the program was well-prepared to examine how and when volunteers could assist in helping the program address these priorities.

The team discovered several areas they thought needed improvement. It was clear that the program needed to improve attendance, increase participation in Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time* activities, and better capture grade level gains to satisfy the program's performance indicators. The team also recognized that both staff and volunteers needed a better understanding of how to emphasize the importance of PACT Time during new adult student orientation. Of particular concern was the program’s inability to accurately track the overall program statistics.

**Results of their planning**

Two of the program’s needs—converted into goals—were to improve the orientation process for new students and to make better use of other agencies’ volunteer help. Several strategies were implemented to address these needs. A notebook was created for staff and volunteer use that includes parenting activities and tips for facilitating parent education. Student roster spreadsheets and goal setting worksheets were revised to prompt the capture of data so important to providing evidence of student progress. Conversation starter/vocabulary sheets with suggested parent/child activities and PACT Time Weekly Activity Journal sheets were developed for parents’ use.

These new and improved forms assist the program in ensuring that family gains are captured and provide better documentation of these gains. Armed with a clearer understanding of the program’s need to better deliver and document PACT Time activities as well as with a notebook containing clear directions and suggested activities, new staff and volunteers are better able to support the program in meeting PACT Time goals. Additionally, the program’s strategic plan helped convince the superintendent to fund an adult education instructor at a family literacy site, the first time that such a position was funded by non-grant funds.

According to program coordinator Bev Thomson, “Now my staff know the big picture. Planning ahead and more carefully tracking our progress means that we no longer have surprising—and disappointing—results at the end of the program year.” While acknowledging that long-term planning is difficult when a program is dependent on grant funding, Thomson supports the strategic planning process as it “helps to have an organized way of looking at things.”

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* Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time® is a term used by some family literacy programs to describe regularly scheduled interactive literacy activities between parents and children.
Sample A provides more details related to Christian County’s process and their utilization of volunteers to meet the program’s needs.

Nuts and Bolts of Needs Assessment

Planning to plan
Planning to plan… That may sound redundant, but it’s actually crucial to any process. Preparation can streamline your planning and needs assessment process and eliminate wasted time. Before you begin, assemble the following information:

- Recent program statistics/annual reports/performance indicators
- Staff job descriptions
- Budget
- An organizational description or profile and an environmental or situational analysis, if you have them
- List of previously set program goals with explanations about if and how each has been met. Unmet program goals can serve as a foundation for examining the place of volunteers in your program. Could more and better trained volunteers have made a difference? A tool for examining your program’s recent past is included as Template A.

Who should be involved in the needs assessment process?
Your planning group may expand or change during different steps of the needs assessment process. For example, your advisory board may have valuable contributions to make in the first few steps, while your program staff may be more involved during the later steps of implementation. Involving many minds in the process will result in a richer assessment and plan.

Although you will gather input and collect data from myriad sources, it is best to keep the team to a manageable size, especially if you plan on striving for consensus. Balance the need to move the planning process forward with the need for involving stakeholders, as input from many may result in greater acceptance of the final plan.

How long does it take to complete a needs assessment?
The length of time depends upon the experience within the team, the size of the team, and the team’s level of knowledge of your program. Frankly, it can take as long as you allow. However, effective needs assessment can be done in a day. To minimize the time spent in a meeting, share pertinent information with team members in advance of the needs assessment meeting, encouraging team members to do some of the preparatory work outside of meeting time.
The Needs Assessment Process: Step by Step

Needs assessment is a process. There is a beginning, an end, and a defined sequence of steps in between. The flowchart below outlines the steps that will be covered in this chapter.

![Needs Assessment Process Flowchart](image)

**Considering your program’s needs**
What does your family literacy program need? The answer to this important question should be the driving force behind your use of volunteers. One way to tackle this fundamental question may be to look at the four components of a comprehensive family literacy program:

- Children’s Education
- Adult Education
- Parent Time (Parenting Education)
- PACT Time (Parent-Child Interactive Literacy Activities)

The Christian County Family Literacy Program approached their needs assessment by identifying two conditions: “what is” and “what should be.” A variation on these conditions might be “what is” and “what could be”—that is, under ideal circumstances, how would your program operate? These conditions can be applied to the four educational components of family literacy listed above. When describing the current state of your program, the key is honesty. At the same time, this is an opportunity to list program strengths as well as weaknesses.

The “what could be” condition is a chance to dream. What impacts can your program have on the educational progress of adults and children? Remember to connect these dreams to the goals families bring with them to the program.
Here is an easy method for assessing your program’s needs.

a) Organize your thoughts by drawing four quadrants (one for each family literacy component) on two sheets of paper. Label one sheet “What Is” and the other sheet “What Could Be.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is?</th>
<th>What could be?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Ed.</td>
<td>Adult Ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Ed.</td>
<td>Children’s Ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACT Time</td>
<td>PACT Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Time</td>
<td>Parent Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) When completing the “What Is” sheet, consider the previous year’s program goals, particularly those that weren’t met, and student achievement data. You also may want to consider any surveys completed by participants about their level of satisfaction with program services. If your program already engages volunteers, collect their opinions about their integration into the program and how they rate their experiences. And, of course, discuss any funder expectations and whether the program met those expectations.

The “What Could Be” page is your ticket to dream! If there were no barriers, what could the program achieve? In a perfect world (or program!), what would each component look like?

c) Now, expand your thinking. On two new sheets of paper, draw a line to split the page in half. Label one half “Component Integration” and the other “Collaboration.” Title one page “What Is” and the other “What Could Be” as you did before.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is?</th>
<th>What could be?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Component Integration</td>
<td>Component Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Component integration is one of those key ingredients that makes comprehensive family literacy work. Component integration is more than following a theme throughout the four components. It reinforces the learning happening in each component through activities in the other three. Have you ensured that each component relates to the others? Is there a clear connection between all four components? Is this integration intentional and well-planned?

When considering collaboration, think about the organizations you partner with. Are there others in your region that may be able to support or enhance services to families? Keep in mind how volunteers might assist in helping to forge new partnerships. Do your current volunteers have personal connections that would be of value? Is this another opportunity for maximizing involvement by utilizing volunteers in your efforts to build links within the community?

d) Look at any gaps between “what is” and “what could be.” A need is a gap in results, the difference between the current and ideal status (Kaufman & Herman, 1991). What needs might volunteers be able to help address?

Prioritizing needs
Remember, your program’s use of volunteers should stem from your program’s needs. So, the first question is not, does my program need (more) volunteers? Rather, it is, what does my program need? Then, can volunteers help meet this need? If so, how do volunteers help meet this need? The question of whether your program is ready for volunteers will be addressed in future chapters.

More than likely, your needs assessment will identify far more options and possibilities than your program can realistically tackle in a year. You will need to reduce your goals to a reasonable number to which your program can commit. Five key goals, maybe even fewer, might be plenty for your organization.

If you have a long list of needs, how do you choose which ones are most important? Let’s take a look at three methods that can help prioritize needs. The first two are relatively quick ways to shorten a list of choices.

- 10-4 Voting. Each person has 10 votes to allocate to all of the needs you’ve identified. No more than four of an individual’s 10 votes may be used on any one need. All 10 votes must be used. After everyone has allocated their votes, tally the votes given to each need. Set aside the needs that received the fewest votes, and repeat the process until your list is reduced to three to five needs.
N over 3 Voting. Take the total number of needs on your list and divide by three. Assign this number of votes to each team member. For example, if you’ve identified a total of 18 needs, each person would have six votes \((18/3=6)\). Each member then allocates one vote to one need, until all of that individual’s votes are used up. Tally the votes to determine a consensus about which needs should be considered a priority.

The Prioritization Matrix. A prioritization matrix is a decision-making tool that allows you to identify—in a simple and objective manner—those options that are most and least important to you. The method allows you to compare options systematically and record your comparisons, resulting in a prioritized list. Template B provides a simple matrix for your use.

**STEP 3**

**Converting needs into goals**

Once you have prioritized your program’s needs, keeping in mind those that volunteers can help you address, it is time to convert those needs into goal statements. Goals address the potential of your literacy program. They are broadly defined results that establish direction and begin to close the gap between the current status and the desired future. Goals do not direct resources (that is, time, people, or money) and do not represent an activity or endeavor. They are for your program as a whole.

Think big… and creatively! Examples of volunteer-related goals might be:

- To provide more one-on-one tutoring for English language learners, the program will utilize volunteers in ELL classes.
- To retain volunteers longer and thus increase their impact on services, the program will develop and implement a system of volunteer recognition.
- To utilize volunteers more effectively, the program will complete a volunteer management plan.

**STEP 4**

**Setting objectives to measure goal achievement**

Goals provide the framework for setting objectives. Objectives address how you will know when you have reached your goal; they do not address how the goal will be accomplished. Objectives explain (1) what must be done and (2) when it must be done in order to meet a goal. What results will indicate success? For many literacy programs, objectives may be closely related to, if not the same as, performance indicators from government funders.

**Good objectives are SMART...**

- Specific and supportive of goals
- Measurable
- Action-oriented
- Realistic and compatible with other objectives
- Time-related

Assessing Program Needs
Using the first goal suggested above, a related objective might be:

Goal: To provide more one-on-one tutoring for English language learners, the program will utilize volunteers in ELL classes.

Objective: By November 15, we will have three trained volunteers working six hours per week serving as interpreters and assistants in ELL classes.

Developing strategies to meet your objectives

After you have identified objectives, you can begin to address solutions or strategies to meet your objectives. Strategies address the issue of how... How will you reach your objectives? Strategies are statements of how resources (time, money, and people) will be used to accomplish a specific objective. Remember that people are the key to a strategy’s success.

While strategies are well-intended, and good strategies are carefully planned, there is no guarantee that they will be successful. According to Stephen J. Wall, head of the consulting firm Marius in Stamford, Connecticut, “Your strategy is what the organization consciously decides to do and then what you learn out of doing it” (Galagan, 1997, p. 6). Strategies are a series of tests (similar to action research, a popular direction in education). So, don’t be discouraged by strategies that backfire; it happens! But be sure to evaluate what worked and what didn’t, and adjust your strategies accordingly.

Working from the objective listed previously, related strategies might be:

Objective: By November 15, we will have three trained volunteers working six hours per week serving as interpreters and assistants in ELL classes.

Strategies:

a) Recruit ELL class volunteers from the local high school and college (exploring ways to offer academic credit for their time)

b) Move ELL class sessions, if necessary, to a day and time more attractive to potential volunteers

Putting strategies into action

Strategies provide the boundaries for developing action plans and help set them into motion. Action plans address the issue of whom. They describe the steps that must be taken to implement each strategy. Action plans identify the specific tasks and deadlines assigned to individuals or groups. Who will do what by when? See Sample B for an Action Plan developed by the Scott County Literacy Council, Inc.

Continuing with our ongoing example, an action plan item that addresses the strategies described above might include:
Strategy: Recruit ELL class volunteers from the local high school and college (exploring ways to offer academic credit for their time)

Action Plan Item: By October 1, program coordinator will call XYZ High School and Hometown Community College to discuss recruiting students to help in ELL classes.

The steps outlined in this needs assessment process can help you form a plan from which you can identify your program’s needs and determine a course of action to address those needs through the effective use of volunteers. Take advantage of Templates C and D to complete your own needs assessment.

Where Do Volunteers Fit In?

The answer is: Everywhere! Certainly a program goal or objective might revolve around the use of volunteers. Many programs use volunteers heavily in the strategy and action planning stages. In what roles do you most need volunteers?

Let’s take another look at the six-step process and consider where and how volunteers might help programs meet their needs.
The role of volunteers especially should be considered in the final four steps of the process. While volunteers can contribute during the earlier steps, creating an action plan is where volunteers can really dig in.

You may want to think of volunteers as helping in two broad areas, instructional support and administrative support. Don’t limit your thinking to opportunities that involve volunteers being physically present at your center. Many volunteer roles can be completed at home or out in the community. **Template E** is a comprehensive checklist to assist you in evaluating the capacities in which you might need volunteers.

**Putting It All Together**

This chapter has introduced the definitions and the vocabulary of the needs assessment process. It is only with a completed needs assessment that you can realistically see how and where you might need volunteers.

Volunteers can “fit in” or contribute at any stage. Recruiting and training new volunteers might be a goal for your program for next year. Or, recruiting and training volunteers might be a strategy that you will implement in order to help you meet an objective of serving more families. Volunteers may show up in your action plan with important roles in implementing the strategies you have identified.

Following the six-step needs assessment process, you will have a clear picture of where your program is now, where it is headed and how volunteers can fit into your program’s future. Take advantage of the templates and samples provided to help you assess the needs of your program for volunteers.
Strategic Planning Process

In summer of 2003, the leadership team, comprised of six staff members (the distance learning instructor, assessment coordinator, data clerk, adult education instructor, family literacy instructor and family literacy coordinator) and Bev Thomson, program coordinator, carefully analyzed their Kentucky Department of Education Even Start evaluation and Kentucky Department for Adult Education and Literacy’s year-end report. Several other documents were examined in the course of the process including the program’s budget, the state grant scope of work, performance indicators, and GED Test score analyses.

The following questions helped guide subsequent strategic planning.

1. Is our leadership focused on achieving our performance expectations? Is it focused on student achievement? Is it focused on empowerment of staff? Is it focused on innovation?
2. How do we develop our strategic objectives? Do we have an action plan?
3. How do we determine requirements and expectations of students? Do we listen to determine their needs and expectations? How do we build relationships to retain students? How do we determine student satisfaction?
4. How do we use information and analysis to measure and analyze our performance? Do we track daily operations to integrate and monitor overall performance?
5. How can we improve our work system to promote staff satisfaction and productivity? How can we improve training opportunities?
6. How can we improve our process management and delivery of services to improve effectiveness? How can we improve counseling, advising, and instructing students?
7. According to 02-03 Performance Rewards, our program’s performance has been 100%. However, on a daily basis, what would be our greatest concern about performance? What would be the major organizational improvement suggestion?
8. What is our program’s greatest strength?
9. What is our program’s greatest weakness?
10. What suggestions do you have for improving this aspect of our program?
Examples of Volunteer Utilization

- Eight members from local church groups make puppets and puzzles.
- A volunteer from the Helping Hands Health Department works with parents of children under the age of one on developmental issues.
- Two staff from Christian County Cooperative Extension Services office serve as guest speakers on budgeting and nutrition, and also provide 600-1000 free books annually to families of newborns for the Christian County Literacy Council’s project, Born to Read.
- The Christian County Health Department and Pediatric Associates provide well-child checkups of newborns, six-month and one-year-olds. They also distribute 600-1000 free books annually with reading tips to these families, as part of the Born to Read project.
- The BOOKENDS monthly family reading club incorporates volunteer time of 11 preschool teachers; this program serves 100 at-risk preschoolers and their families, assisting parents with PACT Time activities and assisting the program with recruitment of new families.
- The Hopkinsville Housing Authority’s resident specialists provide referrals and transportation; they also provide employability skills instruction for family literacy students.
- Hopkinsville Community College provides a full-time learning center and classrooms as necessary and supplies two case managers from the Ready-to-Work program to help in the recruitment of learners; these case managers each work 20 hours per week to help parents make the transition from GED to post-secondary education.
- During the winter holidays, four local church organizations provide free children’s books to the families in the program.
- Area high school students studying Spanish assist with English as a Second Language classes.
- Hopkinsville Business and Professional Women’s Club provides various instructional materials and clothing suitable for job interviewing.
- Classrooms and maintenance services are provided at no charge by Hopkinsville Community College, Christian County Head Start, and Oak Grove First Baptist Church.
**Scott County (Indiana) Literacy Council, Inc., Action Plan**

The following action plan was created by the Scott County Literacy Council, Inc., to secure a grant request from the Scott County Step Ahead Council of Indiana. Note that, in this sample, the goals support the objective; this is contrary to how this chapter presents the sequence. Still, it shows a completed action plan for a family support committee.

**Action Plan**

Scott County Literacy Council, Inc. of Indiana Grant Request

from Scott County Step Ahead Council of Indiana Planning/Discretionary Grant

Name of Group Members: Family Support Committee

Date: March 1999

| Strategic Objective: Provide fun/educational activities that are family-based (e.g., field trips, take-home packets for parent and child interaction, and educational activities) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Goals Measured by completion of goals stated below** | **Resources ($, people, agencies)** | **How** | **Who** | **When** |
| 1. Provide funding | 1. State, federal, foundation and/or local funds | 1. a) Establish criteria for grant awards  
   b) Solicit grant proposals  
   c) Evaluate proposals against criteria | 1. a) Family support committee and literacy providers  
   b) Same as above  
   c) Scott County Step Ahead Council members who did not submit proposals | 1. September 1, 2005 — annually |
| 2. Award grant(s) | 2. Funds and Scott County Step Ahead Council proposal evaluators | 2. Announce at Scott County Step Ahead Council meeting and mail letters to grantees | 2. Scott County Step Ahead Coordinator | 2. November 1, 2005 — annually |
### Examining Previous Program Goals

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Goal Met? Yes/No</th>
<th>Why?</th>
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Prioritization Matrix

A prioritization matrix is a decision making tool that helps you to identify—in a simple and objective manner. This method uses a series of comparisons of two items and keeps track of your priority for each compared pair. It works especially well for very long lists that need to be prioritized.

Instructions:

1. List items to be prioritized. The items can be in any order.

2. Compare two items at a time, circling the letter of the item that you feel is more important. For example, if A is more important than B, circle A.

3. Count the number of times each item was circled. If two items were circled the same number of times, to break the tie, look back in section two to see which you preferred when you compared the two; then give the preferred item an additional point.

Finally, use the totals in section three to list the items in the new, prioritized ranking.

Example:

1. Let’s prioritize these three theoretical family literacy program needs:
   A. Need to show greater grade level gains for adults in adult education
   B. Need to serve 18 more families next year
   C. Need to collaborate with Organization X to better serve the needs of our single parent participants

2. Compare A and B. For the sake of the example, let’s choose B as more important than A. Next, A and C are compared and A is selected as the more pressing need. Finally, we compare B and C and again choose B.

A / B

A / C  B / C

3. In this example, the top priority is B, the need to serve 18 more families next year, as it earned two “votes,” more than the other options. The second priority need is A, as it earned one vote, compared to no votes for C.
1. List your program’s needs (in any order)
   A. 
   B. 
   C. 
   D. 
   E. 
   F. 
   G. 

2. Circle the need you consider more pressing in the following comparisons.
   A / B
   A / C  B / C
   A / D  B / D  C / D
   A / E  B / E  C / E  D / E
   A / F  B / F  C / F  D / F  E / F
   A / G  B / G  C / G  D / G  E / G  F / G

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>A</th>
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New Prioritized Order:
1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________
4. ____________________________
5. ____________________________
6. ____________________________
7. ____________________________

Assessing Program Needs
### Goals…to meet priority needs

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### Objectives…to measure attainment of goals

#### Objectives for Goal 1

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#### Objectives for Goal 2

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#### Objectives for Goal 3

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### Strategies…to achieve objectives

#### Strategies for Objective 1A

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#### Strategies for Objective 1B

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#### Strategies for Objective 1C

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#### Strategies for Objective 2A

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#### Strategies for Objective 2B

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#### Strategies for Objective 2C

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#### Strategies for Objective 3A

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#### Strategies for Objective 2C

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#### Strategies for Objective 3C

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Creating an Action Plan

Goal:

Objective:

Strategy:

Action Plan

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<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Resources ($, people, agencies)</th>
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Volunteer Roles Checklist

When considering the roles that volunteers might play in your family literacy program, check off those that you feel your program needs.

Providing Instructional Support

**Adult Education** – A volunteer can…

- Assist teachers with instruction; tutor one-to-one or assist with small group learning for adults who need extra help
- Make home visits
- Help with assessment of students
- Teach special skills such as job interview skills, computer skills, home skills like cooking or sewing, life skills related to a profession (e.g., realtors: how to buy a house; bankers: how to set up a family budget)
- Gather resources for classroom use and for developing curriculum ideas
- Record books onto audiotape

**Children’s Education** – A volunteer can…

- Assist teachers with instruction; tutor elementary school children; tell stories, read aloud
- Assist with a homework club
- Assist in preparing for classroom activities (e.g., gathering and setting out materials, mixing paints, changing learning materials and toys in various areas of the room, putting up bulletin boards and children’s art work)
- Share a special skill or hobby, assist children at the computer or use knowledge and skills to help nurture cultural appreciation
- Help teachers develop student portfolios by gathering, labeling and filing children’s work; help with assessment of students
- Help clean and organize toys, gather and organize free materials and resources, such as art supplies, egg cartons, margarine tubs, etc.
- Be an active part of learning; put on a puppet show or other special event; have interactive conversations with children—listen and support their language and literacy learning; play, sing songs, dance, work puzzles
- Attend and be an extra set of hands (e.g., for excursions and field-trips); help children put on shoes after nap time, or get coats, boots, hats and mittens on for outside play; assist as children select books on regular trips to the library; hold and rock an infant
Help integrate native languages into the classroom for children who are English language learners or help the teacher integrate a second language into elements of the English-speaking classroom.

Assemble parent/child book packets with books and activities for families to take home and use together; help create “prop boxes” with materials to be used in various classroom learning centers; create book listening tapes; make supportive educational materials, such as puppets, flannel board stories, a file of favorite songs, materials for the woodworking area; conduct a Web search or visit the library to identify resources such as books, ideas, materials, and activities related to a particular topic.

**Parent Time – A volunteer can…**

- Provide advocacy training or budgeting information; share money-saving recipes and cooking ideas; show parents “how it’s done”—from how to eat in a restaurant to how to dress for a workplace environment.
- Help parents with navigating the school system, assist parents who are preparing for U.S. citizenship, help parents study for a driver’s permit, help parents interpret a phone bill or fill out a form.
- Take part in a Health Advisory Committee (doctors, nurses and others in the healthcare profession can volunteer to make presentations on topics that are specific to students’ needs).
- Listen, support, encourage; be a mentor or “wise advisor”; establish a relationship with a parent and “set an example”; coach—establish a meaningful relationship with a parent to create an environment in which a parent wants to do and be his/her best.
- Teach parenting skills to young or new parents.
- Provide basic literacy tutoring; help teach parents to read or teach parents how to read to their children.
- Help coordinate and invite speakers to the local program to speak on parenting topics.
- Model the enjoyment of playing with children and model reading to children.
- Share family traditions and parenting experiences; speak to students about a career or a particular area of interest.
- Share connections: provide tickets to special events in the community; make a valuable business contact to pave the way for parents who are facing the fears and joys of that first job.

Assessing Program Needs
PACT Time – A volunteer can…

- Gather take-home materials to be used by families; help select and provide appropriate books for parents and children to read; help gather a variety of books and texts for the classroom; gather music and song sheets for parents and staff; create letter and word games, puzzles, cards; create various ways for children to practice writing, such as sand boxes or small blackboards or slates
- Help organize materials, games, story-telling and scheduling
- Provide the much needed “extra set of hands” that will make parent and child interactive literacy activities meaningful and engaging
- Develop a relationship with families and provide encouragement as well as assistance as parents try new ideas with their children
- Facilitate book making with families
- Arrange family literacy, math and science activities
- Support parents with ideas for ways to “have fun with language”
- Help facilitate special services such as health screenings and picture day, or help plan and make arrangements for special events, such as a family literacy supper; plan and make field trip arrangements
- Share with parents various ways to use literacy learning materials
- Assist in preparing the classroom environment by gathering toys or materials needed for a particular activity, readying an area for use, or helping organize the classroom
- Participate during Circle Time by singing songs, listening and reading stories, and assisting with children; share rhymes, chants and songs with parents and staff; lead songs for parents, children and staff to learn
- Help to interpret instructions, stories and songs for parents and children who speak a language other than English; help the teacher to integrate families’ first languages into the English-speaking classroom
- Take notes on events occurring during PACT Time that will help teachers focus learning and discussion during Parent Time
- Become a role model for both adults and children
- Help English language learners or others new to the community link to resources available beyond the classroom, providing a “friendly face” that both parents and children can turn to for support
Providing Administrative Support

A volunteer can…

- Serve on advisory boards/boards of directors, or as committee member
- Manage other volunteers
- Keep records or serve as librarian
- Help with intake assessment
- Provide teacher/program clerical support; serve as office assistant; create Web site; develop low literacy materials for adult readers; place orders for materials and books; coordinate guest speaker program for classes
- Clean and maintain facilities and equipment
- Recruit families and other volunteers
- Assist with marketing and public relations, designing and printing brochures and newsletters; prepare press releases and program information
- Plan and support events and celebrations, field trips, guest speakers, etc.
- Assist with fundraising and grant writing
- Help supervise on the playground or in the cafeteria or work in the kitchen; ride buses with children to provide additional assistance and supervision
- Work on special projects
- Offer personal and professional expertise in helping the program and its participating families access other community services, such as free or low-cost medical or dental services
- Coordinate sharing of materials and resources between site collaborators
- Inventory materials
- Offer to be a mentor; take an adult student to lunch; help fathers become role models for young men and boys; become a “foster grandparent” to a child
- Provide student transportation to/from the program, to the library for story hour or for special events (e.g., a GED testing date, a visit to the local college, a trip to a job site, or a field trip to the zoo)
- Raise awareness about family literacy or be a guest speaker in the community on behalf of family literacy programs; advocate for parents involved in the legal system; be an advocate for parents involved in the public school system; serve as a liaison and representative within the community, informing church groups and service organizations about the program
- Provide child care for parents while they attend classes or provide an hour or two of “respite time” for a single parent
References — Assessing Program Needs


CHAPTER 2:

Identifying Costs and Benefits

Contributing Author: Susan McShane
Introduction

Through a program needs analysis, you may have discovered new or changing student, program or community needs. Now you are considering utilizing volunteers to help meet those needs. At first glance, adding volunteers may look like a good way to take advantage of the expertise and good will of people in your community. You may see increasing volunteerism as a way to meet identified needs quickly and flexibly.

But in truth, adding even a small number of volunteers is similar to adding new staff: it’s a serious decision with a potentially broad impact. You need to know that developing your volunteer efforts will be worth the cost and effort required. A cost-benefit analysis is a good tool for making this decision.

The BoulderReads! program described below has not conducted a formal cost-benefit analysis, but the evaluation data program staff have collected provide evidence of the contributions of volunteers.

Program Description

BoulderReads! is a program of the Boulder, Colorado, public library that provides one-on-one reading and writing instruction for adults. Tutoring is provided by volunteers who are trained and supervised by the BoulderReads! staff, two full-time credentialed educators and one part-time staff member. Reading Buddies, another one-on-one service of the program, serves the children of adult reading students (and sometimes other children who need reading help). The children (ages 4-14) are paired with University of Colorado students, who earn service-learning credit by reading to and with their “little buddies” for 1.5 hours every week. In 2003, 200 adults and children received tutoring from 234 volunteers.

The value of volunteers

The program was developed originally as a volunteer-based service, so there was no formal analysis of costs and benefits, but Diana Sherry, Director of BoulderReads!, speaks in no uncertain terms about the value these volunteers contribute. She maintains that volunteers allow the program to meet the needs of adults in the community who cannot be served effectively by other adult education programs offering group-based instruction. She also cites exemplary participation and retention and significant learner outcomes that she attributes to long-term study and the intensive nature of the targeted, individualized instruction provided by volunteer tutors.
Sherry cites these specific benefits of volunteer involvement:

- Adults stay longer in the tutoring program than many who attend group-based classes in other programs. As a result, they achieve their goals. More than 90% of entering adults remain enrolled for more than 12 hours, and those adults average 29 months of participation in the tutoring program.

- Of those who participate at least three months, 96% achieve major personal goals, often related to employment, support of children’s learning, or post-secondary education.

- Children in the Reading Buddies program enjoy the individual attention of their young adult “big buddies” and respond readily to their suggestions. Working with these tutors, children read a variety of materials and even write their own books.

While providing valuable support, these volunteers are not “free.” The program offers 12 hours of initial tutor training, a rich selection of print materials for use by students and tutors, and ongoing in-service training in the form of “Tutor Resource Nights.” The staff also follow up on the tutors’ monthly reports to monitor progress and suggest additional strategies and resources as needed. Sherry believes this kind of investment in volunteers is absolutely necessary for high-quality services, and she has no doubt the value they contribute outweighs the costs of professional training and supervision.

This chapter will help you do an analysis of anticipated costs and benefits as you decide whether to make an “investment” in volunteers.

What Is Cost-Benefit Analysis?

Cost-benefit analysis is a planning tool that allows service providers to compare estimated costs with expected benefits of a proposed activity. Cost-benefit analysis is also useful in evaluating programs because it invites comparison of resources used and outcomes achieved. The federal government (as cited in Richardson & Phillips, n.d.) has defined cost-benefit analysis as “a systematic quantitative method of assessing the desirability of...projects or policies when it is important to take a long view of future effects and a broad view of possible side-effects.”

This kind of analysis is useful in the not-for-profit sector as well as in the business world. In order to make the best use of funds and to be accountable to your stakeholders, you must be sure you are making good decisions. An analysis of costs and benefits encourages critical thinking and provides concrete data for the planning process.

A cost-benefit analysis may be done from at least three perspectives:
1. How much value does the program receive from the resources invested?
2. How much do participants receive?
3. What is the overall rate of return for program and participants (Watters, 1988)?

The guidelines and examples that follow are based on analysis from the third point of view—programs and participants.

The next several pages outline a detailed, formal cost-benefit analysis process. Even if you do not choose such a formal approach, consider these issues and concepts in your analysis.

What should be included?

Explicit costs and opportunity costs. Explicit costs are closely related to the work performed by volunteers. Examples include training materials for tutors, travel expenses for volunteers working at multiple sites, and staff time for training and management of volunteers. And of course, costs are not always monetary: Your program or its participants might pay another kind of price for a volunteer’s poor decision (in counseling a parent, for instance).

Depending on your volunteers’ needs and responsibilities, costs will vary but could include several of the following:

- Recruitment costs (printing, postage)
- Training materials
- Other training costs (meals or refreshments)
- Staff time for training and supervision
- Travel reimbursement
- Liability insurance
- Administrative staff time
- Overhead (office space, telephone)
- Volunteer recognition (gifts or events)

Opportunity costs may be harder to identify. The opportunity cost of a project may be defined as the cost of forgone alternatives. What might you have found along “the roads not taken?” For example, if you use volunteers to tutor adults or children, the tutors will need training and supervision. If you assign a staff
member to take on volunteer supervision as part of her/his job, other responsibilities will have to be reassigned. What could your staff be doing with the time spent on these activities if there were no tutors? What are the impacts on staff and program processes (Kushner, 2003)?

**Other cost considerations.** Although volunteers are, in many ways, a cost-saving option (compared to hiring additional staff), be careful not to make the decision to involve volunteers on the basis of cost alone. This emphasis may lead to the “negative perception which implies volunteers are second choice” (Voluntary Action-Leeds). And of course, as the list above indicates, volunteers are not free. Particularly when volunteers work directly with parents or children, you must make a significant investment in their training and support in order to ensure professional, high-quality and reliable services.

As Diana Sherry from the BoulderReads! program points out:

“We get high quality outcomes because we have great volunteers, but also because we give them good, practical training. We have lots of print resources and a computer lab they and the learners can use, and we monitor the teaching and learning. It all costs time and money, but it’s worth it.”
**Direct benefits.** Direct benefits are those most closely related to volunteers’ responsibilities: the intended results of volunteers’ efforts. When listing these benefits, you may include both inputs (like the number of hours worked) and outcomes (materials produced, time saved, additional families served). Again, benefits vary depending on what volunteers do. Following are examples of benefits that are relatively objective and quantifiable:

- Volunteer hours (for dollar-value of time, see *Sample C*)
- Number of individuals tutored
- Materials produced by volunteers or by participants as a result of volunteer training or assistance
- Additional services provided (e.g., more small-group instruction because of volunteers in the classroom, translation services for English language learners, transportation to clinics or PTO meetings)
- Additional families served (e.g., greater attendance at events because of child care or transportation provided by volunteers or because of volunteer assistance with recruitment of families)
- Time saved when volunteers assist with administrative tasks like mailings, preparation of training materials, or phone calling

Other benefits of involving volunteers, though no less real, are harder to quantify.

Possible benefits to participants include:

- Individualized instruction
- Access to volunteers’ specialized knowledge or skills
- Informal counseling or mentoring services

Possible benefits to staff and programs include:

- More flexibility for teachers in planning activities
- Support in addressing any special needs of children or parents
- Support in meeting needs of English language learners (especially if volunteers from learners’ cultures or language backgrounds are available)
- Flexibility in meeting specific, one-time or occasional needs; also described as “the luxury of focus”—volunteers’ ability to concentrate on specific individuals, problems or projects (Lee & Catagnus, 1999)

Diana Sherry describes one direct benefit of volunteers in her program this way:
“Those who come to us are the adults who think they won’t succeed in a classroom. We offer flexible, individualized instruction for those at the lowest end of the skills range and those with other life problems—the ones most at risk. This is a group that probably can’t be reached and helped any other way. Volunteers allow us to meet the needs of the most-in-need adults in our community.”

Because of these direct benefits, programs are able to do more with less. This increased productivity is reflected in more and/or improved services. Increased productivity has another benefit as well: Programs that make the most of scarce resources are that much more attractive to both public and private funders (Kushner, 2003). (See also the indirect benefits outlined next.)

**Indirect benefits.** Indirect benefits represent the next tier of impact: benefits beyond the primary work of volunteers. These “ripple effects” are potentially numerous and varied, but are often hard to attach a dollar value to. The benefits in the list below have been cited by authors and program staff (Kentner, Lange, Reifschneider & Takacs, 2003; Lee & Catagnus, 1999; NCFL, 2004).

Possible indirect benefits include:

- Increased community exposure
- New contacts and networking opportunities
- Broader donor base
- Expanded human resources (ideas, experiences, skills)
- Increased productivity as a “selling point” to potential funders
- Perceived credibility of volunteers: those who give their time without pay are respected by participants, donors, and legislators
- Freedom to experiment: the ability to try out new ideas with little funding

**Benefits to the community**

If individuals and families achieve their goals, the whole community benefits. These benefits may be difficult to identify and quantify, but the broader, long-term impact of volunteer services may be of great interest to your program’s external stakeholders (funders, tax payers, agency partners). According to the Literacy Volunteers of America (1999), “[f]or every dollar spent by Literacy Volunteers of America to tutor adults across the United States, $33 in economic benefit is returned to the overall economy, according to an economic impact analysis conducted by global management consulting firm, A.T. Kearney.”
Another consideration
In some organizations the presence of volunteers is perceived as a threat to the jobs of paid staff. To address this issue directly you might want to analyze the roles of all staff, identifying not only the benefits of volunteer involvement, but also the benefits that paid staff bring to your organization. (See also the chapters on “Involving and Developing Staff” and “Defining Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities.”)

What Is Involved in the Analysis Process?

The steps below will take you through a formal analysis of the costs and benefits to participants and to the program or organization. If you are engaging in cost-benefit analysis to provide data for decision making, you may need to do an analysis for each option you are considering: no volunteers, a few volunteers, many volunteers, or volunteers in one or another capacity.

Laying the groundwork
Before you begin be sure you are clear about what you are trying to achieve with volunteers.

1. Identify your goal(s). What are your program needs? What do you expect the volunteers to do that will help to meet those needs? (See the chapter on “Assessing Program Needs.”)

2. Define the specifics. What will the volunteer component look like? How will it work? What will it take to make it work well? Consider any necessary program changes, staff development, program processes, and volunteer support services. (See Template F for a planning form.)

Steps in analyzing costs and benefits
Undertake this process carefully, objectively, and with input from staff and representation of varied points of view within the program.

1. Identify both explicit and opportunity costs and both direct and indirect benefits.

2. Express both costs and benefits in the same terms (a monetary value, whenever possible).

3. Adjust costs and benefits to take into account factors that are hard to quantify.
4. Project future costs and benefits, but be sure not to place too much weight on these since they have no present value (Kushner, 2003).

5. Subtract costs from benefits or create a ratio of benefits/costs.

6. Submit data for decision making.

See Sample C for an example of a cost-benefit analysis.

Putting It All Together

Decision making, especially in family literacy programs where there are many variables to consider, is a complex process. Deciding whether or not to increase your program’s capacity to work with volunteers should not be entered into lightly.

Many people approach volunteerism with a “free labor” attitude. It’s important to recognize that any support for your program comes at some cost. The key in making the decision to incorporate volunteers into your program is demonstrating that the benefits—to families and to the program itself—outweigh the costs.

Volunteers are not free. A cost-benefit analysis requires you to consider all the real resources required. You might discover from this kind of analysis that the expected benefits of volunteers are not worth the work and money they will require. Or you might decide that one plan for volunteer involvement is much less expensive than another and might be a good first step—a way to learn something about managing volunteers before getting “in too deep.” Before you make plans, be sure to consider both sides of the ledger!
Cost-Benefit Analysis for Involvement of Volunteers in Adult Education Classes

Following is an analysis of a proposed plan to involve 12 volunteers as instructional aides or tutors. These volunteers would provide a total of 12 hours of service per week per site, for a total of 24 hours of service to the program. Volunteer time is valued at $17.19 per hour, based on 2003 figures from the Independent Sector Web site (cited in Kushner, 2003, and in Kentner, Lange, Reifschneider & Takacs, 2003). This amount includes benefits of 12%.

Volunteer Involvement Cost-Benefit Analysis

Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Costs (Year 1)</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment &amp; placement costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Article in local newspaper volunteer section</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Notices in school newsletters</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff presentations at PTA meetings</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Total staff time* for recruitment activities above (5 hrs.)</td>
<td>5 x $30 = $150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Volunteer background checks ($10)</td>
<td>12 x $10 = $120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training for 12 volunteers</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Initial training materials (LVA Tutor books &amp; other materials)</td>
<td>12 x $14 = $168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Materials for 2 in-service workshops during school year</td>
<td>12 x $8 = $96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Refreshments for training: 2 basic training workshops + 2 in-service workshops (4 x 12 = 48 participant meals/snacks)</td>
<td>48 x $5 = $240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff time to plan &amp; conduct training* (24 hrs)</td>
<td>24 x $30 = $720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Support & supervision for 12 volunteers

- **Training of staff to train volunteers**—provided free by literacy council. **Staff time for training**\(^*\) (15 hrs.) \(15 \times 30 = 450\)
- **Staff material for training** (1 manual with copy-ready masters) \(1 \times 20 = 20\)
- **Additional teacher planning time**\(^*\) (1 hr./wk. x 2 teachers x 36 weeks) \(72 \times 30 = 2,160\)
- **Management & administrative costs**\(^*\) (.5 hr./wk. x 36 weeks = 18 hrs.) \(18 \times 36 = 648\)

### Insurance

- **Liability & worker’s compensation covered through school district’s policy** $0

### Volunteer appreciation

- **Dinner** ($12 per meal—with discounted/donated services) \(12 \times 12 = 144\)
- **Gift** ($15—with discount/donation) \(12 \times 15 = 180\)

### Opportunity Costs (Year 1)

Other possible uses of staff time spent in receiving and providing training for volunteers (39 hrs.):

- **Additional planning time**
- **In-service training or other staff development activities** ??

### TOTAL Quantifiable Costs (Year 1)

$5,096

* Staff costs include payroll taxes
## Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Benefits (Year 1)</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional benefits</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Volunteer time (2 hrs. x 3 days/wk. = 6 hrs./wk. x 2 classrooms = 12 hrs. x 36 wks. = 432 hours)</td>
<td>$7,426.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More individualized instruction for adult learners (volunteers can work with individuals &amp; small groups during part of class period, freeing teachers to work more flexibly and directly with learners)</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spanish-speaking volunteers (if available) = translation for clearer teacher-student communication</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More staff members = more knowledge and experience to share with learners and more variety in instructional styles</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Future possibility: tutors for English language instruction</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational benefits</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Classes able to enroll more learners because of improved student-staff ratio</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased productivity and creative capacity through new ideas (more people = more brains at work)</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect Benefits (Year 1)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers strengthen the connection to the neighborhood and larger community:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More people know about the program as volunteers spread the word</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local support for program services may grow (donations, other funding)</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Volunteer involvement supports image of organization as effectively using resources</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL Quantifiable Benefits (Year 1)</strong></td>
<td>$7,426.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits – Costs</th>
<th>$7,426.08 – $5,096 = $2,330.08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits / Costs Ratio</td>
<td>$7,426.08 / $5,096 = 1.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You would likely conclude from this analysis, based on quantifiable factors only, that involving volunteers in your adult education classrooms would be worth the cost and effort. The ratio above suggests that your program and participants might receive almost $1.50 for every $1 invested.

Of course, such an analysis is a prediction based on assumptions. If you get all the volunteer time you plan for and if volunteers attend training and are able to provide valuable support for teachers and learners, and if your costs are not significantly higher than estimated, you should find this plan to be profitable in several ways. However, even though there are no guarantees, you are much better off for having done a careful analysis than you would be if you had taken action without this kind of thinking.
### Volunteer Involvement: Preparing for Cost-Benefit Analysis

(Complete a form for each plan under consideration)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Goal(s) &amp; Needs</th>
<th>Plan to Address Goal(s) &amp; Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Plan Details

**Volunteer Responsibilities/Activities**

- What will volunteers do?
- When?
- Where?

#### Management & Training

- Recruitment (Who will do this? When and how?)
- Training (Who will do this? When and how?)
- Support and supervision (Who will do this? When and how?)

#### Other Program Impacts & Concerns

- Space needs?
- Materials, furniture, equipment?
- Legal or liability concerns?
- Other?
### Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Costs (Year 1)</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment &amp; placement costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support &amp; supervision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer appreciation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity Costs (Year 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL Quantifiable Costs (Year 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Benefits (Year 1)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional benefits</td>
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<td>Organizational benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indirect Benefits (Year 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL Quantifiable Benefits (Year 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References — Identifying Costs and Benefits


CHAPTER 3:
Involving and Developing Staff
Contributing Author:
Amy Wilson
Introduction

Involving staff is key to developing and maintaining a successful volunteer effort. Staff can identify program needs and how volunteers can support program goals and student achievement. By including staff in the decision making process of how and when to utilize volunteer expertise, staff will work more closely and cooperatively with volunteers.

It is essential to provide staff with training in how to work effectively with volunteers. After programs have identified ways that volunteers can support the program, procedures must be designed to successfully incorporate volunteers into the organization. Additionally, those who are responsible for managing volunteers may need training in management skills to build a cohesive team.

Volunteers may include workers from local businesses, retirees, college students, and parents in your program. You can ensure that they contribute effectively through program planning, training, and evaluation. As you communicate with the volunteers and emphasize their value to your program, your community support for family literacy will increase and multiply.

Now, let’s read about a family literacy program that learned early on about the need to include program staff in the decision to utilize volunteer services.

Program Description

The Southwest Family Literacy Program in an urban area of Texas was meeting the challenge of serving 50 families at a learning center. The program had been successfully serving families for several years when their advisory council suggested the use of volunteers to enhance services. The program coordinator immediately developed a volunteer recruitment process. She scheduled several presentations at local agencies to begin recruiting volunteers. The presentations were well received and she soon had a list of potential volunteers. Later, during a staff meeting, she informed the staff that volunteers would soon be joining their team.

A few weeks later, several of the volunteers approached the program coordinator to inform her that they would no longer be volunteering. When she asked the volunteers why they were leaving, their responses were simply that they did not feel welcome or that their services were needed.

The coordinator promptly convened the staff to investigate this situation. When she questioned them about the volunteers, one staff member stated, “I don’t need a volunteer in my classroom; I can handle my class.” Another said, “You never
asked us if we needed volunteers in our classrooms; I spend most of my time just answering questions about our program rather than teaching.” The coordinator immediately realized her mistake. She had not included her staff in the decision making process or trained the staff to accept and utilize volunteers in their classrooms.

Fortunately, the coordinator was able to resolve the situation by reviewing and redesigning the program’s volunteer recruitment and management plan with her staff. Together they:

- Set goals for volunteers (which were later rewritten with the help of volunteers)
- Created guidelines for volunteers (which later became a policy handbook)
- Developed a list of tasks and roles volunteers could choose
- Developed volunteer orientation meetings
- Developed a process for volunteer recognition

Once the staff clearly understood the goals for this endeavor they were able to effectively include volunteers in their classrooms. The volunteer program grew and improved each year and is now a vital part of this family literacy program’s success.

The Importance of Involving Staff in Identifying Program Needs

As you plan your volunteer efforts, it’s helpful to recognize that staff bring diverse experiences, skills and attitudes to their work with volunteers. Some staff members readily acknowledge the benefits of including volunteers, but others may need to be convinced. They may need to examine models and examples of family literacy programs that successfully utilize volunteers. One way programs can gather information is by networking with other programs.

Considering possible roles for volunteers
Volunteers work in roles that generally fall into two categories: Instructional Support and Administrative Support. They may fulfill one or more of these functions:

- Tutor
- Mentor
- Family recruiter
- Guest speaker
- Board member
- Classroom assistant
- Activity leader
- Fundraiser
- Office assistant
- Field trip liaison
- Homework helper
Reviewing these options may help your staff think creatively about ways to involve volunteers. Roles and responsibilities of volunteers will be discussed more in depth in the following chapter.

**Getting staff input**

Some programs formally survey and/or interview staff members to identify program needs. The needs assessment process described in the first chapter can help. Surveys may include questions about successful program implementation, what has been effective, and what changes need to be made.

Gathering specific information about how and why needs are or aren’t being met can determine an effective course of action. Then, based on the program’s needs, you can ask the question, “Could a volunteer support our program in this area?” If the answer is “yes,” then determine when volunteers are most needed, what tasks they will do, and how many volunteers are needed in which locations. This information is important as your program begins to recruit volunteers.

Including staff in the needs assessment process allows “ownership thinking.” When staff provide input and feedback, trust is built, they feel included, and begin to feel “responsible.” Developing staff “ownership” strengthens the organization and, of course, the volunteer component as well. Decision making conducted in this manner often leads to more effective implementation of changes.

Staff members need to thoughtfully explore both the benefits and responsibilities of including volunteers in the delivery of the program’s services. Approaching this exploration as a collaborative team effort allows program directors and managers to gain additional information from personnel about the program’s needs and capacities. Then the organization can develop and implement plans that are understood and supported by program staff. When planning with your staff, be sure to discuss the benefits as well as the challenges of volunteer involvement. Before the meeting you might prepare by considering the issues that follow.

**Discussing benefits of involving volunteers**

One important benefit of involving volunteers may be to allow you to fully develop program components that otherwise have limited support.

For example, one family literacy program saw the need to include an afternoon homework club for children. Because they had limited staff and fiscal support, the program asked for help from the community. A local electric company “adopted” the family literacy program. The company sends employees to the program to tutor the children and support the homework club. This collaboration helps both

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*Involving and Developing Staff*
the company and the family literacy program achieve their goals. Volunteers from the company enjoy social interaction with their colleagues while they give back to the community by sharing their time and expertise. Volunteers support families, staff, and the development of the program.

There are many possible benefits for families, staff, and the program as a whole.

Benefits for families. Families may benefit from the expertise and program support brought by the volunteers who (potentially) provide additional instruction and experience. Volunteers also may bring creative ideas and resources to the program. Additional skills and experiences may be as diverse as the volunteers, perhaps in art, music, business, health, first aid, automobile repair, science, and nature. Many volunteers are retirees who are participating in foster grandparent programs, and children benefit from this additional attention and multi-generational contact.

Enrolled parents also may volunteer, benefiting their own families and others in the program as well. When participating parents volunteer in a program, they have an opportunity to develop additional skills. For example, some family literacy programs train parents to volunteer in the early childhood or elementary school classroom. The parents demonstrate skills in working with their children’s teachers and increase their involvement in their children's education. Some participants have learned office skills, organizational skills, and decision making skills through volunteer opportunities in their programs.

Parents also may want to explore volunteer opportunities outside the literacy program. Many parents have work-related goals, and volunteering in a specialized setting such as healthcare can enhance their work readiness. Volunteering is an effective form of work experience, developing skills and building résumés.

Benefits for staff. Staff benefit in many ways through the support of volunteers. Volunteers often bring enthusiasm, a positive attitude and vitality, raising the program’s energy level. Staff also may be able to meet program goals and objectives more readily with volunteer support. Some programs need trained volunteers in their early childhood programs to maintain appropriate adult-to-child ratios. If programs have understaffed satellite locations, staff may be able to use volunteers to augment teaching and activity teams. Staff members can examine their roles, work sites, and responsibilities to determine how volunteer support may be effectively implemented. In one program, a staff member
determined that having a volunteer read during story time would give her time to prepare more thoroughly for the next planned activity.

**Benefits for programs.** A carefully prepared volunteer effort can support programs in several ways. First of all, programs facing increasing costs and decreasing funds may find that trained volunteers allow them to maintain existing services to a maximum number of families. With specialized volunteer expertise, programs may even be able to develop more comprehensive services. In one instance, a volunteer assists a literacy program by obtaining, repairing and upgrading computers so that families can access information and learn technology skills.

Additionally, volunteers may advocate for political support, help with resource development, and make connections with other organizations. People often volunteer for more than one organization, and they can help organizations develop new collaborations. One person who also volunteered for the American Association of University Women helped a program obtain a grant for additional health literacy materials. And of course, volunteers’ hours may contribute to matching funds required by some funding sources.

Outlining the many benefits volunteers provide to families, staff and programs can help staff accept and plan for the integration of volunteers into the operation of a program. It also may help staff think of other ways volunteers can provide support.

**Addressing staff concerns**
Although volunteer contributions may be significant, you should be prepared to address concerns staff may have about involving volunteers.

Some of the following concerns may sound familiar:

- Reliability of volunteers
- Additional training and supervision responsibilities
- Becoming too reliant on volunteers
- Volunteers as a possible threat to job security
- How volunteers fit in the hierarchy of the organization

To deal respectfully and honestly with staff members who have concerns, consider these two simple strategies:

1. Take time with staff to reflect and prepare
2. Plan short-term volunteer assignments
Begin with a discussion on volunteerism. As a first step, explore your own team’s experiences as volunteers. Many staff members may have volunteer experiences, and discussing as a group both their positive and negative experiences may help to develop sensitivity to volunteers. Beginning with your staff’s frame of reference and adding new information, including how literacy programs work with volunteers, is an excellent strategy to develop a collaborative team approach.

Another approach is to consider offering specific, short-term volunteer assignments. Volunteers may want finite assignments with time limits. Of course, if they have positive experiences they may sign on for additional assignments, but you have given your staff an opportunity to get used to the idea and learn how to work with volunteers without making a long-term commitment.

These early steps are important, but it’s not enough to get off to a good start. You also need to provide your staff with specific training in volunteer development and management.

**Preparing Staff to Work with Volunteers**

Working effectively with volunteers requires the use of key communication skills, as well as task analysis and preparation. You may need to provide specific training in these areas.

**Communication and interaction skills**
Staff who work with volunteers should be aware of the importance of open, warm, and respectful communication. Remember, just like the families your program serves, volunteers are diverse and bring many strengths with them. Opportunities to interact with volunteers arise at various times and places, and individual and cultural differences may present challenges to good communication. Think about these factors as you plan staff development.

**Early contacts.** Thorough and successful programs provide volunteers with an orientation and training. When staff are involved in volunteers’ orientation and training, the transition to working in the program is often more comfortable. Staff members should be encouraged to make a conscious effort to build rapport with a new volunteer. This starts with creating a welcoming environment. Demonstrating openness and appreciation for volunteers builds their connection with you and the program. Staff members should smile and address the volunteers by name as they greet them, shaking hands when appropriate.

**Daily interactions.** Staff members communicate with volunteers in lots of “little” ways, and they may need to be reminded of the importance of these interactions. For instance, they should make an effort to let volunteers know they are ready and willing to answer questions. They should remember to introduce volunteers to
other staff, volunteers and program participants. When a volunteer enters a classroom to assist a teacher, the teacher should take a moment to talk and get acquainted. You might suggest that teachers schedule a new volunteer to arrive shortly ahead of the class for a mini-orientation. It’s also a good idea to give the teacher background information about the volunteer in advance, including information about the volunteer’s interests and work experience. Greeting volunteers each day when they arrive is essential to maintaining a good relationship. Acknowledging volunteers when they leave and thanking them provides closure and enhances positive feelings.

Here’s how one volunteer described her experience:

“Every time I left the center, Elizabeth was there to say thank you. She never missed the opportunity. It was a small thing, but it always meant a lot to me. She always noticed and never failed to say ‘Thanks!’”

Getting to know your volunteers may be rewarding in unexpected ways, too. Recognizing that the volunteer is a unique individual builds the relationship, and some have special gifts to contribute. Some volunteers have specialized interests in common with staff and program participants. These special interests can help connect a volunteer to the classroom, and vice versa.

Your staff must understand that daily interactions, although often brief and informal, are important. Promoting good communication habits will support good relationships that may lead to more significant volunteer contributions. And communication helps to bridge and value personality differences.

There are many different personality types, and it’s tempting to group these types and label them. But when working with others, it’s helpful to recognize that their personalities may have different but equal strengths from your own. Personality differences. There are many different personality types, and it’s tempting to group these types and label them. But when working with others, it’s helpful to recognize that their personalities may have different but equal strengths from your own. Individuals differ in multiple ways. They may be primarily task-oriented or more people-oriented, big picture-oriented (visionaries) or detail-oriented, extraverted or introverted, etc. Staff development should address these differences to encourage teamwork. You may find it useful to include volunteers and parents in team building exercises.

Taking advantage of strengths is a key to effective use of volunteers. Encourage staff to consider individuals’ personalities and strengths when they make task assignments. Everyone likes to work at tasks where they can excel.
And remind staff that personality differences can have a profound effect on communication, too. Some people want everything spelled out. Others are comfortable with a more casual or flexible approach. Staff should consider the program’s needs as well as volunteers’ needs in all their communications. What information needs to be provided in written form? What information needs to be provided in advance? What are the volunteers’ expectations and what are your expectations? Are there any cultural differences that you or the volunteer need to be aware of?

**Cultural differences.** Cultural differences may involve several aspects of interaction:

- The distance maintained between people (do they stand close when talking or keep a greater distance?)
- Whether it’s appropriate for a male and female to have physical contact (including shaking hands)
- Gift-giving customs
- How elders are addressed
- How children are addressed
- Touching (in some cultures it is offensive to pat anyone on the head)
- Appropriate gestures
- How children are disciplined
- Eye contact

You may need to provide your staff with training to build awareness of these differences in the volunteer population. In addition, provide volunteers with a thorough orientation on culturally appropriate actions based on your program’s needs and the families you serve.
Other differences. Other factors that influence people’s values and perceptions include age (generation), life experience, and educational experience. Volunteers come from a variety of educational backgrounds. Be sure your staff are clear and explicit in their communications. Some communication strategies might include:

- Clearly explaining the purpose of an activity, the steps, and expected outcomes
- Using language that makes sense to the volunteer (avoiding specialized language or jargon, acronyms, and other educational terms)
- Providing an orientation to family literacy (that is, do not assume volunteers already understand the concepts of family literacy)
- Providing volunteers with program-specific information, like job descriptions and mission statements
- Providing specific training and materials for the work volunteers do

Program staff will probably be involved in training volunteers and may need guidance about what to include. Volunteers providing instruction may require training about learning styles, direct instruction, learning differences, English language learning, academic content, and lesson-extension activities. Staff must make sure volunteers have all of the materials they need to complete their assigned tasks. While this may seem obvious, it takes thought and planning to make it happen.

Encouraging volunteers to ask questions helps them to learn more quickly. One simple technique is to ask, “What questions do you have?” The word “what” stimulates the participants to think of and ask their questions. Many people ask, “Do you have any questions?” Often the reply is “no.”

You also might provide volunteers with index cards and instruct them to write down their questions. Following training, as volunteers work in their various roles, staff and supervisors can set aside a few moments at the beginning, middle, and end of a session to answer questions. When there are breaks in the schedule, staff can ask the volunteers what questions they have. The ability to seek out a person’s questions and answer them is a powerful skill, and it’s a skill you may have to develop in your staff. Some programs keep track of the questions asked frequently by volunteers and use this information to update their training.

Several other factors will enhance the delivery of a volunteer training program. Staff need to demonstrate “expertness,” “trustworthiness,” and “genuine caring.” These qualities help volunteers (trainees) to be receptive to the information and skills being presented.
Tips for staff to enhance training and communication

Thinking of volunteers as learners and being attentive to their learning needs will strengthen your program’s capacity to integrate volunteers. Here are some tips to help volunteers learn:

- Use large print to make training materials more accessible
- Segment volunteer training into several smaller units
- Model visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning
- Demonstrate tasks and strategies
- Provide opportunities for practice and feedback
- Provide mentors for new volunteers
- Maintain regular communication
- Pair volunteers to work together
- Encourage questions

Although many volunteers enter programs with highly developed skills, others will need the periodic training support of staff and supervisors. People also learn at different rates and require varying amounts of repetition and practice.

Tips for giving feedback

Keeping volunteers motivated and encouraging improvement requires feedback. Your staff also may need training in giving feedback to volunteers. The purpose of feedback is to help people stay on track because seeing and experiencing success motivates people to continue putting forth effort.

Tips for giving feedback include:

- Use 25 words or less
- Be specific and offer a solution
- Be empathetic
- Do it face-to-face and in private
- Use a two-to-one ratio (two positive comments for each constructive comment)
- Be aware that your tone of voice and facial expression often have more impact than your words
- Be aware of your thinking (if it’s critical and hostile, change your internal dialogue)
- Check to be sure the person has heard and understood
Have your staff practice giving feedback in short effective statements. Recipients are more likely to understand and remember what was said this way. How staff give feedback to volunteers also models how volunteers are expected to provide feedback to staff and program participants. You also might provide communication training to volunteers so they learn how to give feedback in a manner that helps the person receiving it.

**Showing appreciation**

Showing appreciation is still another vital part of staff-volunteer communication. You and your staff should work together to find ways to demonstrate to volunteers that they are valued and important to the program.

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### Some ways to show appreciation are:

- Say thank you
- Provide certificates for hours of service
- Communicate the program’s successes and announce the volunteers’ contributions through public recognition
- Include volunteers in special program events such as graduations and dinners
- Send thank you notes from program participants
- Provide additional education and training

**Encourage staff to do a job-task analysis**

What’s paramount to successfully integrating volunteers is to plan and continue to prepare for their participation in your program. Because your staff are central to the volunteers’ success, a short professional development training to improve staff’s abilities to break tasks into small steps will help them to provide on-the-job training for volunteers.

For example, in one program an office assistant trained a volunteer to use office equipment. The staff member recognized and analyzed what the volunteer needed to know to operate the fax machine. She demonstrated the task explaining each step. She had the volunteer practice sending a fax and provided the necessary feedback. The volunteer successfully operated the equipment independently. Step by step instructions were written down to support the volunteer and to help her remember when she returned the next week. This effective training required about five focused minutes of the staff member’s time. Eventually, the volunteer will be able to train others to operate the equipment because the training she received was thoughtful and broke the task down into manageable steps.
When programs are prepared and organized, it helps to reduce a volunteer’s anxiety, which is often associated with a new environment and tasks. Clearly defined roles and tasks help employees, families and volunteers feel more comfortable.

The three components of a job-task analysis are: task lists, job breakdowns and performance standards. Task lists describe what the volunteer must do. They also should include what materials and equipment volunteers need to work with. Each task on the list is specific, and includes a job breakdown, or explicit directions for performing the task. Step-by-step instructions improve performance. Consider how each task can be evaluated—or, what performance standard the accomplishment of the task will be held to. Job-task analysis will help you determine the content of your training program and the quantity of training required.

**Involving Staff in Developing Program Structures and Procedures**

Program structures and procedures are developed to protect your program, maintain program services, and retain volunteers. Both supervisory staff and other personnel may be responsible for the structures and procedures described below.

**Staffing**

Roles and responsibilities regarding staff interaction with volunteers should be clear to demonstrate respect for staff members and ensure efficient operations.

- Programs must identify and support the personnel who are responsible for working with volunteers. Each volunteer must know the chain of command and which staff he can approach for help. For instance, if the volunteer has an emergency and can’t come to the program at the scheduled time, whom should he contact?

- When personnel supervise volunteers they must know their program’s policies and procedures, have sufficient time allocated to coordinating or supervising volunteers, and have adequate resources.

- When the supervisor is on vacation, programs must designate another staff person to supervise volunteers.

- Although some volunteers work daily in programs, most have specialized tasks on particular days. A supervisor needs to carefully maintain the volunteers’ schedules and stay in communication with them.
Program closing dates and information must be readily available for volunteers. Snow days and program cancellation policies need to be clearly defined for volunteers.

Volunteers also should receive training in emergency procedures. In one tornado-prone area, volunteers receive information on the program’s safety procedures, including what to do and where to go to maintain safety during a serious weather event.

This kind of communication is a primary responsibility of the volunteer supervisor. Planning and coordinating are additional roles of the supervisory staff. For example, often when a volunteer who is integral to an effective classroom plans a vacation, supervisory staff will prepare another volunteer to substitute. It’s important to remember that volunteers need to receive training on any reporting or documentation required by your program. Maintaining continuity is essential.

**Systems and policies**

As supervisory staff gain experience, they often develop a system for recruiting, training, and placing volunteers. The system may include the following elements:

- Specific intake procedures, such as requiring references, mandated criminal clearances, applications and interviews
- Orientation, pre-service training and in-service training
- Observation
- Volunteer recognition
- Evaluation of the volunteer program

The supervisory personnel and staff also need procedures to address concerns. Program documents must clearly state policies and procedures for volunteers. For example, what performance measures and requirements do you have in place for volunteers? How are these measures and requirements made clear to volunteers during orientation and training? Although most concerns and issues can be managed well through the use of good interpersonal skills, you’ll need policies and procedures in place for disengaging a volunteer whose actions are detrimental to the program.
Management Skills for Program Employees

In addition to supporting staff in the development of policies, procedures and documents, you also may need to address day-to-day management issues. It may be helpful to anticipate issues that could arise and plan ways to develop awareness, skills and sensitivity in your staff that will enable them to respond appropriately. As a foundation, of course, basic communication skills are always important. Within the busy work environment of many programs, employees need to listen and recognize volunteers’ needs and viewpoints. Using reflective listening skills promotes understanding.

Additionally, staff should be able to communicate your program’s mission, philosophy and goals to volunteers, so volunteers are better equipped to support the mission. Working with volunteers is like having a guest in your home. It’s important to present your program in a positive manner. Staff should be careful to speak well of program participants, speak well of collaborators, and speak well of other staff.

All organizations have challenges, but staff members need to be strongly cautioned to leave volunteers out of any current conflicts or personnel issues, and to shield volunteers from any negative program history. Volunteers may leave a program if they sense animosity. If a volunteer brings up a past negative event, then the staff should explain how the organization has overcome the obstacle or is working to resolve it.

Another difficulty may arise when things are going well! Once relationships are established, staff may begin to feel relaxed around volunteers and view them as confidants. Maintaining professionalism is key. Setting appropriate interpersonal boundaries is essential to maintaining a productive workplace.

Other issues related to boundaries include:

- **Establishing boundaries.** Volunteers need to be clearly informed of your program’s confidentiality policies and procedures.

- **Roles.** As volunteers develop working relationships in the program, staff may ask for feedback about their experiences in order to improve services. Although volunteer input is important, roles should be clear.

- **Tasks and responsibilities.** Before increasing a volunteer’s responsibilities, it’s important to discuss the additional tasks and give the volunteer choices. Highly competent volunteers often are asked to take on more and more work. It’s important to assess where the volunteers’ boundaries are, and how much responsibility they are willing to take on.
Some guidelines for developing boundaries are:

- Discuss changes with volunteers in advance
- Clearly define roles and expectations
- Avoid over-reliance on volunteers
- Respect volunteers’ time

Staff sometimes find subtle ways to get volunteers to increase their time commitment, such as requesting that they stay and help with a task after their scheduled hours. This seemingly innocent request can ultimately alienate some volunteers, especially if they feel their time isn’t valued. Part of initiating effective boundaries is communicating with volunteers the priorities of the program and activity. Staff should help volunteers to focus on the most important tasks. Doing important work also adds to the volunteers’ sense of being an essential part of the organization.

**Retaining Volunteers**

Positive experiences are your best retention strategy. It’s natural for volunteers to increase their knowledge and skills as they participate with your organization, and retention is increased as volunteers experience successful learning opportunities and skill development. If paid staff are aware of this need to learn and grow, they will be sure to provide regular development activities for volunteers.

Training and development may be formal or on-the-job. When planning formal training, staff should carefully analyze volunteers’ needs, consider their availability, and develop the training accordingly. Some volunteers will utilize additional resources and written materials that the program provides, so staff should be sure to make such things available. Volunteer handbooks, resource guides, and library materials help volunteers develop their knowledge and skills.

Demonstrating respect for volunteers and developing strategies to include them consistently in your program structure supports retention. Providing a suggestion box for parents, employees and volunteers is an effective tool. It sends the message that their input and ideas are valued. Set a regular time to review and discuss suggestions with your staff and, when appropriate, implement the suggestion quickly. Programs have made excellent improvements this way.
All this work is a good investment. Recruiting, placing, and training volunteers requires program time and resources, so retaining them is an important program goal. To focus on retention, continually work with your staff to examine your program’s key processes using the following steps:

- Redefine why you need volunteers
- Redesign valuable volunteer opportunities
- Recruit thoughtfully
- Screen, interview, and place volunteers carefully
- Provide effective training
- Recognize volunteers’ contributions
- Follow up quickly

Of course, even with effective procedures and strong staff support, a volunteer may determine that he or she is not interested in continuing in a particular volunteer position. In one program, a volunteer (an effective tutor) decided he no longer wished to tutor; however, he ran successful fundraising events for the program. Maintaining positive relationships with volunteers helps them make their best contributions. (For more on volunteer management, see the chapter on “Supervision and Management of Volunteers.”)

**Putting It All Together**

Involving staff is one key to operating a successful volunteer component. Staff members can identify your program’s changing needs and strategies for involving volunteers to support your program’s goals. You can encourage a positive climate for volunteers by including staff in program decisions and providing staff development and training in the areas of effectively working with and managing volunteers.

As you set the stage for volunteer participation and staff involvement, a particularly useful tool is the free Internet-based site, Verizon Literacy Campus (www.literacycampus.org). The project offers a variety of free online courses for program directors and staff to help orient them to the volunteer environment. More information about Verizon Literacy Campus is provided in the “Resources” section of this guidebook.
Effective Use of Family Literacy Volunteers

Involving and developing staff to make good use of volunteers’ time and talents requires analysis, planning and management. The following steps outline the process:

- Define your need for volunteers.
- Identify the tasks best suited to volunteers and what training you need to provide.
- Determine which employees will supervise volunteers and how much of their time will be allocated to volunteer communication and management.
- Develop policies and procedures to support an organized and effective volunteer component in your program.
- Design and implement a process for volunteer training and development.
- Design and implement a process for evaluating the effectiveness of your volunteers.
- At staff meetings include volunteer issues and needs on the agenda as a standing item.
- Be flexible in making changes to improve your volunteer program, as communities and trends in volunteerism change.
CHAPTER 4:
Defining Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

Contributing Author:
Johnnie ("Shani") L. Brown-Falu
Introduction

In most literacy programs, the volunteer manager wears many hats. Volunteer management may fall to the program coordinator or another staff member, but it is likely that multiple staff members will be involved with volunteer efforts. To ensure that volunteers are used efficiently and effectively, it’s crucial to define their roles and responsibilities. Staff, current volunteers and potential volunteers will all appreciate having a clear understanding of expectations from the beginning of the experience.

To ensure that volunteers are used efficiently and effectively, it’s crucial to define their roles and responsibilities.

Volunteers most likely will provide support to your program in one of two areas: instructional support, which includes assisting certified teachers and interacting with students, and administrative support, which can run the gamut from clerical help to recruiting other volunteers to planning fundraising activities. In deciding what roles volunteers should play in your program, it’s important to consider the program’s needs. At the same time, to successfully retain volunteers and maximize their potential, it’s crucial to match their interests to the assignments you give them. Keep in mind that volunteers want to participate in your program for a reason—find out what that reason is, and be sure that the work you ask of them reflects that reason. Also, consider the skills a particular role requires, and either match volunteers to those roles based on their existing skills, or provide training so that they can acquire those skills. No one likes to take on a job he is not prepared to do!

The following story illustrates the importance of defining volunteer roles and responsibilities.

Program Description

A family literacy program in a small rural town was providing many services for families, but it had limited staff and was challenged by the number of families in the community who were in need of services. The program coordinator and staff decided to invite volunteers to join their team in an effort to increase the number of families the program could serve.

Volunteer recruitment flyers were placed in strategic areas of the community and announcements were made through the local newspaper. Soon, the program was overwhelmed by phone calls inquiring about volunteer opportunities. Staff scrambled to schedule an orientation meeting, and volunteers were quickly placed into classrooms to help support the paid instructional staff. The program was delighted with the response they received from interested volunteers and thought...
that with this additional help they would be able to provide services to many more families.

Unfortunately, with little time to plan, it didn’t take long for difficulties to arise. Volunteers began voicing their dissatisfaction with the duties they were asked to perform and didn’t feel they had enough training to make a real difference in the program. Staff began to resent what they felt was a “take over” attitude from the volunteers.

The program coordinator decided to confront the situation by “bringing all parties to the table” to develop guidelines and definitions of volunteer roles and responsibilities. Among the solutions discussed was the creation of a volunteer handbook, which both staff and volunteers would help develop and which would outline the different opportunities available for volunteers. Looking back, all parties involved agreed that more preparation for the incorporation of volunteers into the family literacy team would have been beneficial. The program was able to overcome this rough start and is now able to welcome new volunteers in a more professional manner.

Roles for Volunteers to Support Instruction

There are many ways volunteers can assist educators. Volunteers bring with them both expertise (often from their current or previous profession) and experience. At the same time, it’s important to remember that volunteers usually are not certified teachers, and will need lots of guidance and support from staff to be able to contribute effectively in the classroom. Also, be sure to consider what kinds of training a volunteer might need in order to be prepared to work with the families in your program, many of whom may be from a different culture or socio-economic background than your volunteers, and who likely have less formal education than your volunteers.

Volunteer roles in adult education

Adult learners who participate in literacy programs come from diverse educational backgrounds, and may include English language learners, adults with learning disabilities, GED students, and those transitioning to work or post-secondary education. What they have in common is a desire to improve their lives and their families’ lives through literacy.

One way volunteers in the adult education classroom can support instruction is by balancing the needs of students at different levels. Many programs serve adult learners who are at varied levels of reading and math. A volunteer can work one-on-one or in small groups with students who are at a lower level, allowing the instructor to cover more material with students at a higher level. Or, conversely, a
volunteer might work with students at a higher level while the instructor helps students who are struggling with a particular concept or activity.

Other ways volunteers can contribute to the adult education component include:

- **Assisting Teachers**—Volunteers may be able to help facilitate small group activities, tutor adult students one-on-one, review homework assignments, or help a teacher prepare materials for class. Some volunteers also may be able to provide translation for English language learners.

- **Home Visiting**—Volunteers can accompany teachers on home visits to provide adults with news about upcoming events at the program, share educational materials, and work with parents to reevaluate their educational goals.

See *Sample D* for a job description from Pima County (Arizona) Adult Education Family Literacy program for a volunteer to work with English Speakers of Other Languages.

**Volunteer roles in children’s education**

The children’s education component in family literacy programs focuses on the development of language and literacy skills. One reason for volunteer interest in your program may be the opportunity to work with children as well as adults—the chance to help children establish the skills they’ll need to succeed in school and in life. For some volunteers, this intergenerational exchange of knowledge is extremely rewarding. Bear in mind, however, that volunteers working with children are subject to certain licensing regulations within your state and likely will be required to have a criminal record check. Be sure to let volunteers know up front what personal information they’ll need to provide.

Often, the value of having a volunteer in a children’s classroom is simply having an extra set of eyes, ears and hands. Some roles a volunteer might play include:

- **Storytelling or Reading Aloud**—Volunteers can help foster children’s love for language and reading by sharing stories and books with them. They may read to children in a group setting or one-on-one. When a volunteer reads aloud to the entire group, this also gives the teacher extra time to prepare for the next activity.

- **Facilitating Learning Activities**—Volunteers can help children access materials, oversee the use of those materials, and encourage children to think and play creatively.
Homework Club—School-age children may benefit from some extra attention through tutoring or afterschool sessions. If the club is held in a library or computer lab, volunteers can help students select books and learn how to access the various resources available.

Volunteer roles in parent education
Parent education, sometimes called Parent Time, provides training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher of their child. While the focus of Parent Time is on helping parents understand how their children learn and ways to support that learning, this component also is an opportunity for parents to discuss other life issues with their peers. Volunteers in parent education can share their own life experiences as they help parents address some of the difficult or challenging issues they face.

Volunteers in parent education can offer support in a number of ways, including:

- **Accessing Community Resources**—Parents may be unfamiliar with the services available to them in their community. Volunteers can help parents develop a list of resources and discuss how they can be contacted. Parents may be looking for assistance in areas such as free or low-cost medical services, legal aid, food programs, housing, or domestic or substance abuse programs, among others. Volunteers also can help parents identify free community events that are appropriate for families to participate in together, such as international festivals or library celebrations.

- **Preparing for Work**—Some parents may be getting ready to enter the workforce and may be unfamiliar with the steps necessary for finding and applying for a job. Volunteers can help parents research careers in their community, develop a résumé, and practice a job interview. Volunteers also can share their own work experiences, describing the skills that helped them succeed in the workplace.

Volunteer roles in PACT Time
PACT Time, or interactive literacy activities for parents and children, is a unique component in family literacy. PACT Time provides strategies for parents to support their child’s literacy development while giving parents the opportunity to practice those strategies in a safe and structured environment. In the classroom, teachers and volunteers model learning techniques and offer suggestions and support as parents work with their children.

Volunteers often enjoy working with parents and children together, encouraging the learning bond as it develops between each parent and child. Roles volunteers might play during PACT Time include:
Facilitating Circle Time—As part of PACT Time, sessions often begin or end with a group activity called Circle Time. Volunteers can read a book aloud to the group, demonstrating good read-aloud skills. A volunteer might teach the group a new song or fingerplay, and can help prepare handouts for parents so they can practice the song or fingerplay with their children at home. If a volunteer speaks a language other than English, he or she can translate activities for English language learning families or help to develop activities in the families’ home language.

Arranging Field Trips—Sometimes PACT Time might include a trip to the library, the local zoo or a museum. Volunteers can help to make arrangements, including transportation or meals, and also can help chaperone on the trip itself.

While volunteers can support instruction, it’s important to remember that volunteers usually are not certified teachers (although some may have teaching experience). Again, it’s very important to define the roles volunteers will play in the classroom, and be sure that both staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of those definitions.

Roles for Volunteers to Support Administration

Volunteers come from all walks of life and bring with them many skills. Perhaps their most endearing asset is a desire to help. Some volunteers may be more comfortable providing “backstage” support, while others simply want to put their best skills to good use. A good place to start matching volunteer skills to program needs is during the orientation process. Ask volunteers about their work experience, skills, hobbies and interests, and find out why they want to volunteer in your program. Have choices available about the different kinds of roles they might fulfill—both in and out of the classroom.

There are many opportunities for volunteers to participate in the administrative functions of a program. What follows is just a sampling of the roles volunteers can play in a program’s day-to-day and long-term operations.

Board membership

Advisory Boards and Boards of Directors usually concern themselves with community outreach, fundraising, policy and procedures, and fiscal management. As members of your community, volunteers can provide valuable connections to local businesses and agencies that can support your program. Volunteers often bring with them specialized skills, such as accounting, media relations, or human resources. Board members must have a clear understanding of your organization’s mission and how your program meets the needs of your community. Armed with this knowledge, volunteers can advocate for your program to raise awareness and forge new, purposeful collaborations.
Volunteer management
Volunteers need consistent feedback and recognition. While staff are ultimately responsible for ensuring satisfactory and satisfied volunteer participation, seasoned volunteers can support the ongoing volunteer efforts of your program. For example, an experienced volunteer can act as a liaison between other volunteers and staff, representing volunteer concerns at monthly planning meetings. Current volunteers can coach new volunteers, helping them learn about the program and making sure they understand policies and procedures. Volunteers also can help organize volunteer appreciation events, perhaps in conjunction with other program celebrations.

Clerical support
As any teacher or program coordinator knows, there’s a lot of paperwork involved in education! Many volunteers will have experience with office equipment such as copiers and fax machines, and also may have extremely useful organizational skills. Among the duties volunteers can fulfill are copying handouts and other learning materials, gathering materials from the library or researching information on the Internet, filing, and making phone calls to parents whose attendance has dropped. Volunteers also may be able to assist in record keeping, such as attendance, permission slips for field trips, or donations. Of course, keep in mind that volunteers may want a variety of experiences, and clerical work can become mundane. Be sure that volunteers have opportunities to explore other areas of interest as well, and that all of their hard work is recognized frequently.

Recruitment
As active members in your community, volunteers can be very effective in recruiting both families and other volunteers. Volunteers can lend a helping hand at recruitment events, like county or school fairs, and also can help promote these events and your program by posting flyers in the community. Some volunteers also may participate with other organizations that serve a similar population and can refer families to your program. To recruit new volunteers, an experienced volunteer might speak to civic groups about his or her experiences in your program. And remember that word of mouth is one of your best recruitment tools. Satisfied volunteers will speak positively about your program to just about everyone they meet!

Fundraising
Most literacy programs rely on a variety of funding sources, both public and private. Fundraising can be a time-consuming and arduous process. At the same time, there are many creative ways to approach fundraising. Volunteers can research available opportunities, looking for foundations and businesses that routinely provide support (both financial and in-kind) to educational and social organizations. Some volunteers even may have grant-writing experience or editing skills. Volunteers also can assist in organizing fundraising events in your
community, from bake sales and raffles to more formal presentations for civic organizations. To make the best use of a volunteer’s support of your fundraising efforts, it’s essential that the volunteer has a clear understanding of your program’s mission, goals and activities. And again, word of mouth is a powerful tool. Volunteers who are enthusiastic about your program can advocate for the services you provide to families when speaking with their colleagues and business associates.

**Marketing and public relations**

Many of the roles described above involve some level of marketing and public relations. From designing brochures and putting up posters to participating in events and speaking to civic groups, volunteers can help you create a real presence in your community. Volunteers can write press releases (see *Sample E*), offer to be interviewed by the local newspaper or radio talk show, plan special events or site visits (see *Sample F*), represent your program at a family reading night at the library, or plan a public celebration for National Family Literacy Day (see *Sample G*). Volunteers experience firsthand the great work your program does and can speak with authority and “credibility” about the services your program provides to families.

**Putting It All Together**

The roles volunteers can perform are vast and varied. Taking the time to “get to know” potential and existing volunteers will be worth the investment of your time and effort. By matching volunteers’ skills to the needs of your program, their services can enhance and expand the services you’re able to offer to families.

Volunteers also provide a vital link to the community, which can support recruitment efforts, fundraising and community outreach. Setting guidelines and defining roles doesn’t have to be restrictive, but rather can lay the foundation that allows volunteers to contribute in meaningful and creative ways.
Pima County Community College District

Job Description for Volunteer Tutor for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Reports to: Supervising instructor and Coordinator of Volunteer Services

Hours: An initial commitment of 3-4 hours a week for three months is required

Definition and Basic Responsibilities
The volunteer ESOL tutor will work under the direct supervision of a Pima County adult education instructor but may work one-on-one or in small groups with students in the classroom on basic language skills, including word definitions, grammar, pronunciation, English descriptions of real-life scenarios, idioms and formation of complete sentences. The tutor also may work outside of the classroom with one or more individuals who are speaking significantly below the average classroom level.

Basic Qualifications:
- High School diploma or GED
- Strong desire to be placed into a multi-cultural learning environment
- Excellent oral communications skills and command of the English language. Previous experience as a tutor is desirable but not required

Related Duties May Include:
- Helping to facilitate classroom activities
- Supporting a subject area in various ESOL activities
- Working with instructor to develop resources or appropriate lesson plans

Additional Information:
Potential volunteers may be asked to observe one or more classes at one or more locations before being given a steady assignment. This is to insure that the volunteer is familiar with the variety of Pima County adult education classes. Volunteers also will be asked to attend a 90 minute orientation before or within 3 weeks of initial placement.

Pima County Adult Education (PCAE) serves more than 10,000 students annually at a variety of locations throughout Pima County and employs 170 full and part-time employees, many of whom began their tenure as PCAE volunteers. In 1992 and 1999 PCAE was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as one of the top 10 Adult Education and Literacy Programs in the country.
One way volunteers can help support your program is by taking an active role in public relations, community outreach and event planning. Below is a sample press release. Samples F and G provide steps for planning an event or site visit and some general information about National Family Literacy Day.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“County” Family Literacy Program Sponsors Annual Family Fest Weekend Activities Focus on New Student Recruitment

City/County, KY – (July 20, 2004) – Officials from the “County” Family Literacy Program are pleased to present the third annual Family Fest to be held at the Community Center on August 1, 2004, at 1:00 p.m. This annual event is designed to help attract parents to the family literacy program in “Our” County. “Our Local” grocery store and “Our County” Medical Clinic generously support this year’s Family Fest.

The “County” Family Literacy Program offers services for families during the day or evening hours. Family literacy involves parents and children coming to the learning environment together. Classes for parents may include literacy education, GED preparation or English as a Second Language, and children are taught age-appropriate literacy skills. Later in the day, parents and children come together for interactive learning activities.

The Family Fest will feature lots of fun activities for parents and their children, including games, storytelling and free medical check-ups from “Our County” Medical Clinic. Family literacy staff members will be available to help answer any questions about what family literacy programs offer.

“We want to welcome families and let them know that family learning programs can help start parents and their children on the path to a better life,” said Jane Doe, “County” Family Literacy Executive Director. “We have a new round of classes beginning this fall and we want parents to know that these opportunities are free of charge.”

For more information regarding “County” Family Literacy programs, phone 502-555-7777.

CONTACT:
Jane Doe
502-555-7787
jdoe@countyfamilyliteracy.org

(From Kentucky Family Literacy Programs Recruitment Handbook, National Center for Family Literacy, 2004.)

Defining Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities
Planning an Event or Site Visit

When planning an event or site visit (for example, from a local business leader or legislator), take some time to ask yourself the following questions. Planning the event or visit thoroughly will help ensure success for everyone involved.

- Who is the audience?
- When will the event or visit occur? How long will it last?
- How many people should be invited? (Depending on the location of the event, there may be space or other limitations.)
- Is there a protocol for inviting school or district administrators to the event?
- Do you need to decorate the room (e.g., banners, photos, students’ work)?
- Do you need signage to direct visitors to the location of the event?
- Do you need to issue a press release?
- Will media attend the event? If so, do you need to put together a media kit, with a fact sheet about the program, a press release about the event, biographies and photos of speakers, etc.?
- What is the agenda for the event (e.g., welcome guests, brief presentation about the program, conduct a tour of the site, introduce students to guests)?
- How can students be involved in the planning and hosting of the event? If the event includes a site visit, do students fully understand the purpose of the visit and the importance of engaging the public in the program?
- Will there be any additional costs to organize or orchestrate the site visit? Are there community partners who may be able to defray costs through donations (of materials, refreshments, etc.)?
- What ways can you follow-up on the event or visit (e.g., sending out thank you letters to those who attended, sending regular updates throughout the year)?

(Adapted from Fundamentals of Fundraising for Family Literacy Programs, National Center for Family Literacy, 2002.)
National Family Literacy Day®, November 1, provides all family literacy programs throughout the country an opportunity to celebrate successes as well as a chance to garner media attention. For advocates and other supporters, National Family Literacy Day also provides the opportunity to generate publicity and enthusiasm for family literacy.

Like any event you plan, be sure to discuss your goals with all staff, volunteers and students who are involved. For example, is your goal to recruit families, garner media attention, or both?

Over the past several years, family literacy programs have found some very inventive ways to celebrate. Below are just a few ideas to help “jump start” your creative juices.

- Many family literacy programs make a formal request to their city’s mayor to proclaim November 1 as Family Literacy Day in their city. You might also hold a “Literacy Breakfast” with an official from your community, city or state.

- To raise awareness of family literacy in your community, you could promote a “Run for the Readers” like the one held in Shelton, Washington, which brought together a number of collaborators including the school district, the Even Start program and the Mason County Family Literacy Program. The run/walk for parents and children was followed by refreshments and free take-home books for participating families.

- Everyone enjoys a “Pajama Party,” and the Even Start program in Urbana, Illinois, hosted a pajama party at the public library to emphasize bedtime as a great time for reading together. Parents presented related projects on children’s health, nutrition and sleep.

- Plant a “Literacy Garden” like the folks at Rutland County Head Start in Vermont. The garden serves to commemorate the celebration all year long—and the project provided many teachable moments.

- Hold your celebration a day early and combine it with a Halloween event, but tie it into literacy by focusing on storytelling and active learning activities. The Toyota Families for Learning Program in Denver, Colorado, set out to “debunk the myth that reading is scary.”

(Adapted from Take Action! A Guide to Advocacy for Family Literacy, National Center for Family Literacy, 2002)
CHAPTER 5:
Volunteer Recruitment and Placement

Contributing Author:
Karen Smith
Introduction

Recruiting and placing volunteers is at the heart of a program’s successful volunteer component. This chapter will explore steps and processes in recruiting and placing volunteers. It also will discuss successes and challenges, as well as forms and tools that can be helpful in the management of a volunteer program.

The following program example describes briefly some ways that volunteers can truly round out the literacy services provided to families.

Program Description

In 1991, Pima County Adult Education in Tucson, Arizona, was selected as one of five cities nationwide to receive a Toyota Families for Learning grant. The program began with three sites in the Sunnyside School District and has grown to 10 sites in three districts, including three Toyota Families in Schools (elementary-based) sites. In 1994, Pima County tapped another program called AmeriCorps, a program of national service in which members volunteer in their communities for 1,700 hours and then receive an educational award to further their education.

AmeriCorps volunteers have become central members of the family literacy teams at each site in the Pima County program, bringing a spirit of service to all that they do. Many of them are former family literacy students and bring a depth of understanding of the power of family literacy that enriches their work with families. Former students know best the potential and the challenges of dedicating one’s time and focus to furthering educational goals and often students choose to talk with AmeriCorps members in difficult times or in times of insecurity. AmeriCorps volunteers are a cornerstone of staffing at each site.

In addition to AmeriCorps members, the program also uses many community volunteers. The majority work in the adult education component, providing one-on-one and small group tutoring. Classes are multi-level and volunteers often provide assistance that helps those students needing individualized instruction meet their goals.

In this chapter, program examples refer to the Pima County Adult Education program and include strategies that have worked with both AmeriCorps members and community volunteers.
Getting the Big Picture

When recruiting volunteers, it is key that they get a thorough picture of your literacy program. The most successful way to do this is to have them visit the program, learn about the educational components, and meet the students and staff. For example, when one woman decided she was interested in volunteering in family literacy, the Pima County program invited her to attend an intensive implementation training to help her get the big picture of family literacy. After the training was over, she was never heard from again! Although some might view the loss of a potential volunteer as a failure, the program considered this an important success. With a fuller knowledge of family literacy, the volunteer decided her time and talents could be used better in a different setting. The program and the volunteer discovered this before making a large investment (of time or resources) in the placement process.

Other ways to give volunteers the “the big picture” are to have them look at students’ work and writing, books or projects that parents have made, and other materials that represent your program’s services. And of course, talking with former students and other volunteers about their experiences in the program is a great way for potential volunteers to gain firsthand knowledge about the program and the families it serves.

Recruiting Volunteers

As you consider how to recruit volunteers, keep in mind why you want to recruit volunteers, and why volunteers might be interested in supporting your program. The preceding chapters have provided some valuable strategies for evaluating the challenges and benefits to incorporating volunteers. Before you begin recruitment efforts, be sure that you and your staff are committed to maximizing the contributions volunteers will offer your program.

Recruiting volunteers is a year-round, non-stop activity. If you are lucky enough to have a Volunteer Coordinator in your program, it is critical that he or she spends some time getting to know the program’s mission and vision and the philosophies behind the program’s instructional approach. The Pima County Adult Education program’s Volunteer Coordinator knows the culture of family literacy and its goals and can “just feel it” when he meets a volunteer that would be right for the program.

Before recruiting, be sure you know what your needs are. (See the chapter in this guidebook on “Assessing Program Needs.”) Survey your staff and teachers to know where they could use additional help. Your needs for volunteers will change as your program, staff, and students change, so have a process in place to evaluate
your volunteer need regularly. Once you know what the needs are, you can create descriptions explaining the work you think can be performed by a volunteer. (See the chapter on “Defining Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities.”) Then be prepared for surprises. You may think your greatest need is in tutoring, and suddenly a volunteer with a background in fundraising appears when you hadn’t thought of that as a need.

After doing a program needs assessment and defining volunteer roles, you are ready to recruit. While it requires specific actions to make it happen, volunteer recruitment is also a mindset. It becomes integrated into all aspects of outreach. For example, if you are talking to a civic group about the literacy needs in your community, you can talk about the fact that you use volunteers in your program.

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<th>Some venues for recruiting volunteers include:</th>
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<td>Newspapers and other community publications</td>
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<td>Retirement organizations</td>
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<td>Community colleges and universities</td>
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When you contact these organizations, it is important that you have concise, clear descriptions of what volunteers in your program will be doing. Ideally, these descriptions will include not only examples of activities the volunteer will do, but also details about location and scheduling. If possible, have current or former students take part in presentations to community organizations. If potential volunteers can hear about the impact of the program directly from a student, it is much more powerful than hearing it from a staff member. Leave informational materials about your program with the contact person from that agency. Include a list of volunteer opportunities and perhaps a donation list of goods and supplies your program needs. This will encourage those who can’t volunteer their time to get involved nonetheless. (See Sample H for an example of a volunteer recruitment flier to distribute throughout the community.)

As you get to know your community through this strategy, you may find there is a need for developing a volunteer databank among literacy agencies. This project, though labor intensive, can provide a beneficial resource to the entire community.
In addition, it can increase the visibility and effectiveness of volunteers. You might even use a volunteer to coordinate this project.

Informal meetings and community events can provide opportunities for networking with potential volunteers. Volunteer support often results from informal discussions about student successes and the important role your program plays in the community.

At one literacy site where students were predominantly studying English as a Second Language, a small group of students decided they wanted to begin preparation for their GED exam. The adult educator began networking with friends and community members in search of someone who could volunteer 4-8 hours a week teaching math and encountered several people of diverse skills and background who were inspired to volunteer. A community organizer, an engineer, and a published poet expressed interest in volunteering with the project. The community organizer taught math classes with the GED students for an entire year. The poet and engineer worked one-on-one and in small groups with English language learners. This arrangement provided a mutually beneficial relationship in which volunteers learned about immigrant families and adult education while students gained language and math skills.

**Screening**

It’s important to assess potential candidates’ reasons, goals and motivations for volunteering; their professional background, training, and teaching approaches; their communication styles; and their availability. Staff will want to be sure that volunteers share values that are compatible with the program’s values and educational approach. If your program values a student-centered, participatory approach, does that volunteer also bring that perspective and the skills to implement it? If your program serves English language learners, what is the volunteer’s experience with different languages and cultures? Many programs have discovered that while teaching experience is valuable, it is not always better. Sometimes it is better to find trainable people, engaged and open, who are eager to learn.

This screening can happen as casually as through informal conversations, or through more formal means such as written surveys and forms (see Template H for an example of a volunteer information form). Each program must know whose job it is to do this screening: the Volunteer Coordinator? The Program Manager? The classroom teacher? In most cases, there should be one point person to coordinate the volunteers in your program.
Simultaneously with the recruitment phase, teachers are preparing to welcome potential volunteers in their classroom. Ideally, teachers participate in an orientation that covers:

- Why people volunteer
- What it takes on the front end to make a successful placement
- How to communicate with staff and students about the volunteer’s role
- How to help volunteers feel a part of the entire program
- How to manage time around meeting and planning with a volunteer
- What to cover when meeting with volunteers
- How to define roles and responsibilities for volunteers

These discussions can help cement the idea that accepting a volunteer in a classroom is a huge responsibility for a teacher. (See the chapter on “Involving and Developing Staff.”) Working with volunteers is not just taking advantage of “free help,” but also a time and energy commitment on the teacher’s part.

**Tips for recruiting volunteers**

- Know who is in charge of recruiting volunteers in your organization and make it a fully defined part of that person’s job description
- Make repeated contacts with community organizations that support the mission of your program
- Have job descriptions for positions that can be filled by volunteers
- Help potential volunteers see the big picture of your program
- Make volunteer recruitment a year-round part of your program
- Don’t assume that community agencies and volunteers know about your program
- Don’t assume that teachers know how to use volunteers without some training

**Placing Volunteers**

Once the screening phase has helped identify a good match for your program, it’s time to match the volunteer to the work that needs to be done. To determine what work best suits the volunteer, consider his skills and interests, the communication style of the teacher or staff member who will oversee the volunteer’s work, individual personalities, and the volunteer’s desire for support or independence.
By this time, you should know, for example, if a volunteer has the skills and desire to work with a small group of advanced English speakers, tutor math to GED students, or do one-on-one tutoring with computer skills.

With experience you will begin to notice signs of successful volunteer placement. For example, the Pima County program considers volunteer placement to be successful if:

- Students express that they are learning and reaching their goals better through their work with the volunteer
- Volunteers express their comfort level and satisfaction with what they are doing
- Volunteers feel they are an integral part of the entire site
- Volunteers see the big picture and how what they do ties in with and enhances all of the programming
- Volunteers make a long-term commitment to the site or students
- Volunteers become community advocates for your program.

The greatest challenge to placing volunteers is “match making.” There are many aspects to ensuring that the volunteer is the right match with a particular site, with a particular teacher, and with particular students. This is a delicate, lengthy process, but one very much worth the effort. A bad match, in any one of these areas, can have long-term consequences. It is worth the time spent up front to create the best matches possible.

One year, the Pima County program thought they’d made a good match. Although there were some initial concerns (the volunteer’s availability, language issues, the teacher’s communication style), the staff agreed to move ahead with the placement. After several weeks, it became clear that the match wasn’t working—and that the volunteer, the teacher and the students were not benefiting from the arrangement. The Volunteer Coordinator found another position that was better suited for the volunteer. After the experience, everyone agreed that the “red flags” at the beginning of the process were a pretty good indicator that the match should not have been forced.

Another challenge after placement is finding the time for the teachers and the volunteers to meet, plan, and evaluate. This communication is crucial to the success of the volunteer placement and must be built into the regular work week. This expectation of staff to meet and communicate regularly with volunteers should be a part of the staff training component.
For a volunteer who is going to provide classroom support, the orientation process might include these steps (see also the following chapter on “Training and Development for Volunteers”):

1. The volunteer and the teacher meet to discuss expectations, what kind of support the volunteer may or may not need, scheduling considerations, the role of the teacher, etc. Teachers must be able to express what the site’s needs are, what the volunteers should expect when they first come to the site, and the plan for the first visit. There must be clarity about who develops materials and plans.

2. The volunteer observes the teacher working with students and is introduced and drawn into the lesson and conversation.

3. The teacher, volunteer, and students discuss the day’s experience by talking about what they observed and learned. As the volunteer interacts with students, staff should note the level of comfort between the volunteer and the students.

4. After the class, the teacher (and perhaps the Volunteer Coordinator or Program Coordinator) debriefs with the volunteer, encouraging the volunteer to ask any questions about her ongoing role. Practical considerations, like scheduling, should be discussed as well.

5. Staff—the teacher, the Volunteer Coordinator, and the Program Coordinator—then evaluate the volunteer’s potential integration into the classroom. Any concerns should be addressed at this point, and if for some reason the volunteer doesn’t seem to be a good fit in this classroom, other roles that might be more appropriate should be discussed.

While this may seem like an inordinate amount of “up front” work before permanently placing a volunteer, it can prevent many difficult scenarios where teachers, volunteers, and students alike are frustrated and disappointed with the placement.

Tips for placing volunteers

- Arrange a meeting between the volunteer and teaching staff
- Allow opportunities to observe and “try out” the placement before firm commitments are set
- Follow up and evaluate soon after initial placement
- Be clear with volunteers that your goal is to find a position that will be equally rewarding for the volunteer and the students—be honest, and encourage honesty from your volunteers
Putting It All Together

Finally, follow up is the next crucial step to a successful experience for all. After the volunteer has had a few days’ experience, check in to see how things are going for the volunteer, the teaching staff and the students. Prepare a survey or set of questions to find out what you need to know about how the placement is working. Templates I and J are forms that may be useful in evaluating the success of a placement and the ongoing needs of volunteers. Evaluations should continue throughout the year. If a placement isn’t working, find out if there is another role the volunteer can fill, or you may even have to consider that your program isn’t the right opportunity for that volunteer.

Recruiting and placing volunteers is not much different from recruiting and placing students in your family literacy program. The key is to recruit with retention in mind. A volunteer who has a negative experience early on—much like a student—is likely to drop out.

Volunteers want to know their contributions are worthwhile. One of the best ways to ensure this is to take the time to place volunteers in roles that put their skills to good use. And it’s okay if it takes a little while before you—and your volunteer—figure out what that best use is.
Open the Door to Opportunity

Volunteer for Literacy!

Volunteers are needed in a variety of roles to help children, parents & families learn important skills and reach their goals.

Volunteers can...
- Teach reading, writing, math or GED preparation
- Read aloud to children
- Help with student recruitment
- Provide administrative support
- And much more!

Please Call Today!

Volunteer Recruitment and Placement

(Adapted from The Learning Source for Adults and Families, Aurora, CO)
Volunteer Information Form

Pima County Adult Education • Volunteer Information Form
(Please Print Clearly)

Name: ____________________________________________

Date: __________________________ Date of Birth: _________________ M / F

Home Phone: __________________________ Day Phone: __________________________

Address: ____________________________________________

E-Mail: ____________________________________________

1. How did you hear about the Pima College Adult Education Program?
   - [ ] Volunteer Center
   - [ ] Another Volunteer
   - [ ] Newspaper
   - [ ] Friend
   - [ ] Other:

2. Have you any previous volunteer or tutoring experience?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
   If so, what organization and role?

3. Education (highest grade completed):

4. Have you any teaching experience?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
   If so, what grade level and subjects?

5. What is your special area of interest or expertise?
   - [ ] Math
   - [ ] Computers
   - [ ] Reading
   - [ ] Writing
   - [ ] Science
   - [ ] Citizenship
   - [ ] ESOL
   - [ ] Clerical Support
   - [ ] Other:

6. Reason(s) for seeking volunteer work in adult education:

7. Tutoring Preference:
   - [ ] Learning Center/Classroom
   - [ ] One-on-one
   - [ ] Computer-assisted Instruction
   - [ ] Other:

8. Availability Date: __________________________ Days/Times Available: __________________________

9. Additional Comments:

   -----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   (for office use only)
   Date of Orientation: __________________________ Date Entered in Database: __________________________

Volunteer Plan:

Volunteer Location: __________________________ Subject Area: __________________________
NAME: _____________________________ DATE: _____________________________

* HOME PHONE: ______________________ * DAY PHONE: _____________________________

* ADDRESS: _____________________________

EMERGENCY CONTACT: ______________________ PHONE: _____________________________

* E-MAIL: _____________________________ VOLUNTEER START DATE: _____________________________

VOLUNTEER LOCATION: ______________________ DAY(S): _______ TIME: _____________________________

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU?

* INCLUDE ONLY IF THIS IS NEW OR CHANGED INFORMATION.

1. ON A SCALE OF ONE TO TEN, HOW HAPPY OR SATISFIED ARE YOU IN YOUR POSITION?

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2. COMMENTS: ________________________________________________________________

            ________________________________________________________________

            ________________________________________________________________

3. WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN YOUR VOLUNTEER POSITION LATELY THAT HAS GIVEN YOU JOY AND SATISFACTION?

            ________________________________________________________________

            ________________________________________________________________

4. WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES YOU ARE CURRENTLY FACING? WHAT SUPPORT WOULD YOU LIKE IN DEALING WITH THEM?

            ________________________________________________________________

            ________________________________________________________________

5. IF YOU COULD MAKE ANY CHANGES IN YOUR VOLUNTEER POSITION OR SITUATION, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

            ________________________________________________________________

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CHAPTER 6:
Training and Development for Volunteers

Contributing Author: Susan Lythgoe
Introduction

This chapter focuses on the processes of selecting, training and maintaining volunteers in your program. It provides suggestions for training content that hopefully will give programs the tools needed to train inexperienced volunteers so they can begin to provide instructional support in the classroom. However, it is strongly recommended that volunteers work closely with a certified teacher who will continue to provide knowledge and guidance to them.

Also, be sure to check out the many resources and free online courses at Verizon Literacy Campus (www.literacycampus.org). This site provides self-paced courses that volunteers can take to explore the world of volunteering in a literacy program. There are also courses for program administrators and staff to help prepare them for working with volunteers.

The following program description emphasizes the value of ranking volunteer training as a high priority.

Program Description

Volunteers have been the mainstay of The Learning Source’s adult basic education, GED preparation and family literacy programs since its inception in 1964 in Aurora, Colorado. Unlike many literacy programs, the program always has used volunteers as primary teachers rather than teachers’ aides. Over the years the program’s founder, Sister Cecilia Linenbrink, has often attributed this use of volunteers to the program’s continued existence and success. While The Learning Source started with a handful of volunteers that first year, in 2003 it was fortunate to have 209 volunteers that provided 8,641 hours of instruction. The program’s growth over the years could not have happened without the many community volunteers from all walks of life who have come forward to help others learn.

Without a volunteer training plan, however, the program would not have been able to provide the large number of service hours to participating families. Volunteers clearly need the opportunity to continue to gain knowledge and training throughout their period of service. Of course, the first steps are attracting and then training volunteers in your program. What follows are some ideas on how to begin your volunteer training process.
Off to a Good Start

Response to inquiry by potential volunteer
Maintaining diligent public relations with potential, current and past volunteers is integral to a strong and effective volunteer program. When a volunteer inquires, it is important that he or she gets a response from your program quickly. Remember, volunteers have many opportunities to work in the community and will be more inclined to volunteer for a responsive program.

To be able to respond to a potential volunteer’s interest quickly, it’s helpful to have a packet of materials ready to send or e-mail that includes things such as a welcome letter, a description of volunteer roles, and other basic information about your program. Your initial contact with potential volunteers will set the stage for their participation. Some will realize from the information you provide that, for a variety of reasons, your program is not an appropriate fit for their skills or interests. And that’s okay, because you’ve just saved time and resources that you can put into developing more appropriate volunteers.

Initial interview
An initial interview is a valuable way to discuss the expectations of both the agency and the volunteer to determine if the relationship appears to be a fit. This can be done by telephone or in person, but is an important step in establishing a relationship with a new volunteer. Some organizations ask the volunteer to contact them if they are interested in volunteering. Other programs with a larger staff will follow-up with everyone who requested an information packet. Whoever is your program’s main point of contact for volunteers should be able to describe the program, its goals and target population, and the roles volunteers do or could do. If you are making a concerted effort to engage volunteers, it may be worthwhile to regularly schedule volunteer orientation meetings, so that potential volunteers can plan to attend them in advance.

Orientation
For The Adult Learning Source program, a volunteer orientation takes approximately one hour followed by an instructional strategies training on topics such as adult learning styles, critical thinking skills and the Equipped for the Future framework. It may take approximately another two hours. A second training session may cover topics such as curriculum and instruction for either Adult Basic Education and GED preparation or English language instruction. Each of these training sessions takes about three hours. Programs can spend many more hours training volunteers, but at the same time, you don’t want to overwhelm them with information or intimidate them before they get a chance to experience your program.
While this example has served The Learning Source well, it’s important to consider your program’s needs and the needs and interests of your volunteers when planning an orientation for volunteers.

Volunteer orientation is an opportunity to give people a good understanding of what your agency does and why it does it. A comprehensive orientation might include such things as:

- The background and history of the agency including your mission or vision statements and any guiding principles you may have developed for your organization. This is a way to begin to introduce the values of your agency and the resulting expectations you may have for your volunteers.

- A Tutor Profile. Providing concrete examples of how previous tutors have flourished in the program is a good way to reassure new volunteers that their lack of teaching experience is not a hindrance to the ways they might support classroom instruction.

- A Student or Family Profile. Sharing the success story of a current or past student is a good way to introduce new volunteers to the people they will be working with. It is also a way to give people notice they will be working with families from different cultures and opens up the opportunity to discuss culture and cultural differences. This is critical to establishing a solid foundation for a new volunteer to go into the classroom and work with students for the first time.

It is critical that you be honest in describing your program, participants and the work that’s needed to ensure services are high-quality. Not everyone is suited to volunteering in a literacy program and there are no benefits to placing someone in a situation in which he will not be comfortable. For instance, if you have a program site in an elementary school and another in a correctional setting, very different people may be drawn to the different settings. As professional educators, it’s our job to help volunteers find the best environment in which to work.

Remember that students who are English language learners come from many cultures and have diverse customs and beliefs. Learning about these cultural differences shows an understanding and respect for students. This will go a long way in helping you develop a positive relationship that will enhance English language learning. Part of working with English language learners also has to do with helping them understand United States culture. Your staff and your volunteers are often the “bridge” between cultures. If your program serves ELL families, be sure to explain this aspect of the program during orientation.
Your expectations of your volunteers are another key component to an orientation. This may include such things as:

- A more comprehensive explanation of volunteer roles and responsibilities
- Your agency’s code of ethics and confidentiality policies
- What will be expected of volunteers regarding meetings and trainings
- Other agency policies such as:
  - Copyright policies
  - Computer policies
  - Child abuse reporting policies
  - Conflict resolution policies

It is also very important to tell volunteers what they can expect from your organization. This may include such things as your capacity for ongoing training and how you will provide ongoing communication and feedback on performance. A few forms you may wish to develop are:

- Dear Prospective Volunteer Letter (See Sample I)
- Volunteer Application Form (See Sample J)
- Training Evaluation Form (See Sample K)
- Center Contact Form for New Tutors (See Sample L)

Preparation for Volunteers for the Classroom

**Working in the four components of family literacy**

Whether volunteers will be working directly with parents and children in the various components of family literacy or only working with adults through the adult education component, it is important that they have a full understanding of the family literacy model and the purpose behind it. The intention of the comprehensive model is that learning is strengthened and reinforced throughout an individual’s educational experience, so it’s helpful for volunteers to understand how all the pieces fit together. Volunteers can help support component integration by talking with adult students about their learning experiences in the other components.

Everyone working in a family literacy program—both paid and unpaid—should know and understand what the program’s goals are. Not only does this help everyone see the “big picture,” it also makes your volunteers better advocates for your program when they are out in the community.
Planning and teaching classes

Volunteers can provide instructional support in the classroom—under the supervision of a certified teacher. As discussed earlier in this guide, volunteers may work in a variety of literacy settings, but tutoring is usually most needed in the adult education classroom.

One area where volunteers likely will need assistance is in planning a lesson. A well planned-out lesson is worth the effort—volunteers will be more comfortable in the classroom if they are well prepared, and students will learn better if the lesson has clearly defined objectives. While some volunteers may have some prior teaching or tutoring experience, the certified teacher should work with every classroom volunteer to make sure that each knows:

- What is to be taught
- What materials will be needed to teach this information
- How the information is to be taught
- How the students will practice with the materials

Lessons may consist of a series of objectives, but each individual objective should be clearly defined for the students. The tutor/volunteer can then help make connections between these objectives and the overall lesson. Usually, lessons proceed from easy to more difficult and from the known to the unknown.

It is important that volunteers understand that the content of a lesson should be relevant to their students. Adult learners especially need to feel that what they are learning is relevant to their daily lives. For example, if a student shows interest in child development, learning materials could be geared to this interest. Or, if a student's goal is to obtain a job, information about job search, interviewing, and résumés would be helpful in facilitating the learning process.

Template K provides a guide for creating a lesson plan that teachers and volunteers can use. A teacher may invite a volunteer to create a lesson plan, but the teacher should review the plan before the volunteer shares the lesson with the class.
Working with adult learners

Whether volunteer or paid, teachers must develop a positive learning climate for their students. Praise and encouragement go a lot further than criticism. Individualized, self-paced instruction allows adult learners to move as quickly or slowly as is necessary to achieve their goals. Volunteers are often useful in multi-level classrooms, providing one-on-one tutoring or working with small groups so that the teacher can work with other students. Volunteers also may have very valuable second-language skills. The key to utilizing volunteers effectively in the adult classroom is providing clear instruction and defining expectations.

Meeting students for the first time

When volunteers first meet the students in your program, it is important that they are introduced by a staff member. This will demonstrate to your participants that volunteers and your staff are members of a team. Getting acquainted with students is an important first step for volunteers, one that will influence their tutor relationship. Help volunteers strive to create a warm, secure environment where students feel comfortable. Learning takes place best in a relaxed environment where students feel accepted and free to take risks and make mistakes. Remind volunteers that starting this class may be one of the most difficult things a student has to do. Praise volunteers for small steps as well as large ones and they in turn will praise participants for their efforts and achievements.

Suggest to volunteers that their first session (regardless of students’ levels) might include:

- Informal discussion so students get to know each other and them. This discussion can include names, native countries, number of children, etc. Even low-level learners can show others their native countries on a wall map or globe.
- Showing students text and learning materials. Some students, especially from traditional educational backgrounds, will appreciate this.
- Information about themselves. Students will be curious about these new faces in their classroom and want to know about them.
- Ice breaker activities. These activities are usually fun and help the students (and the volunteer) get to know each other

It is important to structure successful experiences for students and volunteers. Encourage volunteers to share their commitment to the program and to the students, and ensure that they are respectful of students’ existing knowledge and cultures.
In-service opportunities for volunteers

The orientation and training described above will give volunteers a strong basis upon which to begin their volunteer experience. It does not make them experts in this field. It is important to provide ongoing in-service opportunities for your volunteers. A volunteer development plan might incorporate a variety of strategies such as:

- A handbook with general tips for the volunteer tutor
- Regular in-service opportunities that are determined through a needs assessment. These opportunities can be strengthened (and more cost-efficient) when you partner with another literacy program in your area.
- A regular newsletter for volunteers with teaching tips and information about your program. This is an easy way to recognize volunteers and staff who have gone above and beyond in their work.
- Annual (or more frequent) volunteer recognition activities. These are often more special if students are asked to participate and talk about their experiences with the volunteers.

Evaluation for Continuous Improvement

A key part of volunteer management is to provide formative, ongoing feedback to volunteers. This can be done by giving volunteers a self-evaluation form, through classroom observations, or a more formal external evaluation of their performance. Probably, you’ll want to consider using some variety of all three. While this is not unlike staff evaluations, remember that volunteers need to know their work is appreciated. Template L provides a simple self-evaluation tool for volunteer tutors.

To maintain a vital volunteer program, it is important to evaluate your program at least annually to determine strengths and areas in need of development. Some ways in which you can do this are to:

- Provide exit interviews and annual surveys asking for volunteers’ input.
- Conduct a retreat of volunteers and staff to get ideas for improvement. This is a good time to review and modify your volunteer program’s strategic plan.
- Ask another local program to conduct an evaluation of your program. This form of peer review is an inexpensive way for two programs to help one another.
Putting It All Together

None of the groundwork described in this chapter will be effective if program staff don’t fully commit to expanding and enhancing your program’s capacity to work with volunteers in the classroom and throughout the program. Take the time to help staff understand the value volunteers bring to your program. Their contributions are many, but staff may need ongoing reminders. Some regular team building with staff and volunteers can be beneficial. Nothing is more beneficial than for both staff and volunteers to share in your program’s success. It is also important to train all staff in basic volunteer management techniques. These can be as basic as:

- Greeting volunteers as they arrive and thanking them as they leave.
- Providing volunteers with periodic feedback on their work. Both praise and constructive feedback are welcomed by most volunteers.
- Ensuring that volunteers have the materials and supplies they need to teach their classes.
- Letting volunteers know what kind of progress their students are making.

No matter the strategies you implement to build your team, the most important goal is to focus the entire team’s efforts on helping families become successful.
Dear Prospective Volunteer:

The staff and students at The Learning Source would like to welcome you and thank you for the decision you have made to donate your time and efforts to adult and family literacy. We are confident you will enjoy the experience as well as find it rewarding.

As a volunteer at The Learning Source, there are some things you can expect from the agency:

- **We will make sure you receive the training necessary to do your job.**
  In addition to the training this week, you will receive an orientation at the learning center you select and will be informed of additional training and in-service opportunities throughout the year. The lead teacher at each learning center also serves as a resource for you.

- **We will keep you informed of relevant matters within the agency.**
  Several times a year, the Center Update will be mailed to your home. This provides important upcoming dates, highlights of events within the agency, job openings and tips for working with students. You also will receive the agency newsletter, relevant announcements and invitations through the mail. Other materials may be given to you through the lead teacher at your learning center.

- **You will receive feedback on the work you perform.**
  As time permits, the lead teacher will informally observe your interaction with students and offer suggestions as needed. If you would like additional feedback and assistance, the lead teacher and administrative staff are available.

- **You will be treated as a partner within the agency.**
  The Learning Source relies heavily upon volunteers in its programs. Periodically, the agency conducts program evaluations in which the input of our volunteers is solicited. Staff strive to be available to respond to any concerns, input, suggestions or needs you have throughout the program year. If you find your placement is not meeting your needs, please give us the opportunity to find another placement for you that is a better fit.

(continued on next page)
In return, there are some things that the agency expects from you as a volunteer:

- **We expect that you will honor the commitments you make.** Staff and students depend on your support during the sessions you have chosen. Your reliability is valuable to the work of the agency and you are a role model for our students. Your lead teacher will give you a phone number to call in case of a last-minute emergency.

- **We expect that you will respect confidences entrusted to you.** There may be information you learn about a student through our records or through conversations with your students. We trust that this information will not be shared with others.

- **We expect that you will follow agency policies and procedures.** Our learning centers must maintain records pertaining to student activities, progress and attendance. Your role in this may vary from center to center. According to The Learning Source policies, volunteers and staff may not transport students in their vehicles. We also prohibit staff, students and volunteers from selling products or services at our learning centers. The Learning Source also asks that you set appropriate boundaries in your relationships with students and remember that your primary purpose is to assist students in the attainment of their educational goals.

- **We expect that you will be open-minded and respectful of the differences you may encounter.** You probably will have students who have made different choices than you have made and whose values are different from yours. Please recognize that this may be as much of an educational experience for you as it is for our students.

Again, welcome to The Learning Source for Adults and Families. We look forward to having you volunteer with us. Have fun!
The Learning Source Tutor Application

Orientation Date: ________________________________________________

Name (Last, First): _______________________________________________

Address: _________________________________________________________

Phone (home): ________________________ (work/other): ________________________

E-mail: ____________________________________________________________

Employer Name/Address: ___________________________________________

Occupation: _______________________________________________________

Age (please circle): 18-20  31-40  51-60  71+  21-30  41-50  61-70

Education (please circle GED AA BA/BS MA/MS Ph.D. highest level completed): H.S. Diploma Tech Cert. MD/JD Other

Skills/Interests: ____________________________________________________

Have you ever been convicted of any law violation (except minor traffic violation)?  Yes  No
If yes, please give details
______________________________________________________________

How did you hear about The Learning Source (please be specific):
______________________________________________________________

Have you ever tutored for The Learning Source before?  Yes  No  If yes, where and when did you tutor?
______________________________________________________________

Please indicate whether you would be interested in doing additional volunteering in the following areas:  ☐ Office Assistance  ☐ Fund Raising  ☐ Special Events  ☐ Other

Which training are you planning to attend?  GED  ESOL

Which Learning Center would you most prefer to volunteer in? ________________________________________________

Which day(s) of the week are you available to volunteer? ________________________________________________

What time(s) of day are you available to volunteer? ________________________________________________

Thank you for volunteering with The Learning Source!

(Adapted from The Learning Source for Adults and Families, Aurora, Colorado.)

Training and Development for Volunteers
### Training Evaluation Form

#### Presentation Evaluation from The Learning Source

Title of Presentation: ________________________________

Name of Presenter: ________________________________

Date of Presentation: ______________________________

Please indicate your evaluation of the following items by checking the appropriate box.

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Which topics covered during the presentation would you like to know more about?

______________________________________________________________________________________

How could this presentation have been improved?

______________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________

Comments:

______________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________
Center Contact Form for New Tutors

The Learning Source
455 South Pierce
Lakewood, CO 80226
(303) 922-4683

Center Information for New Tutors

Center Name: ____________________________________________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________

Center Assignment

Day(s) of the week: ______________________________________________________

Class time(s): __________________________________________________________

Center Telephone Number: ______________________________________________

Center Staff Members

Lead Teacher: ____________________________________________________________
Sample Lesson Plan Outline

Class: __________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________________________________________

Objectives: _____________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

Texts and Materials: _____________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

Steps:
1. Warm-up/Review
   - Start the class with a “success” experience, getting students ready to learn
   - Review something learned previously, review something important to the day’s lesson
2. Presentation of new material
   - Set the stage, attention-getter or hook
3. Guided practice (more controlled)
4. Comprehension check (done during the guided practice)
   - Watch faces
   - Ask questions
   - Check to see if pairs or groups are understanding the new material
5. Independent practice (less controlled)
   - Other extension activities

*Remember this is just an example. Adapt to your needs and your students’ needs depending on where you are in a unit, the level of your students, etc.

(Adapted from The Learning Source for Adults and Families, Aurora, Colorado.)
Tutor Self-Evaluation Checklist

Self-evaluation is an important aspect of your tutoring experience. You may reflect on a tutoring session and review what was good, what needed improvement and what you plan to change the next time.

An ideal source for feedback is your students. Again, you may ask for a general response from them or you may use a formal evaluation. Students should always be encouraged to let you know what works best and what they liked or didn’t like.

Other tutors or staff may be willing to observe and share their thoughts with you. This is best done when specific items are evaluated and discussed. You can write out a list of specific questions or points you want your observer to watch for or use a formal evaluation form. You also may choose to observe other tutors to see their methods and teaching styles.

The following list of questions may be used as a guide for evaluating yourself. It is useful to regularly ask yourself these types of questions:

Did I have a lesson plan? ____________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

If so, how closely did I follow it? __________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

How was it useful? __________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
To what degree did my student(s) help plan the lesson? ___________________

____________________________________________________________________

How did I make good use of our time together? _____________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Did I use a variety of activities? __________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Could something have been improved or omitted? If so, what? _______________

____________________________________________________________________

Were the materials I chose relevant and motivating? __________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Did I use materials beside the core texts? _________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Did I incorporate activities that used different learning styles? _______________

____________________________________________________________________

What was particularly successful? _________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
What could I have done differently? ____________________________
______________________________
______________________________

Did I give positive reinforcement and motivation? ____________________________
______________________________
______________________________

What made the tutoring fun and enjoyable? ____________________________
______________________________
______________________________

Did the session end on a positive note? ____________________________
______________________________
______________________________

What will need review or additional practice? ____________________________
______________________________
______________________________

What are the plans for the next session? ____________________________
______________________________
______________________________

(Adapted from The Learning Source for Adults and Families, Aurora, Colorado.)
Introduction

Deciding to use volunteers is a complex decision, as you’ve no doubt seen throughout this guide. Volunteers can be an asset for all types of programs serving parents and children. If nurtured, volunteers provide much needed support to participants and staff alike. As such, the supervision and management of volunteers is not limited to just documenting hours and assigning tasks; it also includes providing guidance, volunteer training, opportunities for personal growth, and regular affirmation.

Volunteers can strengthen services and may even allow for program expansion. Programs utilize volunteer services in many different ways. For example, volunteers can be tutors, child care providers or mentors, and can provide clerical support. Whatever their role, volunteers bring valuable talents and experience to family literacy programs.

As a result, volunteer management and supervision cannot be left to chance. The following example of a literacy program illustrates how having a volunteer management plan is crucial to effectively utilizing volunteers.

Program Description

The English School for Migrant and Refugee Services provides educational opportunities for families from all over the world. Families from Cuba, Haiti, Somalia, Liberia, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Kosovo, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and other countries enter this program daily. Such multi-cultural programming relies on many volunteers to be successful. Volunteers provide services such as teaching, tutoring, mentoring, and child care. Organizing all of these efforts is an ongoing challenge.

The program has 10 full-time paid staff members, 11 part-time weekly teaching volunteers, 12 weekly tutors, 24 tutors/mentors who work with children, and 55 mentors who make home visits. Without a strong management system, the program would have difficulty directing all of these services and ensuring that they are all of high quality. Roles and responsibilities of staff need to be well-defined, including their responsibilities toward volunteer management.

For example, the Volunteer Coordinator handles scheduling and volunteer placement, while also ensuring that materials and lessons are provided to the volunteers. To ensure that data collection is being performed accurately and consistently, the Community Resource Director is responsible for recruiting,
interviewing and meeting monthly with home mentors to collect reports. This data is often used when applying for matching grants, ultimately leading to greater program sustainability.

In the example above, two primary staff members (not to mention the many other staff involved in training) are responsible for large portions of volunteer management and supervision. Many programs, of course, can little afford to have one person to manage volunteer efforts, much less two. However, when balanced with the needs of the English School for Migrant and Refugee Services and the needs of the families it serves, it was determined to be a good expenditure of resources to assign two staff members to oversee the volunteer program.

Creating a Volunteer Management Plan

Hopefully, you began your volunteer endeavors by assessing your program’s need—good! Now you are ready to develop a volunteer management plan (Template M). This plan will outline the process for incorporating volunteers into your program’s services. Following are some tips as you begin considering what elements your management plan should address. Many of these have been discussed in previous chapters.

1. **Define specific areas of need**—It’s important that your volunteer program fulfills specific needs and is not a “stop gap” measure. Consider volunteers to be an ongoing asset to your program, providing services that otherwise could not be accomplished as effectively or efficiently.

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A study by the Urban Institute (Hager & Brudney, 2004) concentrated on nine management practices that impact the capacity of an organization to use volunteers effectively:

- Regular supervision and communication with volunteers
- Liability coverage or insurance protection for volunteers
- Regular collection of information on volunteer numbers and hours
- Screening procedures to identify suitable volunteers
- Written policies and job descriptions for volunteer involvement
- Recognition activities, such as award ceremonies, for volunteers
- Annual measurement of the impacts of volunteers
- Training and professional development opportunities for volunteers
- Training for paid staff in working with volunteers

---

Supervision and Management of Volunteers
2. **Involve all staff at all stages**—Staff need to be part of the planning process, as well as of the implementation process, and their commitment to making volunteer efforts work is critical to the success of those efforts.

3. **Define the characteristics of volunteers you’d like to involve in your program**—Although volunteers are sometimes a welcome extra set of hands, eyes or ears, it’s important to think about the characteristics you most need to fulfill specific needs. For example, if your program serves families with infants and toddlers, do you want high school volunteers with little experience caring for young children?

4. **Define volunteers’ roles**—Defining the roles you expect volunteers to fulfill will impact many areas in your management plan, from recruitment to training. You also may want to determine a timeframe of commitment—10 weeks, six months, one year—whatever is appropriate to match need and interest. This will provide a frame for evaluation, giving both you and the volunteer options for continuing the commitment.

5. **Integrate recruitment strategies**—Consider not only how to attract volunteers to your program, but also how to recruit appropriate volunteers with the skills you need. Be sure also to include evaluation as part of your recruitment strategies, recording what efforts worked best and what did not.

6. **Develop a volunteer training process**—Building from the roles you anticipate volunteers will fill and the skills you expect them to arrive with, consider the types and amount of training you’ll need to provide. Remember, too, that training and professional development should be an ongoing process.

7. **Engage a volunteer advisory or support group**—It’s always smart to include volunteers in the decision making process. Involving volunteers demonstrates that you value their opinions and often volunteers will be able to offer a keen perspective on ways to overcome obstacles or improve a process.

8. **Be flexible**—You likely will need to adapt your management plan as new concerns arise and new strategies are tested. Revisit your plan frequently to ensure it is meeting your volunteer management needs.

9. **Design a volunteer data collection process**—Be sure to have a process in place for documenting volunteer hours, achievements, job descriptions, trainings, etc. This can be especially helpful for demonstrating the benefits of and the need for volunteers when seeking additional support from funders or collaborators.
10. **Plan volunteer recognition and incentive strategies**—While you’ll want to be sure to recognize volunteers on a daily basis (a simple “thank you” will work wonders), also plan events specifically to honor their contributions and let them know how much their work is appreciated.

**Supervising Volunteers**

Supervision is a critical element in managing volunteers. While most volunteers will not want to be told exactly what to do at every turn, all will benefit from clear instruction and regular feedback. Remember, volunteers are adults and bring with them many talents, experiences and skills. The key to supervision is making sure that those talents, experiences and skills are put to good use in serving your program’s needs and the goals of your students.

The volunteer supervisor’s role may range from initial interviewing and placement, to assigning tasks, conflict resolution, ongoing evaluation, and volunteer recognition. According to Wadud and Nagy (2004), there are several benefits to be gained from effective supervision:

- Consistent supervision can help identify potential issues, such as volunteer burnout, before they become full-scale problems. The negative experience of one volunteer can adversely affect others in the program.
- Supervision can ensure that program needs and volunteer needs are being met on a regular basis, and that the volunteer’s contribution is clear to the volunteer, the staff and the students.
- Providing ongoing, constructive feedback not only helps volunteers improve their performance, it also demonstrates that they are viewed as important members of the program team.
- A well-supervised volunteer staff works more efficiently and effectively, making your program more successful (by being able to serve more families, by providing individualized instruction, etc.).

**Daily supervision**

The volunteer supervisor will have daily routines to perform to keep the volunteer team satisfied and productive—from making assignments, to ensuring that necessary materials are available, to evaluating the day’s volunteer interactions. But Oddis, et al. (2000) sum up volunteer supervision this way:

> The most important responsibility of a supervisor of volunteers is creating an environment that empowers the volunteers to perform their duties. Empowered volunteers are willing to take responsibility for what they are doing, contribute more than expected, and perceive themselves to be important members of the organization’s staff. (p. 13)
One of the best ways to ensure consistent daily supervision is to plan for it. Designing a daily process will help all staff understand their roles and any specific duties they may have in the process.

Some elements of your daily supervision plan might include:

- **Daily “meet and greet.”** This can be both a functional time spent with volunteers—assigning tasks, reviewing instructions, answering any questions—as well as a motivational time, letting volunteers know their work is valued and that you’re really glad to have them on your team. This also provides a time when supervisors can remind volunteers to document their hours accurately and record any other information needed, and also make announcements about upcoming program events. Of course, you also may have volunteers who come to the program on a weekly or monthly basis. Each time a volunteer enters your program, take a few minutes to review any important information and make him or her feel welcome.

- **Daily reporting.** Volunteer time, miles traveled, and activities performed (in and out of the classroom) are invaluable to a program that needs to demonstrate an in-kind match to a grant-making entity. Also, documenting volunteer participation can help you establish credibility with other organizations in the community, as a testament to the level of community commitment to your program (see Template N).

- **Ongoing, regular communication.** Keeping the lines of communication open with volunteers is vital to making the relationship work. Some programs create a monthly volunteer newsletter (which could be written, designed and mailed by the volunteers themselves) to keep their volunteer pool in the loop, while others use regularly scheduled e-mails and phone calls. Keep volunteers connected to the program by sharing success stories and program accomplishments, news about upcoming events, even new research that relates to instruction—the key here is to keep volunteers motivated and interested in the activities in your program.

Supervising volunteers doesn’t have to be a time-consuming effort, but it does need to be a well-organized one. There are many stories of volunteers who became disenfranchised with an organization because they didn’t feel welcome or didn’t feel they were making a true contribution. Perhaps one of the most important elements of successful supervision is consistency. Volunteers who know what to expect from their volunteer experience are more apt to put forth the extra effort to exceed those expectations.
Evaluating Volunteers

Evaluation and assessment of volunteers can be a tricky yet necessary responsibility. The benefits of evaluation include ensuring that volunteers are placed appropriately in positions they enjoy and that they have the skills to accomplish the tasks they are assigned, and determining any professional development needs. Evaluation is yet another opportunity for you to let your volunteers know how important their work is to your program. Volunteer self-assessment can lead to suggestions about ways to improve program and volunteer services.

As you create a volunteer evaluation process, you may first want to consider how paid staff are evaluated. Evaluating volunteers is certainly a little different, because how a volunteer’s performance is rated will not affect his or her salary. However, the goal of volunteer evaluation is the same as staff evaluation—to enhance personal performance, and ultimately, improve services offered to students.

When evaluating a volunteer, start with clear objectives and be sure that the volunteer knows and understands those objectives when beginning an assignment. Also, be sure that the volunteer understands that his or her progress toward accomplishing those objectives will be evaluated. Here again, making sure that volunteer job duties and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood by both volunteers and other staff will be very important. (See the chapter on “Defining Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities.”)

Keep in mind, of course, that some volunteers may resent your attempts to evaluate their work. After all, they’re contributing their time and talents to your program for free! However, when handled correctly—with professionalism and sensitivity—most volunteers will appreciate constructive feedback. Putting the goals of the program and of the students ahead of any personal goals will go a long way to ensuring that feedback remains objective.

As you begin to develop an evaluation process, some points to consider include:

- Evaluate only those performance areas for which you can or have provided support and guidance. For example, don’t evaluate a volunteer’s tutoring skills if you have not or cannot offer training in that area.

- Start with the positive, then offer suggestions for improvement if needed. If a particular assignment was not completed satisfactorily, ask the volunteer for feedback on how to adjust the process to make the assignment more successful in the future.
Collect feedback regularly from staff who work with a volunteer. Invite staff to provide both accomplishments and areas for improvement. Be sure to let volunteers know that the observations from other staff will be included in their evaluations.

Because documentation of service hours is so important, you may want to use the evaluation process as an opportunity to ensure that volunteers are documenting this information accurately. Let volunteers understand how you use this information.

Another valuable tool is a volunteer self-assessment. Self-assessment allows volunteers to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and to consider what areas they would like to improve through professional development. A self-assessment also can be an opportunity for volunteers to set personal goals, which then can be matched to the roles and tasks they are assigned. For an example of a volunteer tutor self-assessment, see Template L in the “Training and Development for Volunteers” chapter.

The primary goal of evaluation and self-assessment is improved personal performance that leads to improved program services. According to the National Crime Prevention Council (1998), feedback is most effective when it is:

- Specific rather than general
- Descriptive rather than judgmental
- Takes into account the needs of both the receiver and the giver of feedback
- Directed toward behavior that the receiver can do something about
- Solicited rather than imposed
- Well-timed
- Checked to ensure clear communication
- Verified by others to ensure accuracy

**Motivating Volunteers**

Understanding volunteers’ motivation and remaining sensitive to their needs are essential to retaining volunteers. People volunteer for many different reasons, and sometimes those reasons change over time. According to Oddis et al. (2000), people choose to volunteer for three primary reasons:

- Power—a person motivated by power may need to be independent or have control over a project
Achievement—a person motivated by achievement may seek to learn new skills through participation in a project

Affiliation—a person motivated by affiliation will be drawn to the social aspects of the work

McNamara (2000) suggests three basic principles for motivating volunteers:

- Motivating volunteers starts with motivating yourself; if you are enthusiastic about the job, volunteers will be too
- Understand what motivates volunteers by listening to, observing, and asking them about their motivations
- Realize that motivating volunteers is a process, not a task; it will take some time to get to know what motivates your volunteers and to put proper support into place

**Recognition**

As mentioned in this chapter and in others, one of the best ways to keep volunteers motivated is through recognition. That’s not to say that volunteers choose to support your program because they are looking for praise. Still, everyone likes to know they are doing a good job and that their work is appreciated and valuable.

There are many ways to recognize the contributions of volunteers, both internally and externally. Certainly, the daily welcome and announcement of accomplishments is a great place to start. Thank you cards, holiday cards, awards and certificates, and a year-end celebration are other good ways to honor volunteers. Keep in mind, though, that no one wants or needs insincere recognition. Volunteers want recognition for a job well done, and recognition should never seem routine or perfunctory.

Be creative! How about recognizing the “volunteer of the month” by providing a special parking space or posting a picture inside the classroom? Issue a press release about the accomplishments of your volunteers, sending it to the local newspaper and the school newsletter. Invite an experienced volunteer to accompany you to a presentation at a civic organization. Ask your students to write a letter, thanking your volunteers for their support. Sometimes just a well-timed phone call will be all volunteers need to rejuvenate their commitment.
Putting It All Together

Being a manager or supervisor of volunteers can be challenging but extremely rewarding. Planning, organizing and delegating are all important elements of leadership. Below are some final tips as you start on this exciting journey:

- Anticipate potential issues from the start. Plan, plan, plan. Setting short- and long-term goals will help keep volunteer efforts in perspective.

- Prioritize how you will integrate volunteers into the program by focusing on program goals and needs.

- Help volunteers set their own goals and work together to help them achieve those goals.

- Give credit for a job well done, both publicly and privately, and do so sincerely.

- Respect your time and the time of others.
After you have assessed your program’s need for volunteers and decided to develop a volunteer management plan, the following steps can help you turn your management plan into an action plan.

What are your program’s areas of need?

What are the characteristics of the volunteers who can meet those needs?

Define the roles volunteers will fulfill.

What are some ways to recruit volunteers (experienced and inexperienced)?

What kind of training might you need to provide to volunteers, and how will you provide it?

What are some ways to integrate volunteers and staff through team-building strategies?

What data will you collect about your volunteer program, and how will you collect it?

How can you recognize volunteers and provide incentives for their participation?
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References — Supervision and Management of Volunteers


America’s Literacy Directory – www.literacydirectory.org – This is a database of literacy programs throughout the country. Categories include: Programs for Adults and Young Adults, Programs for Children, Learning Disabilities, and Volunteer Opportunities.

American Library Association – www.ala.org/literacy/ – Find information about ALA Office for Literacy and Outreach Services and ALA’s initiative on strengthening library-based adult literacy programs.

Ask ERIC Virtual Library – ericir.syr.edu/ – Search more than 3000 resources on a variety of educational issues. This collection includes Internet sites, educational organizations, and electronic discussion groups.

Certificate in Family Literacy – www.worldcampus.psu.edu/pub/famlt/ – For an in-depth study of family literacy, parenting education for supporting language and literacy development, early literacy development, adult literacy, and adult education, explore the Certificate in Family Literacy offered by the Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy and the National Center for Family Literacy, available online through Penn State University’s World Campus.

Children’s Defense Fund – www.childrensdefense.org – Access resources designed to assist child advocates in their everyday work with policy makers and community-based organizations.

International Dyslexia Association – www.interdys.org/index.jsp – This extensive Web site offers a list of assistive technology products and services, links to related organizations, and conference and seminar information. It summarizes recent research in dyslexia, and has ordering information for IDA books and the Annals of Dyslexia. It has links to legal and legislative sites and a bulletin board.

International Reading Association – www.reading.org – Learn about this professional membership association which is dedicated to improving the quality of reading instruction and disseminating research and information about reading.

LD Online – www.ldonline.org – The site includes weekly links to current articles about learning disabilities, definitions of and FAQs for LD and ADD/ADHD, a monthly focus topic, book reviews, and an extensive resource collection.

Learning Disabilities Association of America – www.ldanatl.org – This is LDA’s official site, and it provides information about the Association, as well as resources, publications, a bookstore, news, events, and so forth.
National Association for the Education of Young Children – www.naeyc.org – NAEYC provides resources and information for guidance for educators of children birth to age eight, and for parents as guidance for choosing the best possible care and education for their children.

National Center for Family Literacy – www.famlit.org – NCFL is recognized nationally and internationally as the leader in family literacy. The intergenerational approach pioneered by NCFL has received critical acclaim and has helped hundreds of thousands of families start on a path to success.

National Even Start Association – www.evenstart.org – The Even Start program integrates early childhood education, adult literacy and basic education, and parenting education into a unified literacy program. Program directors and staff, educators, and parents can find links to various research articles and Web sites to support their efforts to raise the levels of literacy in families and across communities.


National Institute for Literacy – www.nifl.gov – Find out more about the Institute’s programs and services, which encourage the development and provision of high-quality adult education and literacy services. This site features a literacy search engine, the National LINCS, and offers information about the Partnership for Reading program, the effective teaching of reading for both children and adults from evidence-based research. This site also features many literacy-related online discussion lists.

National LINCS – www.nifl.gov/cgi-bin/texis/webinator/lincs_search – Use this search engine by typing in your plain English question about literacy. The site is maintained by the National Institute for Literacy.

New Readers Press – www.newreaderspress.org – New Readers Press, the publishing division of ProLiteracy Worldwide, offers a treasure trove of publications for adult learners and those who help them. Visit their online catalog for listings of books on adult literacy, pre-GED, ESL, workplace, etc., as well as their popular newspaper in plain English: News for You.
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory – www nwrl org/learns/web-based/ – The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory is known for its professional development services. This site provides Web-based tutor training for those who work with children learning to read. It includes a self-evaluation, training activities, strategies, book suggestions and student tracking formats.

Outreach and Technical Assistance Network – www otan dni us/login/login cfm – This site specializes in literacy resources especially relevant to those living in California, but there is also much of use to others in the field of literacy.

Points of Light Foundation – www pointsoflight org/resources/volunteer resource/ – The Points of Light Foundation encourages volunteerism with a variety of resources. This site hosts a free searchable library of articles, effective practices, trends and case studies. The bookstore lists recommended books for the development and strengthening of volunteer programs, fundraising, leadership development and inspiration. Marketplace features recognition and recruitment items.

ProLiteracy Worldwide – www proliteracy org – ProLiteracy Worldwide (formerly Laubach Literacy and Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.) is the largest volunteer-based literacy organization in the United States, providing a full range of literacy services to approximately 235,000 new readers annually through its 1,420 affiliates and a national network of more than 130,000 volunteer trainers and tutors. ProLiteracy Worldwide is the world’s oldest and largest literacy organization.

Reading is Fundamental – www rif org – Find out how RIF uses support from the U.S. Department of Education, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and countless individuals to place more than 200 million books in the hands and homes of children who need them most.

Scholastic – www scholastic com/families – For more than 80 years, Scholastic, a children’s publishing and media company, has created quality products and services that educate, entertain and motivate children and are designed to help enlarge their understanding of the world around them. This portion of their Web site provides a variety of resources for parents that would also be helpful to volunteers who are working with children.

Student Coalition for Action in Literacy Education – www readwriteact org – Learn about SCALE, an organization that supports campus-based literacy programs across the country. In these programs, college students serve as literacy tutors or teachers in their community.
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages – www.tesol.org/index.html
– If you are considering a career in this field, this site will give you everything you need to get started: news, books, periodicals, teacher education programs, and much more.

Urban Institute – www.urban.org – The Urban Institute is a nonprofit nonpartisan policy research and educational organization established to examine the social, economic and governance problems facing the nation. It provides information and analysis to public and private decision makers to help them address these challenges and strives to raise citizen understanding of the issues and tradeoffs in policy making. The Urban Institute conducted a study of organizations that use volunteers to better understand management issues.

Verizon Literacy Campus – www.literacycampus.org – This one-of-a-kind online learning Web site offers free courses and resources to prepare potential and current volunteers—as well as program managers and staff—to work in literacy and literacy-related programs. Users have complete access to self-paced online courses, downloadable resources, information on volunteer opportunities, literacy-related Internet links, learner success stories and more.

Verizon Reads – www.verizonreads.net – Verizon Reads is the umbrella organization for Verizon's national literacy platform. Established in 1999, Verizon Reads is dedicated to the fight for a more literate America through meaningful programs that create awareness, raise funds, and encourage collaboration among literacy providers.

The UPS Foundation – www.ups.com/community/philanthropy/toolbox.html – The UPS Foundation was developed in 1951 to champion innovative solutions to social problems. Its efforts are concentrated on hunger, literacy and volunteerism. Through grants and sharing of resources such as technology and volunteers, The UPS Foundation provides support to communities worldwide. The publication, A Guide to Investing in Volunteer Resources Management: Improve Your Philanthropic Portfolio, available online, encourages businesses, corporate foundations and other grantmakers to strengthen the capacity of their nonprofit partners to more effectively manage volunteers.

The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) was established in 1989 with a grant from the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust. Today, NCFL is recognized worldwide as the leader in literacy development for adults, children and families.

NCFL works with educators and community builders to design and sustain programs that meet the most urgent educational needs of disadvantaged families.

National Center for Family Literacy
325 West Main Street, Suite 300
Louisville, KY 40202-4237
(502) 584-1133
1-877-FAMLIT-1
www.famlit.org