



# **Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration**

## **Tool Kit**

### **For Starting or Strengthening a City Volunteer Program**



Thank you to the Bush Foundation for Funding this Initiative  
2015

**Tool Kit**  
**For Starting or Strengthening a City Volunteer Program**  
**Developing by the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration**  
**(MAVA)**

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*Thank you to cities in Minnesota for contributing strategies for working with volunteers.  
Thank you for contributing documents to the Tool Kit to the cities of Apple Valley, Edina, Inver  
Grove Heights, Red Wing, Plymouth, Rosemont, Roseville, Warren and West St. Paul.*



## **Ten Steps to Start or Strengthen a City Volunteer Program**

Cities across Minnesota and across the country are taking a new look at involving residents as volunteers for the City. The primary reason is to expand what the City can accomplish. However, cities are also finding volunteer engagement connects the City with residents, creates community among residents, and builds civic pride.

Seeing this rise in interest by cities in volunteer engagement, MAVA started an initiative in 2014 to gather lessons learned from cities on involving volunteers to share with other cities. This initiative, funded by the Bush Foundation, connected with 60 cities of all sizes in Minnesota to gain their experiences with volunteers and share what has been learned.

The ten steps for starting or strengthening a City volunteer program came from the lessons learned by the initiative. The attached documents were developed by cities in Minnesota as part of developing a City volunteer program. They have offered to share them, to make it easier for other cities to start a volunteer program.

Ten steps for starting or strengthening a City volunteer program:

1. Assess needs and interest in developing a volunteer program. Identify where volunteers are already involved and what they need. Gather together key leaders to identify what the City hopes to accomplish through volunteer involvement. Develop a case statement for the volunteer program.
2. Talk with other cities of similar sizes that engage volunteers to learn about what the volunteers do and how the volunteer program is structured.
3. Obtain support from the key decision maker or governing body (Mayor, City Administrator, City Council, etc.) for starting or expanding a volunteer program. Be prepared to talk about the positive benefits and impact of a volunteer program such as:
  - Save taxpayer money
  - Expand what the City can offer
  - Bring valuable expertise
  - Volunteers can often work weekends, evenings and holidays when extra help is needed
  - Enhance the connection of the City with residents and the engagement of residents with the City
  - Increase employability of residents who volunteer for resume building experience
  - Contribute to important outcomes for the City, such as beautification, youth support and improved schools
4. Determine who will be responsible for the volunteer program. Seek training in volunteer management for that person(s).

5. Network internally in the City to build relationships with key individuals and departments for the volunteer program. Learn who has expertise and resources that would be important for the volunteer program. Find out who is the most interested. Consider setting up an advisory committee for the volunteer program. Include key staff who are interested in volunteers, staff from departments that have potential for engaging volunteers, current lead volunteers, etc.
6. Design the volunteer program structure.
  - Involve key leaders to brainstorm volunteer positions and develop position descriptions. (See example volunteer position descriptions and list of roles cities are involving volunteers at <http://www.mavanetwork.org/cities>)
  - Assess any risk, liability and legal concerns and develop a risk management plan.
  - Determine if there are any potential union concerns and how to avoid them.
  - Develop ideas for recognizing volunteers.
  - Plan the volunteer data that you want to keep and explore databases for record keeping.
  - Develop a volunteer application (See Attachment C).
  - Develop volunteer policies and a volunteer handbook (See Attachment D).
  - Plan training for the staff who will supervise volunteers (See Attachment E).
  - Create ideas for volunteer recruitment and how you will let the community know about the volunteer opportunities.
7. Develop a work plan for starting or expanding the volunteer program. Detail what will be done by when, who is responsible, who needs to be involved and other accountabilities. (See Attachments A and B).

Be prepared to address items such as:

- The skill set of the volunteers needed. For example, are your tasks simple/difficult?
  - The interests of the volunteers and the cities' needs. Be specific. Do you have a community center, a library or parks that would like volunteer involvement?
  - The season(s) volunteers will be involved.
  - The cost of training a volunteer and of the volunteer program.
  - Policies that need to be developed, such as the age youth can volunteer for different positions, what positions require a driver's license and how much supervision volunteers will be given.
8. Identify key external partnerships for the volunteer program, such as civic clubs to partner for volunteer recruitment, potential partners for events and other organizations that could help get the community involved or bring key expertise you need.
  9. Recruit volunteers through word of mouth, posting volunteer openings on the City website, posting positions at local volunteer center (if available) or [www.volunteermatch.com](http://www.volunteermatch.com) and ask City partners to assist in recruiting volunteers.
  10. Evaluate the volunteer program and decide the next steps. Keep up with the trends on who is volunteering to continually update the volunteer program.

**Attachment A**  
**Work Plan for Developing a Central Volunteer program**

This is a sample work plan for a larger City interested in setting up a centralized volunteer program.

**PROPOSED WORK PLAN FOR  
DEVELOPING A CENTRAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

**PROPOSED GOALS OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

1. Provide value-added enhancements to all programs and services.
2. Strengthen and increase community awareness, partnerships and opportunities for individuals and groups to engage in supporting City programs, departments and goals.
3. Provide systems, training and support to staff and volunteers as a means to maximize outcomes of staff/volunteer partnerships and collaborations.
4. Provide a seamless, consistent and high quality system of intake, training, engagement, retention, risk management and recognition of volunteers.
5. Assure that all City Volunteer program components meet or exceed industry standards.
6. Assure that Volunteer program and Coordinator serve as a valued resource to staff, volunteers, citizens and other City stakeholders. Operate in a manner that the program and Volunteer Coordinator are well respected, connected and visible.
7. Provide systems to measure, assess and analyze Volunteer program outcomes and successes, and allow for continued program improvements.

**PROPOSED PLAN OF ACTION**

**Objective: Create a framework and program that meets the needs, goals and visions of the Volunteer program constituents and stakeholders.**

- I. Schedule and hold listening sessions/meetings with all City Staff who currently are and/or have the capacity to build volunteer partnerships, the Community Engagement Commission, supervisor, and other stakeholders as identified by supervisor. Listening sessions to include:
  - a. identifying opportunities for volunteer engagement. Providing support to staff in identifying new and/or potential areas for engaging volunteers.
  - b. Identifying expectations and needs from Volunteer program.
  - c. Identifying staff expectations regarding their perceived role, duties, accountabilities and ownership in building and supporting volunteer engagement, including: recruitment, training, support, supervision and recognition.
  - d. Soliciting staff and current volunteer ideas and suggestions for volunteer recruitment, training, support and recognition.
  - e. Establishing overview of current volunteer processes; ie; recruitment, on-boarding, training, supervision, tracking and recognition tools, systems and methods for both volunteers and staff partnerships with volunteers.
  - f. Assessing and incorporating strategies for risk management.
- II. Identify, schedule and hold listening sessions/focus groups with current volunteers. Topics to include:
  - a. Current satisfaction level with their volunteer role.
  - b. Ideas for enhancement(s) of Volunteer program for the City.
  - c. Desired role(s) in growing citizen engagement throughout the City.

**Objective: Assure that staff and volunteers have the necessary training, tools and support to share a common vision and excel in building and sustaining successful partnerships, with desired outcomes.**

**Attachment A - Work Plan for Developing a Central Volunteer program (continued)**

- III. Utilizing information from listening sessions outlined above, identify, develop and launch support materials and systems for cohesive, successful, volunteer engagement and recordkeeping. Elements to include:
- a. Establish core operating standards for Volunteer program.
  - b. Establish standards for what a volunteer can expect from the City with regard to their volunteer roles.
  - c. Establish expectations and responsibilities of Volunteer Coordinator.
  - d. Establish expectations and responsibilities of staff partnering with volunteers.
  - e. Develop data base and tracking system.
  - f. Develop on-line and print handbooks for volunteers and staff who partner with volunteers.
  - g. Develop and draft volunteer job descriptions.
  - h. Create on-boarding materials, including enrollment and tracking systems, print materials and Volunteer Orientation plan. Partner with staff to develop position specific training(s).
  - i. Create interest and skills inventory collection tools to assure best possible matches of volunteers to opportunities, full utilization of volunteer gifts, and on-going ability to identify and access needed skill sets.
  - j. Establish on-going training and support needs and materials for volunteers and staff partnering with volunteers. Develop schedule, plan and materials.

**Objective: Build and support a diverse and vibrant volunteer force that represents and welcomes all sectors of the community, and works as a team to meet goals and visions.**

- IV. Volunteer Recruitment plan, materials and systems identified, developed and launched.
- a. Work with Communications to establish branding and messaging parameters and identify available resources. Utilize opportunities listed above to identify volunteer opportunities to be highlighted in communications.
  - b. Explore feasibility of regular volunteer column in community newspaper.
  - c. Explore feasibility of Volunteer programing on Cable channel to highlight current volunteers, volunteer opportunities and report on volunteer impacts and service data.
  - d. Partner with Communications to maximize Volunteer program's social media presence and opportunities.
  - e. Develop list of community gathering places, organizations, service clubs and faith communities for potential outreach and partnerships.
  - f. Identify and train key volunteers as Community Ambassadors to recruit additional volunteers from their circles of influence.

## **Attachment A - Work Plan for Developing a Central Volunteer program (continued)**

**Objective: Create a volunteer force that feels recognized, valued and committed and takes ownership in a common vision.**

- V. Volunteer and staff recognition.
  - a. Create list of free, easy to implement volunteer recognition ideas as a resource for all staff who partner with volunteers.
  - b. Develop systems of on-going recognition of volunteer contributions and needs, such as training and educational opportunities, feedback on impact of volunteerism and appropriate avenues for inclusion in decisions that affect them.
  - c. Explore feasibility of highlighting volunteers in public bulletin boards and other media utilized for recruitment.
  - d. Explore feasibility of branded apparel for key volunteers working in visible roles in the community.
  - e. Explore feasibility of discounts at community businesses for City volunteers.
  - f. Acknowledge volunteer birthdays, start dates and other dates of personal significance.
  - g. Explore feasibility and options for quarterly and/or annual events to recognize volunteers in an event like atmosphere.
  - h. Include staff who supervise volunteers in volunteer recognition activities.
  - i. Establish quarterly staff recognition/awards for outstanding volunteer partnerships. Post on Social Media, intranet and City newsletter.
  - j. Write thank you/acknowledgement letters to supervisors in recognition of staff who excel at volunteer partnerships.
  - k. Explore feasibility of having volunteer partnerships included in employee review process where appropriate.

**Objective: Assure that the Volunteer Coordinator is well connected and visible in community.**

- VI. Build and maintain community connections and visibility of Volunteer Coordinator.
  - a. Explore and identify committees and organizations where Volunteer Coordinator should be participating in order to network and build strategic relationships.

***Thank you to the City of Roseville for sharing this work plan and to Kelly O'Brien, Volunteer Coordinator, City of Roseville for work to develop it.***

## **Attachment B**

### **Work Plan for Developing a Volunteer Board or Committee**

For many smaller cities, volunteer work is coordinated through a volunteer board or committee. Below is a sample work plan for for a City to set up a new volunteer board or committee. Cities have found that adding structure to the process of setting up a board or committee adds credibility and can help develop clarity for the volunteer program..

1. Develop a position statement to describe the proposed board or committee, the need for the board or committee and anticipated positive impact from having the board or committee.
2. Develop an organizational chart to show how the board or committee will report to the City. Identify time needed from City staff or elected officials related to the work of the committee.
3. Develop goals for the board or committee.
4. Gain approval by the City Council for adding the board or committee, as needed.
5. Develop a volunteer position description for serving on the board or committee. Indicate duties of the position, requirements, term length, etc.
6. Develop policies and procedures related to the committee or board.
7. Put together a volunteer application to be on the committee or board and determine a process to review the applications.
8. Recruitment of committee or board members.
9. Evaluate how the process went and determine next steps.

***Thank you to the City of Warren for sharing their Priority Structure for setting up a volunteer Park Board.***



**Attachment C**  
**Sample Volunteer Application Form**

**Logo**

## VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

**Name of City**

Thank you for your interest in volunteering. Your application will be used to determine eligibility for a volunteer position with the City. Please provide complete information so that we can properly evaluate your application.

### Contact Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Skills and Interests

Summarize special skills and qualifications you have acquired from employment, previous volunteer work, or through other activities, including additional languages spoken, hobbies or sports:

Areas of Interest: (please check all that apply) **Insert City volunteer opportunities here**  
Adopt a Park \_\_\_\_\_ Adopt a Hydrant \_\_\_\_\_ City Events/Short Term Assignments \_\_\_\_\_  
Code Enforcement \_\_\_\_\_ Data Entry \_\_\_\_\_ Garden/Landscaping Maintenance \_\_\_\_\_  
Interpreter/Translator \_\_\_\_\_ Office Support \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ -  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Employment and Previous Volunteer Experience

Summarize your previous volunteer experience:

Summarize your current and previous work experience, including name of organization, job times and dates worked:

**Education:** (Highest level achieved or indicate if still in progress)

School \_\_\_\_\_

Degree if graduated \_\_\_\_\_

**Availability**

Sun \_\_\_\_ Mon \_\_\_\_ Tues \_\_\_\_ Wed \_\_\_\_ Thurs \_\_\_\_ Fri \_\_\_\_ Sat \_\_\_\_

Week Day: Morning \_\_\_\_ Afternoon \_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_ Weekend: Morning \_\_\_\_ Afternoon \_\_\_\_

How many hours are you available to volunteer: per week? \_\_\_\_\_ per month? \_\_\_\_\_

**References**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Other**

Person to Notify in Case of Emergency:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes please

explain \_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledgement of City Requirements**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all non-public information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the City or other corrective action. I understand that a background check may be required for certain volunteer positions. I give my permission to the City to check the references that I have listed. I certify that the facts set forth in the volunteer application are true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any falsification, misrepresentation or concealment of information on this application may be sufficient grounds for disqualification for volunteering or immediate removal and that the City shall not be liable in any respect if my volunteering is so denied or terminated. I understand that I am applying for a volunteer position and that I will not be paid in any way. I understand I am representing the City and performing public service. I agree to abide by the City's standards of behavior. If I am selected as a volunteer for the City, I give my permission for photo/video footage taken of me working as a volunteer to be used by the City for marketing purposes.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for completing this application form and for your interest in volunteering with us.

**Attachment D**  
**Sample Volunteer Policy**

**City of \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Volunteer Policy**

## **GENERAL**

### **1.1 Overall Policy on Utilization of Volunteers**

The achievement of the goals of the City is best served by the active participation of community citizens. The City accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels of City government and within all appropriate programs and activities. All City staff persons are encouraged to assist in the creation of meaningful and productive roles in which volunteers might serve and to assist in recruitment of volunteers from the community.

### **2.1 Purpose of Volunteer Policies**

The purpose of these policies is to provide overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer involvement and management efforts. These policies are intended for internal management guidance only, and do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. The City reserves the exclusive right to change any of these policies at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy. Areas not specifically covered by these policies shall be determined by the City Manager.

### **3.1 Scope of Volunteer Policies**

Unless specifically stated, these policies apply to all non-elected volunteers in all programs and projects undertaken on or on behalf of the City, and to all City departments and sites of operation.

### **4.1 Definition of ‘Volunteer’**

A ‘volunteer’ is anyone who without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the City. A ‘volunteer’ must be officially accepted and enrolled by the City’s Volunteer Services department prior to performance of the task. Unless specifically stated, volunteers shall not be considered as ‘employees’ of the City.

## **Attachment D - Sample Volunteer Policy, Continued**

### **5.1 Special Case Volunteers**

The City also accepts as volunteers those participating in student community service activities, student intern projects, alternative sentencing or diversion programs, corporate volunteer programs, and other volunteer referral programs. In each of these cases, however, a special agreement must be in effect with the organization, school, or program from which the special case volunteers originate and must identify responsibility for management and care of the volunteers.

### **6.1 Service at the Discretion of the City**

The City accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the City. Volunteers agree that the City may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the City. The volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to sever the volunteer's relationship with the City. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the volunteer's supervisor and/or Volunteer Services department.

### **7.1 Scope of Volunteer Involvement**

Volunteers may be utilized in all programs and activities of the City, and serve at all levels of skill. Volunteers should not, however, be utilized to displace any paid employees from their positions.

## **VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES**

### **2. 1 Maintenance of Records**

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer with the City, including dates of service, positions held, duties performed, and evaluation of work. Volunteers and appropriate staff shall be responsible for submitting all appropriate records and information to the Volunteer Services department. Volunteer personnel records shall be accorded the same confidentiality as staff personnel records.

### **2. 2 Conflict of Interest**

A person, who has a conflict of interest with any activity or program of the City, whether personal or financial, can be accepted to serve as a volunteer with the City as long as said conflict of interest is disclosed.

## **Attachment D - Sample Volunteer Policy, Continued**

### **2.3 Confidentiality**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a single staff, volunteer, client, or other person or involves overall City business. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the City or other corrective action.

### **2.4 Worksite**

An appropriate worksite shall be established prior to the enrollment of any volunteer. This worksite shall contain necessary facilities, equipment, and space to enable the volunteer to effectively and comfortably perform their duties.

### **2.5 Dress Code**

As representatives of the City, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to citizens and within the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.

### **2.6 Time Records**

Individual volunteers are responsible for checking in and checking out via the volunteer system to ensure accurate time records are maintained. In the case of an absent volunteer system, volunteers will be responsible for the timely submission of timesheets.

## **VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

### **3.1 Service Descriptions**

Volunteer staff, just as paid staff, require a clear, complete, and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the position which they are expected to fill. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a service description must be developed for each volunteer position. This service description will be given to each accepted volunteer and utilized in subsequent management and evaluation efforts. Service descriptions should be reviewed and updated whenever the work involved in the position changes. All service descriptions shall include a description of the purpose, time commitment, activities/duties of the position, a designated supervisor and service location, a listing of job qualifications/desired skills, and a description of job benefits/results expected. The Volunteer Coordinator is available to assist staff in the development of volunteer positions and service descriptions.

## **Attachment D - Sample Volunteer Policy, Continued**

### **3.2 Staff Requests for Volunteers**

Requests for volunteers shall be submitted in writing by interested staff, complete with a draft service description and a requested timeframe. All parties should understand that the recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting jobs and by advance notice.

### **3.3 Recruitment**

Volunteers shall be recruited by the City's Volunteer Services department on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding the volunteer involvement of the community. Volunteers shall be recruited without regard to gender, handicap, age, race or other condition. The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment shall be suitability to perform a task on behalf of the City. Volunteers may be recruited through either an interest in specific functions or through a general interest in volunteering which will later be matched with a specific function. No final acceptance of a volunteer shall take place without a specific written volunteer service description for that volunteer.

### **3.4 Recruitment of Minors**

Volunteers who have not reached their age of majority must have the consent of a parent or guardian prior to volunteering. The Volunteer Services department will maintain this record.

### **3.5 Interviewing**

Prior to being assigned or appointed to a position, all volunteers will be interviewed by the Volunteer Services department and/or City Staff who supervise volunteers to ascertain their suitability for and interest in that position. The interview should determine the qualifications of the volunteer, their commitment to fulfill the requirements of the position, and should answer any questions that the volunteer might have about the position. Interviews will be conducted in person.

### **3.6 Criminal Records Check**

As appropriate for the protection of clients, volunteers in certain assignments may be asked to submit to a background criminal check. Volunteers who do not agree to the background check may be refused assignment.

### **3.7 Placement**

In placing a volunteer in a position, attention shall be paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and to the requirements of the volunteer position. No placement shall be made unless the requirements of both the volunteer and the supervising staff can be met: no volunteer should be assigned to a 'make-work' position and no position should be given to an unqualified or uninterested volunteer.

## **Attachment D - Sample Volunteer Policy, Continued**

### **3.8 Staff**

Whenever possible, staff who will be working with the volunteer should participate in the design and conduct of the interview.

### **3.9 Acceptance and Appointment**

Service as a volunteer with the City shall begin with an official notice of acceptance or appointment to a volunteer position. Notice may only be given by an authorized representative of the City who will normally be the Volunteer Services staff. No volunteer shall begin performance of any position until they have been officially accepted for that position and have completed all necessary screening and paperwork. At the time of final acceptance, each volunteer shall complete all necessary enrollment paperwork, an agreement of service with the City, and a copy of their service description.

### **3.10 Re-Assignment**

Volunteers who are at any time re-assigned to a new position shall be interviewed for that position and shall receive all appropriate orientation and training for that position before they begin work. In addition, any screening procedures appropriate for that specific position must be completed, even if the volunteer has already been working with the City.

### **3.11 Professional Services**

Volunteers shall not perform professional services for which certification or licensing is required unless currently certified or licensed to do so. A copy of such certificate or license should be maintained by the Volunteer Services department.

### **3.11 Leave of Absence**

At the discretion of the supervisor, leaves of absence may be granted to volunteers. Even if a leave of absence is approved, a position may be filled by another volunteer.

## **VOLUNTEER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.1 Orientation**

All volunteers will receive a general orientation on the City and the mission of the volunteer program. Additionally, all volunteers will receive general orientation on the nature and purpose of their assigned position, on the operation of the program or activity for which they are recruited.

## **Attachment D - Sample Volunteer Policy, Continued**

### **4.2 On-the-Job Training**

Volunteers will receive specific on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. The timing and methods for delivery of such training should be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.

### **4.3 Staff Involvement in Orientation and Training**

Staff members with responsibility over supervising volunteers should have an active role in the delivery of both orientation and training of volunteers. Those staff who will be in a supervisory capacity to volunteers shall have primary responsibility for design and delivery of on-the-job training to volunteers assigned to them.

### **4.4 Volunteer Involvement in Orientation and Training**

Experienced volunteers should be included in the design and delivery of volunteer orientation and training.

### **4.5 Meeting Attendance**

Volunteers are authorized to attend meetings which are relevant to their volunteer assignments, including both those of the City and of other organizations. Prior approval from the volunteer's supervisor should be obtained before attending any meeting.

## **VOLUNTEER SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION**

### **5.1 Requirements of a Supervisor**

Each volunteer who is accepted to a position within the City must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor shall be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

### **5.2 Volunteers as Volunteer Supervisors**

A volunteer may act as a supervisor of other volunteers, provided that the supervising volunteer is under the direct supervision of a paid staff member.



## **Attachment D - Sample Volunteer Policy, Continued**

### **5.3 Volunteer/Staff Relationships**

Volunteers are staff and considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programs of the City, with each having an equal but complementary role to play. It is essential for the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.

### **5.4 Acceptance of Volunteers by Staff**

Since individual staff is in a better position to determine the requirements of their work and their own abilities, no volunteer will be assigned to work with a staff person without the consent of that staff person. Since volunteers are considered a valuable resource in performing the City's work, staff is encouraged to seriously consider creative ways in which volunteers might be of service and to consult with their supervisor and Volunteer Services department if they feel they might benefit from the assistance of volunteers.

### **5.5 Staff Volunteer Supervision Training**

An orientation on working with volunteers will be available to all staff. In-service training on effective volunteer utilization will be provided to staff highly involved in volunteer management.

### **5.6 Volunteer Involvement in Staff Evaluation**

Examination of their willingness to engage and effectively utilize volunteers may be a component in the evaluation of staff persons who are assigned to work with volunteers.

### **5.7 Lines of Communication**

Volunteers are entitled to all necessary information pertinent to the performance of their work assignments. Accordingly, volunteers should be included in and have access to all appropriate memos, materials, and meetings relevant to the work assignments. Primary responsibility for ensuring that the volunteer receives such information will rest with the direct supervisor of the volunteer. Lines of communication should operate in both directions, and should exist both formally and informally. Volunteers should be consulted regarding all decisions which would substantially affect the performance of their duties.

### **5.8 Absenteeism**

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regularly scheduled and timely basis. If expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers should inform their staff supervisor as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements may be made. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer's work assignment or term of service.

## **Attachment D - Sample Volunteer Policy, Continued**

### **5.9 Substitution**

Volunteers may be encouraged to find a substitute for any upcoming absences which might be filled by another volunteer. Such substitution should only be taken following consultation with a supervisor and care should be taken to find a substitute who is qualified for the position. Substitutes may only be recruited from those who are currently enrolled as volunteers with the City.

### **5.10 Evaluations**

Volunteers shall receive periodic evaluations to review their work. The evaluation session is utilized to review the performance of the volunteer, to suggest any changes in work style, to seek suggestions from the volunteer on means of enhancing the volunteer's relationship with the City, to convey appreciation to the volunteer, and to ascertain the continued interest of the volunteer in serving in that position. Evaluations should include both an examination of the volunteer's performance of position responsibilities and a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have concerning the position or project with which the volunteer is connected. The evaluation session is an opportunity for both the volunteer and the City to examine and improve their relationship.

### **5.11 Written Basis for Evaluation**

The position description and standards of performance for a volunteer position should form the basis of an evaluation. A written record should be kept of each evaluation session.

### **5.12 Staff Responsibility for Evaluation**

Affected staff should be involved in all evaluation and work assignments of volunteers with whom they are connected.

### **5.13 Corrective Action**

In appropriate situations, corrective action may be taken following an evaluation. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, re-assignment of a volunteer to a new position, suspension of the volunteer, or dismissal from volunteer service.

### **5.14 Notice of Departure or Re-Assignment of a Volunteer**

In the event that a volunteer departs the City, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, or is re-assigned to a new position, it shall be the responsibility of the Staff Volunteer Supervisor of the Volunteer Services department to inform those affected staff and clients that the volunteer is no longer assigned to work with them.

## **Attachment D - Sample Volunteer Policy, Continued**

### **5.15 Resignation**

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the City at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice of their departure.

### **5.16 Exit Interview**

Exit interviews, where possible, should be conducted with volunteers who are leaving their positions. The interview should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving the position, suggestions the volunteer may have to improving the position, and the possibility of involving the volunteer in some other capacity with the City.

### **5.17 Evaluation of City Volunteer Utilization**

The Volunteer Services department will conduct an annual evaluation of the utilization of volunteers by the City departments. This evaluation will include information gathered from volunteers and staff.

## **VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION**

### **6.1 Access to City Property and Materials**

As appropriate, volunteers shall have access to City property and materials necessary to fulfill their duties, and shall receive training in the operation of any equipment. Property and materials shall be utilized only when directly required for City purposes. This policy does not include access to and use of City-owned vehicles.

### **6.2 Insurance**

Liability and accident insurance is provided for all volunteers engaged in City business. Specific information regarding such insurance is available from the City's Human Resources department.

### **6.3 Informal Recognition**

All staff and volunteers responsible for volunteer supervision are encouraged to undertake on-going methods of recognition of volunteer service on a regular basis throughout the year. These methods of informal recognition should range from simple "Thank You's" to a concerted effort to include volunteers as full participants in program decision making and implementation.

## **6.4 Volunteer Career Paths**

Volunteers are encouraged to grow and develop their skills while serving with the City, and are to be assisted through promotion to new volunteer positions to assume additional and greater responsibilities. The Volunteer Services department can assist volunteers in maintaining appropriate records of volunteer experience that would assist the volunteer in future career opportunities, both paid and volunteer.

**Thank you for development of these policies and for sharing their use with other cities:**

- **Diane Erickson, Cities of Apple Valley, Inver Grove Heights, Rosemount and West St. Paul**
- **Jackie Maas, City of Plymouth**
- **Kelly O'Brien, City of Roseville**
- **MJ Scott, City of Edina**

**Attachment E**  
**Sample Employee Volunteer Handbook**

## **Employee Volunteer Handbook**

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This handbook has been developed to serve as a guide to your role and responsibilities in our volunteer program. Volunteer Services is here to support you and your volunteer. Thank you for thinking about engaging volunteers into your department.

### **I. OVERVIEW**

#### **City Manager Statement**

*Dear City Employee,*

*As a staff member, you have the unique opportunity to increase work output and maximize resident's dollars by developing meaningful relationships and fostering an environment for residents in the community to engage in volunteer opportunities. You can do all of this by considering what contribution a volunteer can have in any City project or event.*

*\_\_\_\_\_ has always utilized volunteers in some form or fashion and is hoping to cast a wider net by creating a solid volunteer program with the support of City staff. Through a formalized program, residents work side-by-side with City staff in a variety of programs and venues.*

*Establishing a volunteer program as an integral part of the City will help us extend City resources and offer additional services to the residents. Our residents are enthusiastic, skilled and committed to the City. Engaging them into a program to share their valuable time and skills will support staff efforts to stay focused on work plans and complete tasks that otherwise would have gone undone. While a volunteer program gives volunteers a chance to boost their skills, it also gives you, as an employee, a chance to learn new supervising skills.*

*I encourage you to take a look at ways a volunteer could enhance your job. Join your co-workers who have already discovered the benefits utilizing volunteers can bring to the City and the community. Start the conversation with your supervisor and reach out to the Volunteer Services office that can help you recruit, screen and find you the right volunteer to meet your needs. The opportunities are endless.*

*Sincerely,*

*City Manager*

## **Attachment E - Sample Employee Volunteer Handbook, Continued**

### **Volunteer Services Mission**

The City volunteer program creates and sustains a culture of community engagement throughout the City by supporting the utilization of volunteer contributions in impactful ways, while recognizing the value of volunteer and staff commitments.

### **Volunteer Services Vision**

The Volunteer Services department will build the capacity of citizen engagement through the development of meaningful service opportunities where residents can share their skills and talents. The Volunteer Services department will ensure volunteers are fully and effectively integrated into the City and supported by all staff members. The City volunteer program will be a key resource to residents, staff and City Council to support the mission and needs of the City.

### **Volunteer FAQ**

#### **Why should I utilize volunteers? What is the benefit?**

- Encourages community involvement as volunteers vote, write letters to the editor, attend town meetings, and have their own extensive networks
- Volunteers who feel valued, and understand the importance of the work they are doing can become a powerful positive constituency for your City and community
- There are many individual benefits to you, as well as benefits to the organization and community
- Volunteers can stimulate creativity and offer new ideas that give you a new perspective about your departmental needs
- Volunteers can help free your time so you can focus on the things that you are specifically trained to do
- Qualified volunteers can handle aspects of your work that keep you from completing your higher level tasks

#### **How much time does it take to train a volunteer?**

In truth training a volunteer to do a task is very similar to training someone who is being paid. Up front you have to expend training time, but in a short time, you will be freed from time consuming tasks, and have time to focus on your priority tasks.

#### **Can a volunteer replace paid staff?**

While volunteers are an excellent support to staff they cannot replace the expertise of paid staff. Volunteers are supplemental to staff.

#### **Will a volunteer be as accountable as a staff person? Do they understand confidentiality and data privacy?**

Some volunteers will have prior work experience and knowledge of working with protected information. However, if they don't Volunteer Services includes confidentiality training in orientation and can assist staff in providing a second level of training with the individual volunteer. All volunteers receive the same background check and training as a paid staff.

## **Attachment E - Sample Employee Volunteer Handbook, Continued**

### **Can volunteers be fired?**

Volunteers can be let go for a valid reason. If a volunteer has dependability or performance issues, or just isn't working out as you'd envisioned you can contact the Volunteer Services department with your concerns to talk through the process. If the issue is job compatibility, the volunteer will be reassigned, but if it is a more serious concern the volunteer's time with the City can be terminated.

### **What if I need to adjust the service responsibilities listed on the service description?**

If the volunteer is expected to do things that are unrelated to the original description, the volunteer may feel the project was misrepresented and not want to continue the work while others might enjoy the challenge. If you want to adjust the role of the volunteer speak with the Volunteer Services department first.

### **What is the most important thing to increase my odds for having a successful volunteer position?**

When volunteers start they will feel in the dark just as any new hire does. It is your job to help them understand their role in the project and how their contributions will help. Make them part of the team!

## **II. VOLUNTEER SERVICES ROLE**

### **Role of Volunteer Services Department**

The Volunteer Services department is here to help staff when it comes to involving volunteers into their department.

- Help staff create volunteer service descriptions or develop volunteer roles
- Recruit volunteers
- Interview and conduct talent assessments on applicants
- Maintain a database of existing and potential volunteers
- Conduct evaluations about volunteer and staff's experiences
- Manage volunteer retention through recognition and acknowledgment efforts
- Address concerns and resolve volunteer issues

### **Volunteer Placement**

Volunteer placements are determined by the volunteer's skills, interests and abilities, and the City's needs. If these factors are not in alignment, the potential volunteer may be declined or may be referred to another agency. Be assured that steps have been taken to ensure a successful volunteer placement for both the volunteer and the supervisor.

- There is a formal process to becoming a volunteer that begins with the potential volunteer completing a volunteer application.
- If the volunteer seems to be a match based on the application an interview is scheduled with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- If the candidate appears promising at the time of the interview, he/she is invited to meet directly with a Department Supervisor.

## **Attachment E - Sample Employee Volunteer Handbook, Continued**

- After the volunteer is placed, but prior to the first day of service, he/she must undergo a criminal background check, and any other specific requirements of your department.
- The volunteer is also given a Volunteer Handbook to read prior to their training.

### **III. VOLUNTEER SUPERVISOR ROLE**

#### **Your Responsibilities**

As a volunteer's supervisor you play a vital role in the success of the volunteer experience. Since you are the expert for the area in which the volunteer has been placed you will be responsible for orientating and working with your volunteer.

#### **Orientate/Train**

- Block off some time to spend with the new volunteer
- Take the volunteer on a tour of your work area and other parts of the building they may need access to
- Provide your volunteer with information specific to your department and team along with information on their project and work responsibilities
- Training requirements will vary with the demands of each specific assignment, but it should be ongoing

#### **Be Ready**

- Have the volunteer's work assignment or project ready with enough work to fill their shift
- Have supplies needed for the task available
- Let your volunteer know how important the work they are doing is, even if it seems tedious, and how it benefits the City
- Accept a volunteer's right to say "no" +

#### **Be Clear**

- Explain your instructions clearly and concisely and take time to discuss all aspects and the purpose/big picture of each assignment
- Be sure to allow time for questions and periodically check in with your volunteer. Remember to give reassurance as needed
- Ask specific questions to confirm that the volunteer truly understands the assignment and expectations
- Tell him/her where and how he/she can get more information or help
- Define the standards and the results that you expect, including timelines. Explain how you will monitor the project
- Coaching is part of any learning process and is both corrective and reinforcing. Assess actions and outcomes, not people and personalities

#### **Plan Ahead**

- Discuss their work schedule and set expectations
- Break larger jobs into manageable pieces that can be accomplished within the volunteer's shift, provide sequential instruction
- Talk about assignments to work on the next time they come in
- Make sure they know who to call if they need to cancel a shift



## **Attachment E - Sample Employee Volunteer Handbook, Continued**

### **Keep Them in the Loop**

- Invite them to attend in-house training or work development opportunities
- Be sure to allow time for questions and periodically check in with your volunteer. Remember to give reassurance as needed
- Keep volunteers up to date on changes that have occurred since their last shift that impacts their work
- Develop a system or procedure for on-going communication, most performance problems are, in fact, communication problems

### **Establish a Relationship**

- Build a working relationship with your volunteer, and provide the volunteer feedback on his/her performance, along with recognition and thanks
- Give corrective feedback as soon as possible, while the situation is fresh and relatively minor versus delaying and allowing situations to develop into something more major
- You are the primary giver of positive feedback, and delivering that feedback will make a big difference in the continuing service of the volunteer

### **Being a Good Volunteer Supervisor**

Here are some tips:

- Be fair, supportive and available
- Give clear instruction and feedback
- Communicate expectations upfront
- Be a good listener
- Act in a pleasant and professional manner
- Recognize the volunteer's efforts and celebrate their successes
- Have "real" work prepared or call the volunteer in advance and reschedule
- Take action early to correct performance or attendance issues
- Show concern for the volunteer and make them feel valued
- Daily thank you's and on-going recognition of and appreciation for the volunteer's contributions

## **IV. VOLUNTEERS ROLE**

### **Responsibilities and Expectations**

Volunteers are an integral part of the City's work. The way volunteers can assist staff and departments is unlimited. When a volunteer is on-boarded by the City they are held to the same standards as paid employees. You can expect your volunteer:

- To carry through with their commitment to the City
- To perform the duties they committed to, to the best of their ability and to ask for assistance when needed
- To be responsible, reliable, and loyal to the City, the program/department, and the community we serve
- To maintain confidentiality in their activities
- To accept the leadership of the staff supervisor
- To consult with the City staff for clarification of policy and/or procedures

## **Attachment E - Sample Employee Volunteer Handbook, Continued**

- To participate in the orienting and training programs
- To represent the City in a positive manner when dealing with the public
- To wear a name tag/identifying badge as required
- To be informed about their responsibilities and limits
- To be part of the team

## **V. ESTABLISHING A VOLUNTEER POSITION**

### **Ideas for Possible Volunteer Positions**

There are endless possibilities for utilizing volunteers in the workplace. Think outside of the box and if you want to explore an opportunity more, connect with the Volunteer Services department. Consider...

- |                         |                       |                        |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| • Grant Writer          | • Data Entry          | • Billing Assistant    |
| • Data Entry            | • Public Relations    | • Designer             |
| • Tour Guide            | • Public Speaking     | • Emergency Management |
| • Human Resources       | • Business Planning   | • Greeters             |
| • Finance               | • Real Estate         | • Program Coordination |
| • Event Planner         | • Photographer        | • Assessing Aides      |
| • Computers             | • Technical Writer    | • Analyst              |
| • Inventory             | • Organizer           | • Fine Arts            |
| • Engineer              | • Contract Negotiator | • Focus Groups         |
| • Poster/Flyer Delivery | • Tree Inventory      | • Instructors          |
| • Mailings              | • Trainers            | • Marketing            |
| • Graphics Designer     | • Gardener            | • Research             |
| • Chaperones            | • Teen Volunteers     | • Safety and Patrol    |
| • Database Management   | • Stewards            | • Surveys              |

### **Volunteer Service Description**

Every volunteer who serves with the City has a service description associated with their position. The description is important for several reasons.

- It helps the staff person formulate the details of the position
- It assists the Volunteer Services Department in talking about the position with a potential volunteer
- It defines the position for the volunteer
- It aids the staff person in evaluating the volunteer's performance
- It provides information needed to conduct appropriate recruitment
- It defines boundaries and is the first step in risk management

The service description outlines:

- Purpose of the position
- Population served
- Time Commitment/Length
- Qualifications/Desired Skills
- Service Duties
- Outcomes/Learning Opportunities
- On-boarding/Training Requirements

## **Attachment E - Sample Employee Volunteer Handbook, Continued**

- Supervisory Plan

If you would like to establish a volunteer position in your department contact the Volunteer Service department to talk more about the opportunity and receive a service description template.

### **Training Check List**

To ensure consistency and competency for a new volunteer into a position, the volunteer staff supervisor is asked to develop a training check list to accompany the volunteer service description. This training check-off list will be completed the first day on the job.

## **VI. ON-BOARDING VOLUNTEERS**

### **Recruitment**

Once the volunteer position has been established, the Volunteer Services department will advertise the opportunity to the public and recruit volunteers that match the desired qualifications. If staff has connected with someone about the position, they can direct the applicant to apply on-line and notify the Volunteer Services department of the inquiry.

### **Application**

All interested candidates will apply through the Volunteer Application located on the Volunteer Services website \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Interview & Talent Assessment**

All applicants will interview with the Volunteer Services department who will conduct a talent assessment to ensure an appropriate volunteer placement. When possible, staff who supervise volunteers are encouraged to participate in the interview process.

### **Background Check**

Applicants who are offered a volunteer position will need to complete a background check prior to starting, and will not be scheduled for their first shift until the background check results have been reviewed.

### **Volunteer Orientation**

Before beginning their volunteer position, volunteers will attend a general volunteer orientation conducted by the Volunteer Services department. Orientation will include:

- |                              |                                     |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Information about the City | • Confidentiality Training          |
| • City Leadership            | • Data Practices                    |
| • Volunteer Opportunities    | • Volunteer Policies and Procedures |
| • Sign Photo Release         | • Watch Welcome Video               |

## **Attachment E - Sample Employee Volunteer Handbook, Continued**

### **Volunteer Training**

After orientation, the volunteer is ready to begin. The first day on site should include the training outlined on the training check list, acclimation and a tour of the volunteer space and

department where the volunteer will be performing their duties. All of the volunteer's training does not need to be completed in one shift.

## **VII. VOLUNTEER POLICIES**

### **Code of Conduct**

Need to get this language from the employee handbook.

### **Conflict of Interest**

Need to get this language from the employee handbook.

### **Time Records**

Volunteers are responsible for signing in and signing out on the computer, when possible. When a computer is not on site, volunteers can report their hours to their supervisor or enter them on-line at \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Dress Code/Identification**

Volunteers are responsible for presenting a positive and professional image to the Community. Volunteers are asked to dress appropriately for the conditions and tasks involved with their volunteer service.

Volunteers will be issued some type of volunteer identification, such as a badge. ID badges or other identification are property of the City and must be returned upon resignation. Volunteers are only allowed to wear their identification while volunteering.

### **Use of Technology**

Volunteers must use information technology and all City communication systems in a lawful, ethical, and professional manner. There is no expectation of privacy in anything created, stored, sent, or received on the computer system that is the property of the City of \_\_\_\_\_. See XXXXX policy.

### **Scheduling**

If a volunteer is going to be absent from a scheduled assignment, we ask them to notify their supervisor or Volunteer Services department as far in advance as possible. The City is closed on major holidays.

### **Youth Volunteers**

Volunteers who are not yet 18 years old must have the written consent of a parent or guardian prior to volunteering. The volunteer work assigned to a minor shall be performed in a non-hazardous environment and will comply with all appropriate requirements. Volunteers must be at least 13 years of age to serve.

## **Public Statements**

Volunteers must refer all media inquiries regarding the City and its operations to their staff supervisor. No volunteer, unless specifically designated, is authorized to make public statements on behalf of the City, its departments, programs, etc.

**Thank you for development of this handbook and for sharing its use with other cities:**

- **Diane Erickson, Cities of Apple Valley, Inver Grove Heights, Rosemount and West St. Paul**
- **Jackie Maas, City of Plymouth**
- **Kelly O'Brien, City of Roseville**
- **MJ Scott, City of Edina**

## **Attachment F**

### **Strategies for Success through Volunteers**

Many strategies for success in engaging volunteers for cities were shared during the initiative by the sub-grant cohort group, in the surveys, during the focus group discussions, by workshop panel members and participants, and in interviews with City staff. The conversations that created the sharing of these lessons learned were the core of the initiative. In general, the lessons learned supported good volunteer management practices with added advice for implementing these practices in a City volunteer program. Some of the advice was more targeted for larger cities with multiple departments, but much of the advice cross cuts cities of a variety of sizes. Below are the key themes of the lessons learned that cities shared.

#### Starting a Volunteer program

- Seek volunteer management training for staff working with volunteers. When possible, hire a volunteer manager with experience.
- Network with other cities of similar size that involve volunteers to learn from them and share what you know. Cities have had success in modeling their volunteer program after a successful program in another City.
- Work with the community. Find out what they want out of a volunteer program. Their goals and interests should be considered as the program is created or expanded.
- Before recruiting volunteers, create policies and structure for your volunteer program. Have positions and roles ready for the volunteers and applications and process in place. It is important to start professional and with a good structure in place.
- Develop strong policies related to safety and liability.
- Need to have a solid plan and support from the City Council and City management.
- Start slowly with just a couple of volunteer positions; don't try to do too much too soon.
- Try one volunteer and get them moving, and then try one more! Before you know it, you've got a whole team of volunteers.
- Do not be discouraged if process is slow in building the volunteer program. Start at a pace that will be successful. Work steady and with quality. Build it right to build sustainability and not frustrate people. It's a process of building relationships. Building a volunteer program is not easy and it does not happen overnight.

*"Having access to some kind of volunteer management knowledge will make or break it."*

*"Recommendation to cities: Try to find someone with some background in volunteer management. MAVA a huge resource."*

#### Structure

- Create a clearly identified entry point for volunteers at the City. Have someone assigned to be the point person to follow up when a resident calls with interest in volunteering. Volunteers say it is important to them to have a point of contact at the City. Cities have documented losing volunteers because there was no one to respond to interest.

- For larger cities, a key step is to develop a centralized volunteer program that works with the different departments that engage volunteers. This creates a unified process for engaging volunteers, gives volunteers good choices to meet their interests, and builds quality expertise in volunteer engagement. To be able to work across the whole City, it is critical that the position is housed in City administration and not in one department.
- Be realistic about expectations for volunteers and how much staff time and other resources it takes to train and supervise volunteers -- volunteers are unpaid staff and will need a support and supervision infrastructure.

*“Need to have a designated person to be successful with volunteers – not adding that job to someone who is already overloaded.”*

### Staff Buy-In and Training

- For larger cities, it is important to take time to get buy-in from departments and staff for engaging volunteers. To accomplish this, it is essential to have top management articulate the value that volunteers will bring to the City. Start involving volunteers with departments where there is potential for success. When one department has success with volunteers, share that with other departments to spark their interest in volunteers.
- It is important to invest in training for the staff that work with volunteers. Many City staff do not have the same degree of experience with volunteers that nonprofit staff have and it is important not to assume knowledge about volunteers. You may have to dispel myths such as volunteers only come in the same day every week, or that volunteers are not qualified for the work.
- Meet with new City staff to educate them on the volunteer program. Make sure that they understand the role of volunteers to augment what the City does, not to take work away from staff, and encourage them to acknowledge and appreciate the volunteers.
- It is important to create partnership with staff and departments and important to meet their expectations. Relationship building is critical.
- When talking with City staff, talk about the value that volunteers add and be clear that they do not replace staff. This is important in all cities and especially important in cities that have unions.

*“People in civic setting do not have exposure to volunteers in same way as nonprofit – so not as familiar.”*

*“You have to take the time to break down fear of being forced to take on someone that does not have skills, fear of being stuck with someone not doing a good job and the fear losing their job.”*

*“Don’t try to push a volunteer on a supervisor that is resistant. Build on your successes, and always look for new ways to approach departments or supervisors that don’t see the benefits of volunteers.”*

### Designing Positions

- Think broadly and creatively on the ways volunteers can be involved. Some cities have roles for volunteers in every department. See <http://www.mavanetwork.org/cities> for a listing of volunteer positions shared by cities.

- Make sure tasks are rewarding. Do not have volunteer roles as a dumping group for what no one will do.

*“Develop use of volunteers as a core strategic function whose resources/talents are focused on purposeful needs.”*

### Recruiting Volunteers

- Understand that the motivation for volunteering for a City is often different than volunteering for a nonprofit or a cause. It might include getting to know the City better and getting more engaged with the City. Here are thoughts that volunteers shared on why they volunteer:
  - *“It’s my gift to the City.”*
  - *“It encourages community involvement and support”.*
  - *“I am everyone’s neighbor and love the satisfaction I receive in fulfilling what I see as an obligation.”*
- Work with the local chambers of commerce and civic groups to help recruit volunteers and to take on the coordination of volunteer projects.
- Recognize how the composition of your community is changing and develop strategies to recruit the full diversity of your community.
- Newcomers can be important volunteers, but be aware that how they want to be involved might be different from that of longer term residents. Use the suggestion of University of Minnesota researcher Ben Winchester to hold a newcomer supper where newcomers meet each other and you can listen to their interests before you ask for their help.
- Identify the media that the volunteers who you want to recruit use, and then use that media. Include Facebook, Twitter and texting in how you communicate with volunteers if you want to recruit younger volunteers.
- Make sure the opportunity to volunteer is easy to see on your City website homepage.

*“All you have to do is ask. It is crazy what our volunteers can do. You just have to ask and use the talent pool out there.”*

### Assigning

- Assess volunteers’ talents and interests to help them find the best fit in your City for volunteering.
- Determine what their volunteer passion is about. Find the place where they will do the most good and where they will be happy.
- Give volunteer ownership to carry out the work, within parameters you set. Let them run with it to create ownership as long as they know the parameters.

### Training, Supporting and Communicating with Volunteers

- Make sure that volunteers are well trained in City policies and procedures as well as in what they need to know to do their positions.
- Make time for volunteers and listen to them. Have regular communication with volunteers through one on one meetings, newsletters, and a variety of means.



- Use technology to save time and simplify operations. Larger cities are finding that volunteer databases such as Volgistics are useful. Cities of all sizes are finding it useful to use free online volunteer sign-up tools such as Volunteer Spot and Sign-Up Genius.
- If a volunteer overstep bounds, call them on it as you would with a staff member. Create confidence with staff that there are processes to reassign or remove volunteers if they do not work out.
- Make sure there is accountability for tracking the outcome of what volunteers actually did accomplish. Find out what you need to track. For example, how many trees were mulched.
- If a volunteer's actions are causing other volunteers to decline being involved, you have to deal with the volunteer that is causing the concerns and possibly terminate them. This advice was heartily endorsed by smaller cities that cited instances of a problem with one volunteer driving away other needed volunteers.
- Recognize volunteers in ways that are meaningful to them. Ask your volunteers how they want to be recognized.
- For volunteers surveyed, the top factors on the decision to continue to volunteer were: appreciation, working conditions, rewarding work, being of service, and learning. As one volunteer said, *"I feel a real part of the organization and it fulfills my driven need to help."*

#### Ideas for Solving Common Problems

- If residents are shying away from volunteering or seem burnt out:
  - Assess if there are too many things the same people are being asked to do.
  - Do a survey of what the community is interested in the City offering through volunteers.
- If having difficulty finding event volunteers:
  - Check with the community to find out if they really want the event. This can be done informally or through a survey.
  - Break volunteer roles into smaller chunks to address how busy people are. The new style of event organizing has some roles that are time limited and does not assume finding an event leader to devote their life to the event.
- If concern about volunteers following through:
  - Develop volunteer position descriptions that clearly outline duties.

Make sure there is a supervisor to check in with the volunteer on progress.

## **Attachment G**

### **Additional Resources**

#### **MAVA Training on Volunteer Management**

- MAVA's "Volunteer Impact Leadership Training Series" is a two day workshop that covers all the basics for running a top notch volunteer program. This is offered several times a year in the metro area and at other locations around the state.
- MAVA offers quarterly professional development workshops and other workshops on special topics.

More information available at: <http://www.mavanetwork.org/events>.

#### **Resources for Cities on Volunteer Engagement at: <http://www.mavanetwork.org/cities>**

- Strategies for success through volunteers
- Insights from volunteers on why they volunteer for a City
- Listing of roles in which cities are involving volunteers
- Volunteer applications and policies and other practical documents shared by cities

#### **Articles of Interest to Cities on Volunteer Engagement**

- "Cities Using Volunteers," League of Minnesota Cities study, [http://www.lmnc.org/media/document/1/sotc13\\_volunteers.pdf?inline=true](http://www.lmnc.org/media/document/1/sotc13_volunteers.pdf?inline=true)
- "Managing Volunteers to Minimize Risk," *Minnesota Cities*, November – December 2011, [www.lmnc.org/media/document/1/managingvolunteersminimizerisk.pdf](http://www.lmnc.org/media/document/1/managingvolunteersminimizerisk.pdf)
- "Risk Management Information: Covering the Cities Volunteers," <http://www.lmc.org/media/document/1/coveringtheCitysvolunteers.pdf?inline=true>
- "Tapping Volunteers for Results," *Minnesota Cities*, November – December 2011, [www.lmnc.org/media/document/1/tappingvolunteers.pdf](http://www.lmnc.org/media/document/1/tappingvolunteers.pdf)

#### **Volunteer Management Software**

- Volgistics is a volunteer management software being used by some cities for tracking volunteer data. Information at: <https://www.volgistics.com/>
- For free software for volunteer scheduling, see <http://www.signupgenius.com/> and <https://www.volunteerspot.com/>

#### **Other**

- General volunteer management resources at: <http://www.mavanetwork.org/volmgmt> and <http://www.energizeinc.com/art.html> .
- Become a MAVA member for workshop discounts and access to additional resources at: <http://www.mavanetwork.org/join>.