

KOSCIUSKO LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
1986 Class

VOLUNTEERISM IN KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

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Volunteerism in Kosciusko County

Volunteers are essential to a thriving community and signify support and commitment on the part of its residents. In most communities, there is competition for volunteers among the various social service organizations. In Kosciusko County the competition is not a great issue, but it is difficult for new residents to the community to know what types of volunteer work are available and whom to contact. When volunteers do express interest in an organization, they are assigned a job with very little training, support, and often not even an interview to insure that the person's qualifications match those for the volunteer position. Most agencies and organizations do not have structured volunteer programs and rely instead on staff who are already over-worked to do the recruitment, training and recognition of volunteers -an impossible task.

As an outgrowth of the Kosciusko Leadership Academy, a need was identified for a county-wide clearinghouse for volunteers. Volunteer recruitment and volunteer recognition are two components of the project, created to bring together people who want to volunteer with agencies and organizations which need volunteer assistance. The clearinghouse will serve as a central means of promoting volunteerism in Kosciusko County, screening volunteers, matching volunteer qualifications and interests to available job descriptions submitted by local service organizations, and referring the individuals to the agencies. The agencies will then interview the volunteer and make the final decision whether the individual will make an appropriate addition to the organization. The clearinghouse concept holds several benefits for the potential volunteer: one phone contact and personal interview to access all available volunteer positions within the county, counseling to determine the position suited to his/her background and interest, literature about the various organizations, and a referral to the correct contact person at the agencies of interest.

Social service agencies and community organizations rarely have enough time to spend recruiting volunteers as needed. The volunteer clearinghouse, with the cooperation of the local newspapers and radio stations, will publicize volunteer position openings free of charge weekly. Other benefits to the agencies and organizations are a screening out of volunteers obviously inappropriate, referral of potential volunteers already briefed about the organization and the volunteer position vacancy, as well as the use of the specialized skills bank of trained individuals wanting to donate limited time for projects such as typing a grant, developing a design logo, developing a marketing strategy or designing specialized equipment to be used by a certain agency.

Once an agency or organization has accepted a volunteer's contribution of time, it must be insured that the individual understands the mission and is committed to the organization and its work. Volunteers must be effectively utilized. Volunteers give of their time to fulfill a need. Agencies and organizations need only to identify what that need is for each individual and to see that it is fulfilled to insure that a volunteer will return. Since there is no monetary reward, the pay to the volunteer is a sense of accomplishment. Without this sense of accomplishment, the volunteer will not return to the job or will not be dependable.

There are almost as many reasons for volunteering as there are volunteers. A person may volunteer to be part of his child's organization, to help others, to improve the community, to gain more experience, to use untapped educational skills, to stay active and involved, to get out of the house, to meet new people, to test a new career. An individual might volunteer for a combination of reasons.

We have all worked on committees or in volunteer capacities where we feel our time is being wasted. The result is inactivity, poor attendance, and failure to accomplish the stated purpose. Volunteers require the same motivators as paid employees to keep them thriving:

- Be assigned to well defined tasks which fit abilities
- Be properly trained
- Be supplied with instructional and promotional material
- Receive refresher workshops
- Be able to understand and feel committed to the organization
- Be given new and expanding responsibility to add to a sense of usefulness
- Be transferred to other assignments when interest wanes
- Derive satisfaction from participation
- Be given the opportunity to give suggestions and be listened to by others
- Be rewarded for efforts

It is appropriate to discuss volunteer recruitment and maintenance together because they are intimately related. After all, an important strategy for recruitment of volunteers is a good plan to keep volunteers in the organization. Numbers of people brought into an organization have little significance if there are equally large numbers leaving. Therefore it is critical that time and energy be spent on a plan to retain volunteers before the recruiting phase begins. Newly-recruited volunteers are ready to be oriented, trained and placed on a job. If that doesn't happen, they will lose interest, or go somewhere else to find an organization which will use them. Before volunteers can be used, they must first be found. Recruitment takes place on an on-going basis, and it should involve everyone in the organization. There are some helpful steps to recruitment to make it more successful.

1. Capitalize on the "word-of-mouth" mode. People who belong to an existing group and enjoy their involvement will informally recruit friends, co-workers, and anyone else with whom they come in contact on a daily basis. Develop guidelines on how to recruit one-to-one. Research on recruitment indicates that this is the most effective recruitment mode.
2. The "begining cycle" recruitment is most effective if it is well timed. It should correspond to the busy months in the organization and the time people make next year's commitments. If the program cycle begins in September, the best time to recruit is in the spring.
3. Present materials in as many different places and ways as is practical with time and funding limitations. The use of radio, public service announcements and newspaper stories, slide tape or video presentations, signs, brochures, posters, and banners

announcing the events and meetings can be an indispensable means for getting the attention and participation of the public. More costly media methods include television, direct mail and select mailing lists. The "pay-off" in terms of the numbers of volunteers recruited using these methods is lower than person-to-person solicitation.

Many businesses recognize the value their employees and their company will derive through volunteerism. The most popular mechanisms used by companies to encourage and support employee volunteer involvement are:

- Encouraging personnel to serve on Boards of Directors of non-profit agencies/ corporations
- Loaning personnel to provide management and technical assistance to non-profits
- Recognizing employee volunteers through a variety of means
- Internal publicity to formalized awards
- Making information about specific community volunteer opportunities regularly available to their employees
- Initiating or participating in projects that involve groups of employees

Agencies and groups utilize volunteers to aid in cost savings, supplement staff resources and experience, assist client groups in self-help efforts, assist in fund raising, give a personal touch in service to clients, to do community outreach and to enable a quick reaction to community conditions. Since funding usually makes it impossible to continually expand paid staff, improving, extending and adding to the agency's program can take place only through the services of volunteer staff. Volunteers also bring growth, vitality and new horizons to the organization.

Volunteers are motivated in many different ways, depending upon personality type and past individual experience. The individual types of volunteers and recommendations for reinforcement are as follows:

1. Motivated by Security

- Plan carefully
- Have task materials ready
- Say we missed you when absent
- Have name tags for volunteers

2. Motivated by Service

- Letters of appreciation from the people who are helped by the program
- Keep records of the numbers of persons helped by the volunteer and publish the results

3. Motivated by Socialization

- Have a get-acquainted volunteer and staff gathering
- Provide volunteer lounge and coffee
- Sponsor a holiday or recognition party for volunteers

At the end of the year, formal appreciation serves to remind staff, clients, or program participants and volunteers how important the volunteer program is. It does demand time commitment to give recognition, but a few, well-defined and organized activities will reap dividends in volunteer morale and commitment.

Volunteerism can be expected to grow. Because volunteers are increasingly more skilled and experienced, an agency will profit by finding ways to use volunteer services in more areas of operation. Agencies will also have to become more adept at screening, training, recognizing and challenging their volunteers to assure they continue to devote their time to the particular cause. An agency can more readily attract quality volunteers and retrain them when it has an organized volunteer program available.

Volunteer Community Services

Mission:

To provide and promote a clearinghouse for volunteer opportunities and recognize the spirit of volunteerism in Kosciusko County.

Goals:

- to inform the public of community volunteer needs through the use of printed material, media coverage, and community interaction.
- to screen and identify the personal strengths and qualifications of potential volunteers and to direct these to volunteer position.
- to provide and coordinate community-wide recognition of volunteers.
- to maintain a current job description bank for open volunteer positions and to solicit new agency/organization participation, excluding those with religious or political missions.
- to maintain a specialized skills bank of persons offering short-term or periodic commitment.

Rationale:

The Volunteer Community Services agency will be a service to both organizations needing volunteers and persons in Kosciusko County who would like to volunteer their time and talents.

The benefits to agencies/organizations will be to:

- 1) advertise the volunteer positions open in the county
- 2) screen and interview prospective volunteer candidates
- 3) match candidates having the appropriate skills, talents, and interests with the organizations.

- 4) aid in the maintenance and recognition of volunteers
- 5) maintain a list of volunteers who possess specialized skills and abilities, to be utilized for short-term volunteer commitment.

The benefits to the individual wanting to volunteer are:

- 1) having one place to contact to obtain information regarding all types of volunteer positions, and the commitment involved.
- 2) learning about Kosciusko County by becoming involved as a volunteer in an agency/-organization.
- 3) developing new interests and skills, meeting new people, and contributing to worthwhile programs in Kosciusko County.

Annual Operating Budget

	Plan A
Staffing	\$ 5,200
FICA	375
Brochure	100
Office Supplies	450
Telephone/ans. machine	650
Postage	100
Travel	250
Texts/subscriptions	200
Typewriter, office furniture	250
Awards/recognition	<u>200</u>
Total	\$ 7,775
Less Donations	<u>2,100</u>
	\$ 5,675

Program Overview

- 1) Volunteer positions will be procured, categorized and a job description will be written for each.
- 2) Volunteer positions will be advertised through the media and by contact with service organizations.
- 3) Prospective volunteers will telephone VCS for information on open positions. VCS employee will log call and do a short screening interview over the telephone. An appointment for an office interview will be made.
- 4) Interview will be conducted at the VCS office and application for volunteer position, including categories of interest and availability of transportation, will be completed.
- 5) Prospective volunteer will be given up to 3 referrals for volunteer positions involving jobs he/she has shown interest in. VCS will set up interviews for the prospective volunteer at the agencies.
- 6) Volunteer will be interviewed by the agency/organization; final selection is made by the organization.
- 7) VCS will maintain statistics on number of calls, number of interviews, referrals, males or females, age group of volunteers, average length of volunteer time commitment.
- 8) VCS will aid organizations in the training and evaluation of volunteers, and in volunteer recognition activities.
- 9) A volunteer Skills Bank, listing persons with specialized skills and talents, will be developed and maintained for volunteer positions, prospective board positions, etc.

Outcomes for the VCS

- 1) Procure 200 volunteer positions. Write job descriptions for each.
- 2) Advertise volunteer positions in the local newspaper and on radio each week.
- 3) Screen 350 calls for volunteer positions.
- 4) Interview 300 prospective volunteers and refer 275 persons to agencies/- organizations.
- 5) Speak to 50 service organizations about VCS.
- 6) Develop 10 volunteer recognition activities and coordinate with 25 agencies/- organizations.