

Volunteers – The Heart of the Community

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Identify the importance of volunteers in communities✓ Apply the ISOTURE Model to local volunteer efforts✓ Determine the benefits of volunteers✓ Assess the need for volunteers in a community organization
Advance preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Review the materials provided (about 1 hour)
Materials needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Computer and projector✓ CD with PowerPoint presentation✓ Hats or pictures of hats✓ Copies of Assessing the Current Situation (Attachment 1)✓ Copies of Supporting the Vision with a Plan (Attachment 2)
Time needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 45 minutes – 1 hour
Background	<p><i>“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; it’s the only thing that ever has.”</i> Margaret Mead</p> <p>Every human being has a circle of influence within their home, among their friends and in their community that contributes in a positive way to society. Many feel that volunteering contributes to society in important ways, especially by improving things for the next generation.</p> <p>In the early 1900s the concept of social welfare expanded and became more institutionalized. Both public and private agencies relied on volunteers. But when professionalization emerged, fewer volunteers were directly involved in providing service, although they continued to serve on boards and committees, made policy and planning decisions, and raised funds. By the late 1950s and early 1960s the pendulum had swung back and more service volunteers were being recruited to strengthen programs (Wolozon, 1968).</p> <p>Volunteers today feel that their volunteer work is highly important. About 48 percent of volunteers help with programs for children and youth. The Internet has helped non-profits and other groups recruit volunteers.</p> <p>What motivates people to volunteer their time? Most people volunteer simply because they are asked, and because they have a desire to help others. While some volunteer roles may also give people the opportunity to promote a specific issue or cause, most volunteers just want to make a difference in their communities. Whatever their motivation, volunteering helps people gain skills and experience that can be an advantage in their careers.</p>

Interest approach

Have a variety of hats or pictures of hats (cowboy, baseball, hard hat, top hat, helmet, straw, military, chef, etc.) for the group to use. Divide participants into small groups and have each group select a hat. Ask each group to write a description of the type of volunteer or resource person in their community who would wear this hat and kinds of talents and resources this volunteer would offer. Have each group report to the whole group.

Lesson

1. Read the quote from Margaret Mead (slide 2).
2. Review the history of volunteer trends (slide 3).
3. Discuss with the group the reasons people volunteer (slide 4).
4. Instruct each small group to discuss the questions and then report to the whole group (slide 5).
6. Volunteers are important to many programs. Volunteers help identify needs in the community and provide the manpower to meet those needs (slide 6).
7. The ISOTURE model is an effective way to manage volunteers (slide 7).
 - Identification** is the first step in finding willing individuals who have the competencies and abilities to fulfill leadership roles.
 - The process of **selection** is crucial in matching the abilities of the volunteer to the requirements of the job. In addition, criminal background checks, interviews and references are becoming standard for all volunteer organizations.
 - The process of **orientation** should occur very soon after the volunteer has been recruited and selected.
 - Training** will stimulate and prepare volunteers with the knowledge, attitude and skills that are necessary for carrying out their roles.
 - Utilizing** volunteers means allowing them to put into action their training and skills. Keys to success are a supportive environment, and a supervisor and peers who treat all paid and unpaid staff equally.
 - Recognition** should be given to reward good volunteer performance. Volunteers need to be thanked and feel appreciated. Such a sense of satisfaction will result in dedication.
 - Evaluation** is important both to the volunteer and to the organization. The process will give useful feedback to all parties. This type of feedback can help the supervisor discover new leadership potential and learn how to best use volunteers.

Application

To have a needs-based volunteer system (slide 8) you have to do your homework by reviewing local needs, assessing local capacities and resources, considering community values, and reviewing the organization's mission and vision. Assess the current situation in a community organization by completing the questions on Attachment 1 (slide 9). Further expand your thinking by completing the take-home activity on Attachment 2 (slide 10).

Reference

- Boyce, M.V. 1971. *A systematic approach to leadership development*. Washington, D.C.: USDA.
- Klumpp, M. 2004. *Volunteer Core Competencies*. National Association of Extension 4-H Agents.