



VolunteerMatch

VolunteerMatch Learning Center  
Core Components

# Writing Accurate and Useful Volunteer Position Descriptions

Jennifer Bennett, CVA  
Director, Education & Training

# Agenda

- Components of a position descriptions
- Getting started writing or updating position descriptions
- Putting position descriptions in their place
- Just don't put them in a drawer
- Using position descriptions in recruitment, training and retention

# Parts of a Position Description

- Title
  - Volunteer is a staff category, not a title
- Team or Department
  - Reports to/Works with
- Description of role
  - Brief but explains what the position does
- Primary Responsibilities
  - Secondary Responsibilities
- Skills and Experience
  - What a volunteer needs to know to be successful
- Time Commitment
  - Hours/week, months

# Involve Others

Before you get started create a plan and timeline for creating or updating volunteer position descriptions.

- Recruit a volunteer with HR experience
- Have volunteers write their own position descriptions
  - Do the position descriptions written by volunteers match your expectations for the position?
- Involve program managers, team leaders
  - Create a committee with representatives from each constituent groups to coordinate the process

# Put Positions in Their Place

Integrate volunteer positions into the organization structure.

- Use the reports to/works with section to determine how positions fit together.
- Can positions be divided into new positions, graded levels or leadership positions?
  - Encourages volunteers to grow or take on more responsibilities.

# Responsibilities

## Primary responsibilities

- Day to day activities
- Recurring responsibilities
- What are volunteers expected to do in this position?
- What behaviors or actions are required for this position?

## Secondary responsibilities

- Actions or activities that are required of all volunteers
- Team or program responsibilities

# Creating Accurate Responsibilities

What responsibilities or activities are

- Missing?
- Appear on more than one position description?
- Happen each shift or day? Seasonally or annually?

Have they been included? What's missing?

- Seek feedback from constituents and others from within the organization.

# Skills and Experience + Training

All the things a volunteer needs to know to be successful in the position.

- Skills can be position or team specific
- May include things that can only be learned in your organization or during a shift (on the job training.)

Experience or characteristics a volunteer needs to have to be a good fit for the position or organization

- Career skills
  - Are volunteers expected to have these skills before they start, or can they be gained during service?



# Don't Just Put them in a Drawer!

## Use Volunteer Position Descriptions to recruit.

- Tell prospective volunteers how they fit into the organization.
- Outline the day to day work a volunteer can do.
- Explain what skills you're looking for, and what volunteers can learn.
- Share the full position description with prospective volunteers so they can better understand what's expected of them.

# Don't Just Put them in a Drawer!

Use them to develop application and interview questions.

- Create application questions to investigate a prospective volunteer's previous experience.
- Develop interview questions that explore a volunteer's ability to fulfill the position's primary responsibilities.
- Ask questions that help you understand how well a volunteer might work with the team or in the organization structure.

# Don't Just Put them in a Drawer!

Use them to inform orientations and develop trainings.

- Use primary responsibilities and skills to develop training materials and courses.
- What does a volunteer need to know before they start work, and what needs to be learned on the job?
- Integrate secondary responsibilities into orientations.
  - Standards and norms
- Reports to/Works with can also help volunteers better understand the structure of the organization.

# Position Descriptions and Retention

An accurate position description can help you recruit and keep more of the right volunteers.

- Clear positions and responsibilities can help mitigate difficult situations with volunteers.
  - Everyone is on the same page.
- Give your volunteers room to grow
  - Graded or leveled positions, leadership positions, an opportunity to take on more responsibility or have a role to work towards.
- Program managers and team leaders can better understand how volunteers fit into the organization.
  - Build support for volunteers, and the work they do.

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# Thank you!

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## For any questions contact:

Jennifer Bennett

[@JenBennettCVA](https://twitter.com/JenBennettCVA)

[jbennett@volunteermatch.org](mailto:jbennett@volunteermatch.org)