From Management to Engagement: Skilled Volunteers in Public Libraries

Get Involved Collaborative Webinar
September 28, 2017
Presented by Carla Lehn
clehn@califa.org
Learning Objectives

- Shift from traditional volunteer management to volunteer engagement
- How to plan for and find skilled volunteers
- Hear from successful library early adopters
- Where to find more resources on this subject
Trends First Noticed with Boomers Require Shift from Management to Engagement

Engage their **skills and expertise**

Offer **flexibility** and a **wide variety of options**

Want **clear expectations** of time, tasks and training

Show them **impact on mission** -- how will their work **make a difference**?

Beyond volunteer management -- **engagement in meaningful ways**
Strategy #1: Design Roles for Skilled Volunteers

• Job Center Coach
• Event Planner
• Computer Coach
• Graphic Designer
• Photographer
• Adult Literacy Tutor
• Coordinator, After School Programs
• Homework Helper
• Lego Club Leader
• Public Relations Specialist
Why Have Written Volunteer Position Descriptions?

Clarifies Expectations & Co-Worker Roles

Primary Recruitment and Placement Tool

Avoids Problems/Basis for Engagement

Best Planning Tool - What’s needed?

Is it Volunteer Centered? Utilize Skills?

How Does It Impact Your Mission/Make a Difference?
Elements of a Volunteer Job Description

• Descriptive Title (not just “Library Volunteer!”)
• Position Overview and Impact (does it make a difference?)
• Key Responsibilities
• Qualifications
• Training and Support Provided
• Benefits of Volunteering
• Time & Length of Commitment
• Staff Connection/Collaborator
LEHN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Volunteer Position Description

Public Speaker

Position Overview and Impact: Make presentations about the library to community groups to raise awareness about what the library has to offer, and to attract potential library users, volunteers and supporters.

Key Responsibilities:

1. Attend a 2 hour orientation to the Library and on its public speaking objectives, presentation outline and materials that have been prepared.

2. Respond to requests to speak based on your schedule when Speaker’s Bureau Coordinator contacts you with a speaking engagement.

3. Report data on number of attendees, particular interests of the group and/or unanswered questions to the Speaker’s Bureau Coordinator within 3 days of speaking engagements.

Qualifications:

- Commitment to the Library’s vision and mission
- Successful public speaking experience

Training and Support Provided: Orientation to the Library, and training on public speaking objectives, outline and materials, as well as access to Speaker’s Bureau Coordinator as needed.

Time Commitment: Average 3 - 5 hours per month based on number of speaking engagements offered to you that fit into your schedule.
LEHN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Volunteer Position Description

Speaker’s Bureau Coordinator

Position Overview and Impact:
Manage the library project that delivers presentations about the library to community groups to raise awareness about what the library has to offer, and to attract potential library users, volunteers and supporters.

Key Responsibilities:

1. In conjunction with the Library Director, develop speaking engagement objectives and speaker presentation outline and materials.

2. Recruit, train, supervise and acknowledge volunteer public speakers.

3. Identify priority community groups to contact for speaking engagements in conjunction with Library Director. Contact the groups and schedule a speaking engagement on their calendar.

4. Contact and schedule a trained volunteer speaker to attend each engagement.

5. Track and report volunteer hours and speaking engagement statistics quarterly.

Qualifications:

• Commitment to the Library Literacy Service vision and mission
• Successful public speaking experience and project management skills
• Good community contacts
Strategy #2: Targeted Recruitment

Based on Volunteer Job Description -- WIIFM

Not every warm body fits every position

Assess Skills/Interests and make a good fit

Don’t be limited to who you know -- work together

Better to have vacancy than wrong volunteer
TARGETED RECRUITMENT PLAN

Volunteer Position:

From the Volunteer Position Description:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What qualifications must this person have?</th>
<th>What benefits will the volunteer receive?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(skills, attitudes, experience, time required)</td>
<td>(Share skills, meet people, gain skills/experience)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How Could We Locate Them?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who has these qualifications?</th>
<th>Do people like these congregate anywhere?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a particular profession, age range, educational level, etc.)</td>
<td>(professional association, service club, corporate volunteer program, faith community?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graphic Design Volunteer

- Becky Isbell, Director
- Brownwood Texas Public Library
- Population 19,288
- Several potential volunteers responded on VolunteerMatch
- Volunteer designed additional materials
VolunteerMatch “Reach”

One Opportunity, Unparalleled Reach

Each volunteer opportunity has the ability to reach:

- Professionals via LinkedIn’s Volunteer Marketplace
- Unique Visitors to VolunteerMatch.org Each Year
- Employee Volunteers (130+ Companies like Starbucks, Groupon, & JetBlue)
- GenerationtoGeneration.com Volunteers Who Are 55+
- Employee Volunteers (5 Corporate Social Responsibility Platforms: Bright Funds, Causecast, CyberGrants, Good Done Great and YourCause)
- Mobile Phone Users Who Activate Twilio’s text-based Volunteer Alerts System

10M
15M
2.6M
660K
IT Volunteers

- Maggie Goodman, Director, Johnson City Texas Public Library
- Population 1,656
- New business team saw it on LinkedIn
- Have already made a difference
- MakerSpace has them wanting to do more!
Get Involved Outcomes

- Surveys of library volunteers who signed up on VolunteerMatch (July, 2012 to June 2016):
  - 79% 1st time volunteering for library
  - 66% told friends about library services
  - 34% told friends about library volunteer opportunities
  - 8% individually spoke to local decision-makers on behalf of the library
  - 7% gave $ to support the library and 5% asked friends to give
What Did You Learn About the Library?

Surveys of library volunteers who signed up on VolunteerMatch (July, 2012 to June 2016)

- A library is more than just books
- So many people rely on public computers
- Libraries conduct lots of free activities and programs
- So many people use the library remotely
- Library has kept up with technology and has resources for the non-tech savvy
- Libraries are under-funded
- They’re more that what most people think a library is.
Support for Your Success

• Get Involved Clearinghouse – www.getinvolvedclearinghouse.org


• Free Webinars – Watch for state announcements & Clearinghouse events

• Closed Facebook Group – Search for Get Involved Powered by Your Library

• Bibliography

• Your State Contacts:
  – TEXAS: Jennifer Peters: jpeters@tsl.texas.gov
  – ARIZONA: Donna Throckmorton, Arizona State Library, dthrockmorton@azlibrary.gov
  – IDAHO: Sue Walker, Idaho Commission for Libraries, sue.walker@libraries.idaho.gov
  – CALIFORNIA: Carla Lehn, clehn@califa.org
Summary

- Today’s volunteer requires a new approach
- Skilled volunteers can help you enhance or expand services
- Volunteers can become your most ardent supporters and advocates
- Most important tool is written volunteer job description
- Tools and Resources exist to help you – you’re not alone!