



Sample Manual for Volunteers

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This sample manual is being provided to assist you in the development of your own. We are not attorneys so we encourage you to contact your attorney or HR Professional for any legal advice you may need in the development of your own Volunteer Manual.

1. Welcome Letter

A letter from the CEO or the Executive Director adds a personal touch to make new volunteers feel welcome to the organization. The letter should be brief and touch on some of the highlights of your organization and should stress the importance of volunteers in satisfying the purpose of the organization. The following is sample letter from the Executive Director.

Sample

Dear Mary,

Thank you very much for choosing to volunteer with _____ . We are pleased to welcome you to our team of volunteers. We believe volunteers are a vital part of achieving our goals for the community and our volunteers play key roles in a number of our positions, such as _____ . We hope that you find the duties of your particular job description to be fulfilling and that your volunteer experience with us to be a rewarding one. The enclosed packet will give you additional information about our organization and will include details about the roles and responsibilities of our volunteers. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself or the Volunteer Coordinator _____ at _____ . And again welcome and thank you!

Sincerely,

*Joe Smith
Executive Director*

2. Details of the Organization

You should provide enough information about your organization so that the volunteers understand the context in which they will be working. This will ensure a good match between the organization and the volunteers. Along with providing the volunteers with a copy of your brochure or other descriptive materials, the following information should also be included in the volunteer manual.

1. Organization Mission Statement

The mission statement is a paragraph or two which defines the organization's reason for existing. It outlines the goals, beliefs and activities essential to the organization. A mission statement defines the purpose of the organization. It is important for a volunteer to understand the purpose of an organization so that they may know how best to be involved.

Sample

_____ seeks to improve the quality of life for our community and to respond to the needs of the community through outgoing projects.

2. Objectives and Goals

This section includes specific actions for achieving the organization's mission. It defines the actual activities and helps volunteers get a general sense of how they can help.

Sample

- *Promote public awareness*
- *Recruit, train and support volunteer programs*
- *Provide safe and enjoyable environment*
- *Provide the required resources*
- *Network with others*

3. Organizational Chart

It is not always clear to a volunteer how things are organized or who is responsible for what aspects of the organization. Developing an organizational chart can be very helpful in clarifying these issues. It can provide the volunteer of a who's who kind of map and allows for better

communication should the volunteer have questions. The organizational chart should include the following:

- Any affiliations that the organization has. For example other organizations that do similar work, partnerships, funding sources.
- Identity the chain of command. This shows the volunteer who does what. This is particularly important if the volunteer will be working with these individuals on a daily basis.

4. Site Map

Depending on the size of your facility it might be necessary to provide volunteers with an actual map of the building and surrounding areas. Giving a personal tour is also a good idea. Be sure to identify where the volunteer might be working, where their supervisor might be and where breaks can be taken. It is also a good idea to point out any restricted areas if you have them

5. Emergency Procedures

Outlining your organizations emergency procedures will assure that the volunteers know what to do in the event of an emergency. This should include a floor plan of exits and locations of first aid kits. It should also include a list of who to contact.

6. Hours of Operation

Indicate when and if your organization is open to the public and what your normal hours of operations are. Make it clear when volunteers will be required to be onsite of if they will be working offsite.

7. Vehicle and Parking Regulations

In this portion you should indicate where it is appropriate for volunteers to park. You should include and restricted areas and what the speed limit in the area is. You should also advise the employee if your facility requires that vehicles be registered with security personnel and what the insurance requirements are if the volunteer is going to be driving their own vehicle for organization business.

8. Confidentiality and Communications

Most organizations ask that volunteers, who interacted with clients or the media, sign a confidentiality agreement. This is done to protect the organization and the community they work with. It is important to identify who is allowed to speak to members of the press or media. If the volunteer is allowed to do so, it is important to let them know what they are allowed to discuss.

3. Volunteer Information

Once you have given an overview of the organization, it is good to give the volunteer clarification of their role within the organization

1. The Role of the Volunteer

- Explain why volunteers are important to the organization.
- List ways volunteers have made a difference in the past and how they are making a difference today.
- Include major achievements that your organization has made because of your volunteer program.
- Define what a volunteer is within your organization.

2. Why volunteer with your organization

After hearing your organization's stance on volunteers, it is helpful for volunteers to express their own reasons for wanting to volunteer. This help both the volunteer and the organization achieve the goals and create meaningful and fulfilling experiences. Below are some reasons people volunteer. You may use this or create one specific to your organization.

Sample: *My Reasons for Volunteering with* _____

- *To work within the community*
- *To meet new people*
- *To get new experiences*

- *To do something I enjoy*
- *To fulfill a community service requirement*
- *To share my knowledge*
- *As an academic requirement*
- *To feel useful or needed*
- *As a kind of therapy*
- *To have fun*
- *To do something different*
- *Other:* _____

3. Staff and Volunteer Relations

If there are both paid staff and volunteers at your organization, you should be clear on the relationship between both to take full advantage of the potential for a positive working relationship. Explain:

- Who is responsible for what?
- Who supervises the volunteer staff?
- How is each recognized?
- How much input do the volunteers have as opposed to paid staff?
- What avenues do the volunteers have for expressing their input?

The following is a **sample** statement that addresses the questions above.

Paid staff and volunteers at _____ work toward achieving the mission and goals of the organization. Both contribute in many ways and the volunteers compliment the work done by paid staff. We value the experiences and knowledge of both paid staff and volunteers. We encourage both to express ideas or concerns. This feedback should be addresses to supervisors or at out general meetings.

4. Statement of Commitment to Volunteerism

Knowing that you have a commitment to volunteerism and that you take it seriously is very important and can help when an individual is trying to chose an organization in which to invest their time and experience. Some of the statements you might want to make are:

- Volunteer involvement fosters civic responsibility and participation

- Volunteer involvement strengthens the community
- Volunteers increase the ability of and organization to meet their goals
- Organizations recognize the volunteers are a vital component.
- Volunteers are treated as integral members of the team.
- Volunteers receive supervision appropriate to the task
- The contributions made by volunteers are acknowledged.

4. Personnel Policies

For the most part these policies will only apply to paid staff, however a review of all our personnel policies may find that some policies may or do apply to ALL those who work towards your organizations mission. Some of the polices you may want to include are:

a) Screening

This is a process that helps organizations to select the most suitable individuals for the particular roles. Some of the methods of screening could be: Applications, Resumes, Interviews, References, Orientation, Probation Period and Evaluations.

b) Code of Conduct and Standard of Appearance

Before actually addressing specific job duties, many organizations outline line a code of conduct and appearance standards by which volunteers and paid staff are expected to abide.

Some of the things expected might be:

- Taking the commitment to the organization seriously
- Honoring any confided in you
- Respecting the mission and goals
- Respecting others property
- Be courteous and friendly
- Be willing to learn
- If nametags are required be sure to wear them at all times while at the facility
- Dress appropriately for your duties
- Clothes should be clean and appropriate

This list is not inclusive of every situation and you should review to see what best meets the standards you are looking for.

c) Rest Breaks and Related Activities

If you are mandated a smoke free facility, it may be necessary to make this clear to your volunteers. Point out any special areas designated for eating, coffee breaks and if there are food services on the premises. Any policies that ban alcohol or drug use should also be stated

d) Recognition and Benefits

It is important to note any “perks” or benefits with be involved in volunteering for your organization. You can list the various ways that volunteers are acknowledged. This demonstrates that volunteers are appreciated and makes it a meaningful experience. It delivers the message that your organization *IS* the place to volunteer.

e) Grievance, Rights and Sexual Harassment Policies

You should make reference to your organization’s policy on dealing with employee/volunteer complaints. Provide volunteers with this policy or process on handling these situations properly.

You should also make reference to your organization’s policy on sexual harassment and what rights the employees and volunteers have.

f) Resignation

Describe the process for resigning or leaving the volunteer program, whether a telephone call or a letter of resignation is required. Some organizations choose to do an exist interview that allows the volunteer to state the reasons for leaving. This can be useful as it can tell you how your program is running.

If the volunteer signs on for a pre-determined amount of time with a specific end date, you may decide this is not a necessary point.

Yo u should also make a point of what the grounds for termination are.

5. Insurance and Liability Coverage

Employees and volunteers alike must be accounted for under your business insurance. You must make sure that you have the proper coverage for the activities the volunteers are doing. You should also make sure to discuss special event coverage with your broker if it is necessary. Provide volunteers with a brief statement to describe what insurance coverage is in place to protect them.

See the appendix (last page) for a sample Volunteer Agreement and Release from Liability that can assist with this.

6. Description of Positions

Volunteers are best able to determine whether a position suits their needs and experience when a written description is provided. They are also more likely to succeed if your expectations of them are clear.

If you have any questions about this document or if we can help you with any of your insurance needs please call Scott Hauge at 415-680-2109.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY

1. I, [full name of volunteer], agree to work for [Nonprofit] as a volunteer on [name project or activity] on/from [timeframe of project].
2. As a volunteer, I understand that I control the dates and times when I do the work and that [Nonprofit] is not responsible for scheduling my volunteer work. I also understand that I will not be compensated for any time spent volunteering, nor am I entitled to benefits, including employment insurance benefits upon the termination of this agreement or as a result of this service.
3. I am aware that participation as a volunteer may require periods of [describe physical requirements, i.e. standing, lifting and carrying up to 40 pounds] and will require the exercise of reasonable care to avoid injury. I am voluntarily participating in this activity with knowledge of the hazards and potential dangers involved, and agree to accept any and all risks of personal injury and property damage.
4. As consideration for volunteering for [Nonprofit], I hereby agree that I, and my assignees, heirs, guardians, and legal representatives, will not make a claim against or sue [Nonprofit] or its employees, agents or contractors for injury or damage resulting from the negligence, whether active or passive, or other acts, however caused, by any of its officers, employees, agents, or contractors of [Nonprofit] as a result of my volunteering. I HEREBY RELEASE AND DISCHARGE [NONPROFIT] AND ITS OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES, AGENTS AND CONTRACTORS FROM ALL ACTIONS, CLAIMS, OR DEMANDS THAT I, MY HEIRS, GUARDIANS, AND LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES NOW HAVE, OR MAY HAVE IN THE FUTURE, FOR INJURY OR DAMAGE RESULTING FROM MY PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT.
5. I UNDERSTAND THAT IF I AM INJURED IN THE COURSE OF THE PROJECT, I AM NOT COVERED BY [NONPROFIT]'s WORKERS' COMPENSATION PROGRAM. I authorize [Nonprofit] to seek emergency medical treatment on my behalf in case of injury, accident or illness to me arising from my involvement as a volunteer. I understand that I will be responsible for medical costs incurred by such accident, illness or injury.

[If your volunteers are covered by your workers' compensation program, delete from here up through Item #4. If your volunteers are not covered, delete from this note down through Item #7. The item numbering will self-adjust.]

6. As consideration for volunteering for [Nonprofit], I hereby agree that, EXCEPT FOR A WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIM, I, and my assignees, heirs, guardians, and legal representatives, will not make a claim against or sue [Nonprofit] or its employees, agents or contractors for injury or damage resulting from the negligence, whether active or passive, or other acts, however caused, by any of its officers, employees, agents, or contractors of [Nonprofit] as a result of my volunteering. I HEREBY RELEASE AND DISCHARGE [NONPROFIT] AND ITS OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES, AGENTS AND CONTRACTORS FROM ALL ACTIONS, CLAIMS, OR DEMANDS THAT I, MY HEIRS, GUARDIANS, AND LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES NOW HAVE, OR MAY HAVE IN THE FUTURE, FOR INJURY OR DAMAGE RESULTING FROM MY PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT.

7. I UNDERSTAND THAT IF I AM INJURED IN THE COURSE OF THE PROJECT, I AM COVERED BY [NONPROFIT]'s WORKERS' COMPENSATION PROGRAM. I authorize [Nonprofit] to seek emergency medical treatment on my behalf in case of injury, accident or illness to me arising from my involvement as a volunteer.
8. I understand that the materials and tools provided by [Nonprofit] are and remain the property of [Nonprofit], and I agree to return these tools and any remaining materials to [Nonprofit] at the end of my volunteer service.
9. I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AGREEMENT AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS.
I AM AWARE THAT THIS IS A RELEASE OF LIABILITY, AND SIGN IT OF MY OWN FREE WILL.

Date

Volunteer Signature

Printed Name

Date

[Nonprofit] Representative Signature

Printed Name

If volunteer is under 18 years of age, parent or guardian must read and sign the following:

This release, its significance, and assumption of risk have been explained to and are understood by the minor.

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature

Printed Name