Volunteer position descriptions define expectations

A written volunteer position description is one of the most important factors in a successful volunteer management program. Writing a position description enables you, as the volunteer coordinator, a chance to articulate why you need volunteers and what they can do to help the program grow and maintain its purpose. Many organizations are vying for volunteer participation and many potential volunteers are seeking specific positions. A written position description will give you the advantage of having clear expectations already set out, a volunteer will be able to get a better idea of what the “fit” might be with your organization.

Written volunteer descriptions also have the advantage of allowing you to dream a little. Write down something you have hoped for — what kind of volunteer would you like to see get involved — what skills, what experiences? The written description will help you as the coordinator organize some future plans.

Volunteer position descriptions need to have enough information for a volunteer to make a determination about carrying out the assignment. Some considerations for information to include are:

- Are duties and responsibilities clear?
- What are the qualifications for the position?
- Who will be the supervisor or who will the volunteer report to?
- How long will the position last?
- How will the volunteer be evaluated?

The position description is a starting point. A conversation or interview with the potential volunteer is the next step. A discussion of where you, as the coordinator, hope the program goes is important. It is also important to learn how the volunteer will see him or herself as part of the overall program and if that will be a good fit.

Alaska concerns:

- The volunteers have been here so long they won’t change and will not listen to me
- I have enough trouble keeping up with day to day work — how can I dream about future directions for the program?
- Everyone likes the idea of the program but no one will step up to volunteer — how can I “make the sale”

Learn more about these topics at Everyone Ready

VNG-Volunteerism for the Next Generation:
- Organizational Readiness: “Designing the Volunteer Position Description” “Identifying Volunteer Roles” “Volunteer Position Description Worksheet”

Everyone Ready:
- Designing Work for Today’s Volunteers
- Building the Foundation for Volunteer Involvement