

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



How to Succeed With Volunteers-In-Parks
60-Minute Module Series

DESIGNING JOBS

Training Guide

National Park Service
Volunteers-In-Parks Program



HOW TO SUCCEED WITH VOLUNTEERS-IN-PARKS

60-Minute Module Series

Program Preparation
Program Planning
Motivation
Needs Assessment
Designing Jobs
Recruitment
Interviewing
Orientation
Training
Safety Management
Supervision
Delegation
Performance Reviews
Recognition

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INTRODUCTION

Designing jobs and writing job descriptions are the most important activities performed in volunteer management. The quality of the jobs you offer will directly impact your ability to attract the best volunteers available. If your jobs offer challenging, useful and thoughtful activities, people will say “yes” to your recruitment; otherwise, people know there are a thousand other ways to spend their time.

One of the key reasons people leave volunteer jobs is that they never had a clear understanding of what was expected. Without written job descriptions, most job information is shared verbally, leaving the door wide open for all sorts of misunderstandings, including potential liability issues. With written job descriptions, information can be communicated, reviewed, and re-evaluated periodically.

PURPOSE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The **Purposes** of this module are to sensitize both volunteers and paid staff to the significance of volunteer job design and to provide tools and methods to enhance their efforts in designing creative and effective volunteer jobs.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the importance of good volunteer job design.
2. Analyze the trends in volunteering and their impact on the design or redesign of volunteer jobs.
3. Design new volunteer jobs for their park.
4. Name the necessary components of written job descriptions.

GENERAL NOTES TO TRAINER

1. This workshop is in a suggested format. Feel free, however, to personalize it to meet your park needs.
2. This session may surface discussion both for and against developing written job descriptions for volunteers. However, under Director's Order #7, written job descriptions are required for all volunteers.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

Transparency Handout	Section	Method of Presentation	Time
T-1 T-2	H-1 Introduction Learning Objectives Key Concepts	Lecture	5 minutes
T-2 T-3	H-1 H-2 Concept 1 Job design is critical	Discussion/Activity	10 minutes
T-2 T-4	H-1 H-3 Concept 2 Volunteer trends affect job design	Discussion/Activity	10 minutes
T-2 T-2	H-1 H-4 Concept 3 Good job design helps attract good volunteers	Discussion/Activity	10 minutes
T-2 T-5	H-1 H-5 H-6 H-7 Concept 4 Include all essential elements in job descriptions	Discussion/Activity	20 minutes
T-2	H-1 Summary/Wrap-Up/ Evaluation	Summary Remarks	5 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 60 minutes

TRAINER'S NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Time: 5 minutes

T-1: Learning Objectives

Read purpose of written job descriptions (H-1) and summarize learning objectives (show T -1 overhead).

T-2: Key Concepts

This training is built on **four Key Concepts**.

H-1: Key Concepts

Note: Discussions and exercises will be based on information obtained through a park needs assessment.

CONCEPT 1

Time: 10 minutes

Written job descriptions are critical to the ultimate success of a volunteer program.

T-2: Key Concepts

H-1: Key Concepts

T-3: Why Written Job Descriptions Are Mandatory

H-2: Why Written Job Descriptions Are Mandatory

Warm-up activity:

Ask participants to think about an experience where they worked without a written job description or where the job description and the actual job didn't match. Then ask them what kind of problems/benefits did that situation create?

Possible responses:

- Could never please self or others
- Could never celebrate completion
- Other staff/volunteers had varying ideas of what I did
- Very frustrating
- Could not prioritize work
- Was able to develop my own job

Key Learning:

If you do not have written job descriptions, volunteers will experience all of the above feelings working for you.

Questions to participants:

Other than the obvious value of giving a person a clear description of what is expected of them, what are some other benefits to having written job descriptions? (Get several ideas from participants and then compare them to your transparency "Why Written VIP Job Descriptions Are Mandatory." Note the handout with the same title contains a brief explanation of each reason.)

CONCEPT 2

Time: 10 minutes

Understanding trends in volunteering will have an impact on job design and re-design in your park.

T-2: Key Concepts

H-1: Key Concepts

T-4: Trends in Volunteering

H-3: Trends in Volunteering

Presentation:

As we design or evaluate current jobs, we must do so in light of key changes and challenges occurring in the prospective volunteer community.

Discuss volunteer trends using the transparency. For each trend, ask participants how they are, or need to be, accommodating to these trends so as to be more attractive to prospective volunteers. Note handout on trends as an additional reference.

Example:

Trend: Most volunteers are employed.

Impact: Volunteers unavailable during work hours. Volunteers must be recruited at their work site.

Response: Design jobs with flexible hours; send recruitment brochure to companies; develop lunch-time opportunities.

Consider the following potential responses as additions to those you may have already discussed:

- Designing of episodic (short-term) jobs
- Job sharing
- Group volunteer opportunities
- Targeted recruitment to professional, youth, retired, ethnic groups, etc.
- Offering flexible hours and locations

- Organizing a system of substitute volunteers
- Reimbursement of volunteer's expenses
- Breaking down committee work into time-limited task forces
- Efficient use of volunteer time
- Broadening the ways volunteers are used in the park (maintenance, administration, VIP program management, outreach, public affairs, etc.)
- Develop positions for evenings and weekends
- Develop jobs that can be done off site; "virtual volunteering" (e.g., in volunteer's home, office)

CONCEPT 3

Time: 10 minutes

Good volunteer job design can help attract and hold the best volunteers available.

T-2: Key Concepts

H-1: Key Concepts

H-4: Characteristics of Good Volunteer Jobs

Presentation:

The design of jobs for volunteers is very flexible. Be sure to take advantage of that flexibility to make sure that the jobs are fulfilling and that they offer variety, opportunities for growth, and a sense of completion. And don't forget to include elements of fun.

Question for participants:

If you had the complete flexibility to re-design your own job, however you wish, what would you change to make it more fulfilling for you? (Note that volunteer jobs can be both indoor and outdoor, cross division or district lines, vary in terms of schedule and hours per week, have elements of both physical and mental work, etc.)

Use your creativity to make sure the jobs you design for your volunteers are great ones!

Ask participants:

What kind of language would you use in your job description to encourage someone with strong social skills to volunteer at your visitor center desk? Or attract someone who is achievement oriented to work on your adopt-a-trail program? Or someone with decision-making skills to organize your commemorative event?

The language you use in describing your volunteer job can directly affect the type of volunteer you attract.

CONCEPT 4:

Time: 20 minutes

Job descriptions should be clearly written, and include all essential information.

T-2: Key Concepts

H-1: Key Concepts

T-6: Essential Elements of Written Job Descriptions

H-5: Essential Elements of Written Job Descriptions

H-6: Volunteer Job Description (Form)

H-7: Sample Volunteer Job Description

Presentation:

The job description is your planning tool to help your volunteers understand the results to be accomplished, the tasks that are involved, the skills that are required, and other important details about the job. It should be developed from information obtained from a park -wide needs assessment as discussed in the Needs Assessment module.

A job description provides an organized means of creating continuity in a job from one volunteer to the next. It is also a living document that will be revised as the program changes or the volunteer develops during his/her service.

The ideal job description contains the following elements: (note the handout samples)

Job Title

(Be creative — make it fun or professional or just descriptive, depending on whom you are trying to recruit, but make sure it does not mislead.)

Supervisor

(reporting requirements and supervisory assignment)

Work Location

(where volunteer will report to work)

Project Duration

(hours, dates, days, time commitment needed)

Description of Duties

(description of the work to be done)

Benefits to Volunteer

(e.g., job training for marketable skills, housing, park

Goal /Outcome of job

(why the position was created and how it relates to mission of the park)

Knowledge/Skills/Experience Desired:

(Qualifications required and desired)

Special Requirements:

(e.g., physical requirements, age requirements, certifications, etc.)

Date prepared or Date revised-add this notation at the bottom of the page

Ask participants:

Write a job description for a position that you would actually want a volunteer to fill. If you have completed a needs assessment as part of this training, use it to develop the job description

(After 10-15 minutes, spend some time discussing what participants have come up with to see if they are on the right track. Remember, the job description they write will be used in the next module for a targeted recruitment effort.)

setting, reimbursed expenses, etc.)

SUMMARY/WRAP-UP/EVALUATION

Time: 5 minutes

T-2: Key Concepts

H-1: Key Concepts

Paraphrase:

Re-emphasize the importance of designing jobs that address priority park needs but also consider the current trends in volunteering and target the most qualified volunteers available. Good job design is the foundation of a solid volunteer program but it should also retain the flexibility necessary to undergo change as needed.

END 60-MINUTE TRAINING

SUGGESTIONS FOR EXPANDED ACTIVITIES

1. Identify the five trends having an impact on your park's success in attracting and retaining volunteers. Divide into five groups. Have each group look at one trend and recommend ways to respond to the impact. Have each group report back to the larger group.
2. Divide into three groups. Give each group the same generic job description. Have each one tailor the job description to a specific type of potential volunteer — one to working adults., one to a youth group, one to retired people. Have each group share with the larger group what they allowances they made in scheduling, description of duties, benefits, etc., to the original job descriptions.
3. Have each participant bring a sample volunteer job description they are currently using to class. After covering the essential elements of written job descriptions, have each go over their sample and make revisions, then share their revisions with the group and why they made them. Alternatively, have each participant trade their sample jobdescription with someone else, then critique each other's.

RESOURCES

1. Ellis, Susan. *The Volunteer Recruitment Book*, “Chapter 2 – A Fresh Look at Volunteer Job Design,” pg. 11-20, 1996. Available from Energize, Inc., 1-800-395-9800; or www.pointsoflight.org/catalog or www.bettystallings.com
2. McCurley, Steve and Rick Lynch. *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing All the Resources of the Community*, “Chapter 4, Creating Motivating Volunteer Jobs.” Heritage Arts Publishing, 1996. Available from: www.pointsoflight.org/catalog
3. McDuff, Nancy. *Episodic Volunteer: Building the Short-Term Volunteer Program*. Available from www.pointsoflight.org/catalog

Other resources that may be available

4. Wilson, Marlene. *The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs*, Volunteer Management Associates, 1976. 1-800-944-1470.

TRANSPARENCIES

Guide to Transparencies

- T-1:** Learning Objectives
- T-2:** Key Concepts
- T-3:** Why Written VIP Job Descriptions Are Mandatory
- T-4:** Trends in Volunteering
- T-5:** Characteristics of Good Volunteer Jobs
- T-6:** Essential Elements of Written Job Descriptions

Learning Objectives

- Explain the importance of good job design
- Analyze trends and their impact on design
- Design new volunteer jobs
- Name the components of job descriptions

Key Concepts

Concept 1

Written volunteer job descriptions are critical to the ultimate success of a volunteer program.

Concept 2

Understanding trends in volunteering will have an impact on job design and re - design in your park.

Concept 3

Good volunteer job design can help attract and hold the best volunteers available.

Concept 4

Job descriptions should be clearly written and include all essential information.

Why Written VIP Job Descriptions Are Mandatory

1. Staffing
2. Setting Priorities
3. Recruiting
4. Selecting
5. Placement

Why Written VIP Job Descriptions Are Mandatory (con't)

6. Mutual Understanding
7. Commitment
8. Support and Feedback
9. Continuity
10. Liability Protection

Trends in Volunteering

1. More demands on time
2. More short - term jobs
3. Want challenging, interesting jobs
4. Greater diversity of volunteers
5. Expect to be treated professionally
6. Most volunteers are employed
7. More forced choice or “voluntolds”

Trends in Volunteering

(con't)

8. More seniors over 70 volunteering
9. Need more flexibility in hours
10. More family and group volunteering
11. Want to help a cause, not agencies
12. Want experience and training
13. More professional skills available

Characteristics of Good Volunteer Jobs

Essential Elements of Written Job Descriptions

Job Title

Supervisor

Work Location

Time Commitment

Major Duties

Training and/or preparation
required

Essential Elements of Written Job Descriptions

(con't)

Benefits to Volunteer

Goal/Outcome of Job

Qualifications Desired

Special Requirements

HANDOUTS

Guide to Handouts

- H-1:** Key Concepts of Designing Jobs for Volunteers
- H-2:** Why Written VIP Job Descriptions Are Mandatory
- H-3:** Trends in Volunteering
- H-4:** Characteristics of Good Volunteer Jobs
- H-5:** Essential Elements of Written Job Descriptions
- H-6:** Volunteer Job Description (Form)
- H-7:** Sample Volunteer Job Description

Key Concepts of Designing Jobs for Volunteers

The purpose of a written job description is to officially document priority work that the park has determined needs to be done, and the volunteer agrees to do.

Concept 1

Written job descriptions are critical to the ultimate success of a volunteer program.

Written job descriptions are powerful management tools that describe priority work within the context of total staffing needs. They provide a clear understanding of what is expected of the volunteer and serve a direct role in recruiting, selecting, placing, supporting, and evaluating the volunteer. Written job descriptions can also help minimize potential liability problems.

Concept 2

Understanding trends in volunteering will have an impact on job design and re-design in your park.

The pool of potential volunteers, as well as their needs, expectations and time availability, are important factors to consider when designing volunteer jobs.

Concept 3

Good volunteer job design can help attract and hold the best volunteers available.

Volunteer jobs can be tailored to make sure volunteers get an experience that is meaningful and measurable, and at the same time offers variety, growth, and a sense of completion. These jobs should also appeal to the individual motivational types of volunteers. And along the way, there should always be elements of fun.

Concept 4

Job descriptions should be clearly written, and include all essential information.

In addition to the job title and the work to be done, job descriptions should include the volunteer's supervisor, time commitment, skills needed, goal of the job, training to be given, work location, benefits to the volunteer, and any special requirements of the job.

Why Written VIP Job Descriptions Are Mandatory

Staffing.

Job descriptions are the end result of the needs assessment planning process. The process works to make the most effective use of staff.

Setting Priorities.

Written job descriptions clearly spell out the priority work that is most appropriate for volunteers to do.

Recruiting.

Job descriptions help in recruiting. Volunteer centers, for example, will only list jobs which have written descriptions.

Selecting.

With a written job description on hand, it is easier to say “yes” or “no” to a prospective volunteer.

Placement.

Job descriptions allow a better match between prospective volunteers and jobs.

Mutual Understanding.

Written job descriptions spell out the work the volunteer has agreed to do.

Commitment.

Written job descriptions demonstrate your serious commitment to volunteers and to volunteer positions.

Support and Feedback.

Job descriptions are the basic documents upon which supervision and evaluation are based.

Continuity.

Written job descriptions provide continuity from one volunteer to the next in the same position.

Liability Protection.

Written job descriptions detail the work that the volunteer has agreed to do. Such documentation can be critical in cases where on-the-job injury or tort claims must be settled.

Trends In Volunteering

- I. Volunteers have increasing demands on their time.
2. Volunteers are looking for more short-term volunteer opportunities.
3. Volunteers (especially “Babyboomers”) want challenging and interesting assignments.
4. Volunteers are coming from a broader cross-section of society (i.e., growing numbers of professionals, unemployed youth, diverse ethnic groups).
5. Today’s volunteers expect to be treated professionally.
6. Most volunteers are employed.
7. Seniors over 70 are increasing in numbers and are volunteering in increasing percentages.
8. Nearly all volunteers need more flexibility, finding it difficult to commit to regular hours.
9. Family and group volunteering is gaining in popularity.
10. There are more forced choice or “voluntold” such as many schools requiring a number of volunteer service hours as a requisite for graduation.
11. People are interested in working for causes, not just for organizations.
12. Many volunteer to get job experience or training, or as a re-entry experience.
13. Many prospective volunteers already have professional skills.

Characteristics of Good Volunteer Jobs

Meaningful and Significant

Ownership and Responsibility

Variety/Continuity/Growth

Academic/Work Credit

Measurable Goals and Objectives

Fun Stuff

Tailored to “motivational type” of Volunteer:

Appeals to Need to Achieve:

- Latitude in setting pace and methods
- Challenges skills and abilities
- Progress evident, feedback clear
- Goals within reach, opportunity to master

Appeals to Need for Power:

- Sense of importance, real purpose
- Prestige, recognition
- Opportunity to direct co-workers
- Opportunity to control work
- Access to decision making

Appeals to Need to Affiliate:

- Being part of the team
- Opportunities to interact
- Cooperation required
- Stable work group

Essential Elements of Written Job Descriptions

Job Title

Supervisor

Work Location

Time Commitment

Major Duties

Benefits to Volunteer

Goal/Outcome of Job

Qualifications (Knowledge, Skills, Experience)

Training and/or Preparation Required

Special Requirements

Volunteer Job Description

National Park Service

Job Title:

Name of VIP:

Supervisor:

Location:

Project Duration:

Hours Per Week:

Hours Per Month:

Description of Duties:

Benefits to VIP:

Goal/Outcome of Job:

Knowledge/Skills/Experience Desired:

Special Requirements:

Date prepared/revised

Volunteer Job Description

Jellystone National Park

Job Title: Visitor Center Volunteer

Name of VIP: Yogi Bear

Supervisor: Ranger Smith

Location: Picnic Basket Visitor Center, Jellystone National Park

Project Duration: Ongoing **Hours Per Week:** 4 **Hours Per Month:** 20

Description of Duties: Volunteer is responsible for operating a visitor center. Operation tasks include greeting park visitors and providing information on cultural, historical, and natural points of interest in the area and throughout the park. Some knowledge of local area will be necessary to answer visitor questions, including how to access attractions from the visitor center. Volunteer will also be responsible for accepting program reservations over the phone and answering phone inquiries. The volunteer operates a cash register and sells park cooperating association retail materials. Volunteer may also issue Golden Age and Golden Access Passports.

Benefits to VIP:

- Personal enrichment and experience working in a national park setting
 - Retail job training and experience
 - Experience in communicating with people of diverse cultures
-

Goal/Outcome of job:

- Provide efficient, courteous services, and helpful information to park visitors
-

Knowledge/Skills/Experience Desired:

- Excellent oral communication skills
 - Knowledge of local area and resources helpful
 - Retail sales experience helpful
 - Computer keyboard experience helpful
 - Bi-lingual language skills helpful
-

Special Requirements:

Volunteer will need to spend a major portion of work time standing; volunteer may be asked to drive a government - owned vehicle to pick up supplies within the park.