

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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

ORIENTATION 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

When a new volunteer first reports to work in your park, he or she will experience a high level of anticipation that relates to trying something new and exciting. There will also be the unanswered questions of whether the volunteer will feel wanted, needed, and appreciated. Whether you plan for it or not, orientation begins when the volunteer first walks through the door. For you, that moment may be a casual introduction followed by occasional bits of information that you give the volunteer whenever you think of them. Or it may be an enthusiastic welcome leading right into a formal orientation session on the National Park Service, the park, the park staff and the new job. For the volunteers, however, that first contact speaks volumes about how seriously you have planned for them, how glad you are they are there, and how much you value their time and contribution. That first impression will affect everything that follows.

PURPOSE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The **Purposes** of this module are to stress the importance of making new volunteers feel welcome and appreciated, and to give them basic information which will help get them started on their jobs.

Learning Objectives

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

1. Make the right first impression when volunteers report for work.
2. Identify what information should be included in a volunteer orientation session.
3. Summarize the essential pieces of information that should be included in a volunteer manual or handbook.

GENERAL NOTES TO TRAINER

1. This workshop is in a suggested format. Feel free, however, to personalize it to meet your needs. This module can be combined with “Training” to complete a one hour block of time.
2. This module is about giving volunteers a good introduction to the National Park Service, to your park, to your paid staff (and to other volunteers), and to the volunteers’ job. A good orientation makes the right first impression by showing volunteers that you take them seriously.
3. Involve the Superintendent and other key staff whenever possible in welcoming new volunteers. Tap into planned orientation sessions for paid staff.
4. Orientation should be given as soon as the volunteer starts working. Don’t forget to involve experienced volunteers in helping to welcome and to train other volunteers.
5. Use the 12-minute orientation video “Welcome to the National Park Service” to help make your new volunteers feel part of the larger NPS family.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

Transparency Handout	Section	Method of Presentation	Time
T-1 T-2	H-1 Introduction Key Concepts	Lecture	2 minutes
T-2	H-1 Concept 1 Orientation begins on the first day	Activity/Presentation	5 minutes
T-2 T-3	H-1 H-2 H-3 Concept 2 Welcome and Introduce	Activity/Video	18 minutes
T-2	H-1 Summary/Wrap-Up/ Evaluation	Summary Remarks	5 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 30 minutes

TRAINER'S NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Time: 2 minutes

T-1: Learning Objectives

T-2: Key Concepts

H-1: Key Concepts

Presentation

Begin with a brief statement on the purpose of orientation and show the transparency on Learning Objectives.

Summarize the two concepts that will be discussed.

CONCEPT 1

Time: 5 minutes

Whether formal or informal, orientation begins from the moment the volunteer first shows up for work and affects everything that follows.

T-2: Key Concepts

H-1: Key Concepts

Quick Opening Activity

Ask participants to share funny or nightmare experiences when they showed up to work at a paid job or as a volunteer, and their employer was obviously not ready for them. Then ask what kind of an impression that made on them. Stress the point that first impressions count and can have long-lasting affects.

CONCEPT 2

Time: 18 minutes

A complete orientation should welcome and introduce the new volunteer to the National Park Service, the park, the park staff, and the job.

T-2: Key Concepts

H-1: Key Concepts

T-3: Basic Elements of VIP Orientation

H-2: Basic Elements of VIP Orientation

H-3: Volunteer Orientation Checklist

**Video:
"Welcome to the
National Park
Service"
(video: 12 minutes)**

Group Activity

Ask participants to describe some of the elements of the orientation they give to new volunteers. Refer to the checklist as a guide to make sure that all volunteers get off to a good start.

VIP Orientation Video

Introduce the video by saying that it helps to welcome new volunteers to the National Park Service and to the Park Service family; to give an idea of the variety of sites, VIPs and VIP jobs that we have; to give some history of NPS and of the VIP Program; and to touch on mutual expectations of NPS and our volunteers. All volunteer supervisors should show the video to their new volunteers as part of their orientation.

SUMMARY/WRAP-UP/EVALUATION

Time: 5 minutes

T-2: Key Concepts

H-1: Key Concepts

Restate the importance of making the right first impression by making volunteers feel welcome and appreciated, and by helping them to feel grounded in the workings of the agency and in their new job.

END 30-MINUTE TRAINING

SUGGESTION FOR EXPANDED ACTIVITIES

1. Ask participants to prepare a detailed outline of an orientation plan for a specific volunteer job in their park.
2. Have participants develop an outline for a video designed to orient new volunteers to their park.
3. Ask participants to recall their most positive orientation experiences, either for a volunteer or paid position. Ask what elements of that orientation that impressed them the most.
4. Ask participants to develop an outline of the items to be included in a volunteer orientation handbook for volunteers at their park.

RESOURCES

1. McCurley, Steve and Rick Lynch. *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing all the Resources of the Community*, Heritage Arts Publishing, 1996. Available form www.energizeinc.com.
2. Vineyard, Sue and Steve McCurley. *101 Ideas for Volunteer Programs*, 1986, Heritage Arts Publishing. Available form www.energizeinc.com.
3. Vineyard, Sue and Steve McCurley. *101 More Ideas for Volunteer Programs*, Heritage Arts Publishing. 1995. Available form www.energizeinc.com

TRANSPARENCIES

Guide to Transparencies

T-1: Learning Objectives

T-2: Key Concepts

T-3: Basic Elements of VIP Orientation

Learning Objectives

- Know the importance of making the right first impression
- Identify key information to include in volunteer orientation sessions
- Summarize essential information that should be included in a volunteer manual or handbook

Key Concepts

Concept 1

Whether formal or informal, orientation begins when the volunteer first shows up for work.

Concept 2

A complete orientation should welcome and introduce the new volunteer.

Basic Elements of VIP Orientation

1. Welcome and introduction to staff
2. Introduction to agency and park
3. Rules, regulations, and necessary forms
4. Logistics
5. Safety/emergency procedures
6. Standards of Conduct
7. Introduction to the job

HANDOUTS

Guide to Handouts

- H-1:** Key Concepts of Orientation
- H-2:** Basic Elements of VIP Orientation
- H-3:** Volunteer Orientation (checklist)

Key Concepts of Orientation

The purposes of orientation are to make new volunteers feel welcome and appreciated, and to give them basic information which will be helpful in starting their jobs.

Concept 1

Whether formal or informal, orientation begins the moment the volunteer first shows up for work and affects everything that follows.

You will only have one chance to make a good first impression. Your attitude, your appreciation, and your efficient use of the volunteer's time will speak volumes about how seriously you are taking that individual. Make the most of it! Have fun! And make sure your volunteers know you are committed to helping them have a great volunteer experience! **And don't forget to have volunteers sign the appropriate agreement forms before they start working!**

Concept 2

A complete orientation should welcome and introduce the new volunteer to the National Park Service, the park and park operations, the staff, and the job.

A complete orientation does not mean a long, overwhelming orientation. The important thing is to make sure all the bases are covered in order for the volunteer to do his or her job and to have an enjoyable and productive experience. Certainly the extent of the orientation should relate to the work the volunteer will perform. But even a very short volunteer assignment should begin with a warm welcome, an introduction to the National Park Service mission, the park, key staff and the job to be done.

Basic Elements of VIP Orientation

1. Welcome and introduction to key staff
2. Introduction to agency and park
3. Rules, regulations, and necessary forms
4. Logistics
5. Safety/emergency procedures
6. Standards of Conduct
7. Introduction to job

Volunteer Orientation Checklist

A Guide for Supervisors

You only get one chance to make a good first impression on your new volunteers. By following the checklist below, you will be giving the clear message that they are welcome and you are taking their donated services very seriously.

- _____ Staff and VIP introductions and welcome
- _____ Introduction to NPS, the park, and the VIP program
- _____ Park rules and regulations
- _____ VIP uniform/dress code
- _____ Buildings and grounds orientation including restrooms, parking, lunchrooms, etc.
- _____ Paperwork/explanation of necessary forms including Form 10-85 (individual volunteer agreement form), Form 10-86 (group volunteer agreement form), job description, logging work hours, etc.
- _____ Introduction to the job
- _____ Safety procedures/fire plan and emergency procedures/first aid
- _____ Location of supplies
- _____ Use of government equipment/telephone procedures
- _____ Use of government vehicles (if applicable)
- _____ Expense reimbursement procedures
- _____ Tax deduction information (IRS Publication 526)
- _____ Code of Conduct
- _____ Volunteer manual
- _____ Injuries/Worker's compensation procedures
- _____ VIP orientation video