

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



How to Succeed With Volunteers-In-Parks

60-Minute Module Series

PROGRAM PREPARATION

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

Throughout the history of the national parks, volunteers have carried on a proud tradition. From the establishment of the first national park, Yellowstone, in 1872, to the establishment of the National Park Service itself, in 1916, and continuing on today, private citizens have played a vital role in the development of the national park system. Interestingly, it was not until passage of the Volunteers in the Parks Act of 1969, that this long-term, informal association turned into a formal partnership.

Each year, tens of thousands of Volunteers-In-Parks (VIPs) willingly offer their time and skills to help protect and maintain the national parks. Volunteers are now involved in every aspect of park operations and management. It is our responsibility to make sure our VIPs have all the support necessary to do their jobs. This training, “How to Succeed with Volunteers-In-Parks,” covers the important building blocks that will enable park volunteer managers and supervisors to provide that support. This module, “Program Preparation,” provides some of the basic guidelines and philosophical underpinnings that are the basis of that support.

PURPOSE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The **Purposes** of this module are to set a welcoming tone for the workshop and to offer a summary of the key elements, policies and expectations of the Volunteers-In- Parks Program.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, participants will:

1. Be aware of the essential elements of a complete, balanced volunteer program.
2. Understand key policies from Director's Order #7 (DO - 7), the Volunteers-In -Parks (VIP) Program guidelines.
3. Understand the role of volunteer manager can vary among different parks.
4. Know that volunteers have clear rights, as well as responsibilities.

GENERAL NOTES TO TRAINER

This module is intended to serve as the introduction to the 13-module training course “How to Succeed with Volunteers-In-Parks.”

1. Prior to attending the course, all participants should read Director’s Order #7 (DO - 7). Questions and issues will be shared at the beginning of the workshop.
2. All instructors should be involved in presenting parts of this module. This will help introduce them to participants.
3. Depending on the participant’s knowledge regarding Director’s Order #7, others sections may need to be lengthened or shortened to accommodate the DO - 7 section.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

Transparency Handout	Section	Method of Presentation	Time
T-1	Introduction	Lecture	3 minutes
	Summary of workshop	Lecture Brainstorm	7 minutes
	Ice Breaker	Group Activitiy	15 minutes
T-2 H-1	Director's Order #7*	Discussion	25 minutes
T-3 H-2 H-3 H-4	Role of Volunteer Manager	Discussion Lecture	5 minutes
T-4 H-5 T-5 H-6	Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities	Brainstorm Discussion	5 minutes

* Pre - class assignment: Read DO - 7. Questions and issues will be shared at the beginning of the workshop.

TOTAL TIME: 60 minutes

TRAINER'S NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Time: 3 minutes

T-1: Welcome to “How to Succeed With Volunteers-In-Parks”

Welcome all to class, introduce speakers, give site logistics.

Include the message “We assume you have come here to learn. We hope you are also willing to teach — to share some of the important lessons you have already learned about working with volunteers, whether with the National Park Service or elsewhere.”

This workshop will consist of 13 one-hour modules covering the essential elements of volunteer management. Taken as a whole, the essence of the training can be summarized in three words:

T-2: Take Volunteers Seriously

T-3: Learning Objectives

Take Volunteers Seriously!

Everything we will talk about will directly support this basic tenant.

Give a **brief summary** of what will be covered during the workshop. Read the learning objectives. Brainstorm any additional objectives from participants and try and relate them to the basic objectives as appropriate. Use flip chart paper and establish a “parking lot” for these questions and issues. Review periodically during training session.

Have participants take a piece of cover stock, fold it in half, and make their own name tags for the table. Instruct them to (1) show their name clearly, (2) use at least two colors of marker pens, and (3) show one interesting factoid (a job, a particular VIP, a site, etc.) relating to their VIP Program.

ICE BREAKER

Time: 15 minutes

Ask all participants to introduce themselves in turn, and explain their name tags. Reward the top three tags with candy.

See Resources: Some books listed contain other ice breakers that can be used.

Present and discuss highlights of Director's Order #7 relating to the VIP Program. Explain that much more will be covered during the workshop.

DIRECTOR'S ORDER #7 HIGHLIGHTS

Time: 25 minutes

T-4: Director's Order #7 Highlights

H-1: DO - 7

Pre-class assignment:

Read Director's Order #7. Questions and issues will be shared at this time.

Ask:

"What is the role of the volunteer program manager in your park?"

THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEER MANAGER

Time: 5 minutes

T-5: Role of the Volunteer Manager

H-2: Role of the Volunteer Manager

H-3: Options for Staffing a Volunteer Manager's Position

H-4: Sample Position Description for a Volunteer Manager

Describe how the job functions and skills of the volunteer program manager vary widely from park to park, depending on park management, park location, and size, initiative of the volunteer program manager, and other factors.

Brainstorm rights and responsibilities of volunteers. Mention that the same high level of conduct that is expected of paid staff is also expected of VIPs.

VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Time: 5 minutes

T-6: Volunteer Rights

T-7: Volunteer Responsibilities

H-5: Volunteer Rights

H-6: Volunteer Responsibilities

Emphasize the need for communicating the rights and responsibilities of all who are involved with volunteer program administration and those participating as volunteers. Discuss the value and purpose of volunteer manuals in the park. Can discuss what would be useful in such a manual.

OR

Additional discussion can take place in the module entitled "Orientation"

END 60-MINUTE TRAINING

RESOURCES

1. Independent Sector for latest research on Giving and Volunteering.
www.independentsector.org
Giving and Volunteering in the United States, 1999.
2. Cambell and Ellis, *The Help I Don't Have-Enough-Time Guide To Volunteer Management*
Available from: www.energizeinc.com
3. Ukens, Lorraine, *Getting Together: Icebreakers and Group Energizers*, Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, 1997
Available from: www.pfeiffer.com/WileyCDA/
4. Stallings, Betty, *Icebreakers: Getting Your Training Off To A Good Start*,
e-Volunteerism Journal, Fall issue, 2000.
Available from: ww.e-Volunteerism.com

Other resources that may be available

5. McCurley, Steve and Rick Lynch. *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing all the Resources of the Community*, Heritage Arts Publishing, 1996.
6. Newstrom, John W., and Edward Scannell. *Games Trainers Play*, McGraw-Hill Inc. ISBN: 0-07-046408-1.
7. Newstrom, John W., and Edward Scannell. *More Games Trainers Play*, McGraw-Hill Inc. ISBN: 0-07-046414-6.
8. Scott, Ann Firor and Susan J. Ellis. *An Overview of Volunteering*, (videotape), Cornell University, 1998.
9. Ukens, Lorraine L. *Working Together: 55 Team Games*, Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, 1997.
10. Vineyard, Sue. *Megatrends and Volunteerism: Mapping the Future of Volunteer Programs*, Heritage Arts Publishing, 1993.

T RANSPARENCIES

Guide to Transparencies

- T-1:** Welcome to “How to Succeed With Volunteers-In-Parks”
- T-2:** Take Volunteers Seriously
- T-3:** Learning Objectives
- T-4:** Director’s Order #7 Highlights
- T-5:** Role of the Volunteer Manager
- T-6:** Volunteer Rights
- T-7:** Volunteer Responsibilities

**Welcome to
“How to Succeed With
Volunteers-In-Parks”**

Take Volunteers Seriously

Learning Objectives

- Be aware of the 13 essential elements
- Understand key policies
- Understand the role of the VIP manager can vary
- Know that volunteers have rights and responsibilities

Director's Order #7 Highlights

Role of the Volunteer Program Manager

Volunteer Rights

Fairness

Communication

Preparation

Assignments

Responsibility

Feedback

Recognition

Volunteer Responsibilities

Representing NPS

Being a team member

Being reliable

Acting professionally

Using equipment properly

HANDOUTS

Guide to Handouts

- H-1:** Director's Order #7
- H-2:** The Challenging Role of the Volunteer Program Manager
- H-3:** Options for Staffing a Volunteers-In-Parks Program Manager's Position
- H-4:** Sample Position Description for a Volunteer Program Manager
- H-5:** Volunteer Rights
- H-6:** Volunteer Responsibilities

Director's Order #7 Volunteers-In-Parks

The Challenging Role of the Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) Program Manager

The job of the VIP Program Manager can be challenging and rewarding. Often, however, the position is misunderstood with respect to the professional and personal skills needed to implement a successful program. The following points highlight some of the unique demands placed on VIP Program Managers.

- VIP Program Managers have the challenging job of managing people, but with added complications stemming from the fact that they do not have a pay check with which to reward their workers at the end of a work period. They must become experts at understanding and providing motivation for each volunteer. Thus, in many ways, they need to be more skilled as managers than those supervising salaried employees.
- VIP Program Managers are involved in a fiercely competitive market for the use of people's free time. They must have a product (volunteer jobs) so enticing that prospective volunteers would choose that activity over any other use of their free time.
- The profile of the volunteer is changing and the VIP Program Manager must be able to lead the organization to new ways of utilizing volunteer resources.
- The VIP Program Manager's job involves responsibilities both inside and outside the National Park Service. The VIP Program Manager must be adept at supervising and keeping records on many types of people, working on different schedules, at all levels of the organization.
- Good VIP Program Managers must be able to apply good volunteer management practices to their park. This requires excellent communication and training skills.
- Managing volunteers frequently involves working long and flexible hours, because many volunteer events are held outside of normal working hours.
- VIP Program Managers frequently do not get many resources, or sufficient training, to assist them in their role.
- The job of a VIP Program Manager can be a lonely one as the number of support personnel within the organization is frequently limited.

Options for Staffing a VIP Program Manager's Position

Budgets, priorities, and staff availability (paid and volunteer) all affect an organization's choice of one of the following models for staffing the VIP Program Manager position.

1. **Full-Time Position (as VIP Program Manager)**
This is the ideal, but only infrequently can a park afford this luxury.
2. **Full-Time Position (with other major areas of responsibility)**
Frequently, in this situation, volunteer management is an add-on responsibility. These managers primarily see themselves in other roles, squeezing in volunteer management as time allows.
3. **Part-Time Position (with no other duties)**
The value of this option is that the person will not be splitting time with other activities in the organization.
4. **Decentralized Model**
Under this option, all staff members recruit and manage their own volunteers, as needed or desired. The result may be a disjointed effort, with very little quality control.
5. **Volunteer Position**
These are difficult folks to find. They need time, skills, and dedication. The park must supply them with the necessary resources to succeed. This may be a shared position among a number of volunteers.

Volunteer Program Manager

Sample Position Description

Reports to:

(designated administrator)

Supervises :

Employee is responsible for managing the Volunteers-In -Parks program at [park name]

Basic function:

Provides direction, coordination, and consultation for all volunteers throughout the park. Plans, develops, and manages the Volunteers-In -Parks program for [park name] in direct support of priority management objectives and the National Park Service Mission.

Duties and responsibilities (example)

The incumbent is responsible for planning, developing, and executing all aspects of the park-wide volunteer program. S/he provides annual analysis and recommendations to for use in setting park goals and program direction. S/he provides ongoing advice, guidance, and assistance to management, law enforcement, interpretive rangers, natural resources staff and maintenance foremen, to carry out the goals and objectives of these programs.

The employee manages the park's dynamic Volunteers-In -Park program and in that role is expected to be a highly effective and professional volunteer manager. [park name] has a volunteer cadre that includes _____ VIPs who have contributed _____ hours in FY _____. Volunteers perform needed jobs in all areas of the park including natural/cultural resource management, maintenance, interpretation and administration.

A key to the success of managing the volunteer program is to maintain a wide variety of community contacts and the ability to use all forms of mass media to both inform the public about the park and to recruit volunteers. The employee serves as focal point to identify methods that will enhance the park's ability to attract volunteers through both outreach programs and recruitment efforts within and outside the local community.

Volunteer Rights

Volunteers have the right to:

1. Receive the same fair personnel practices as paid staff.
2. Have their time used effectively.
3. Receive clear and non - conflicting guidance and direction.
4. Be kept informed of activities pertaining to their volunteer assignments.
5. Not undertake assignments they do not wish to do.
6. Receive appropriate orientation, training, and supervision.
7. Be assigned jobs that are worthwhile and challenging.
8. Be made aware of the overall operation of the park.
9. Have opportunities for growth.
10. Be offered a variety of experiences.
11. Receive regular, clear feedback on the quality and effectiveness of their work.
12. Be recognized for their contributions.
13. Have an opportunity to provide input into the volunteer program.
14. Be trusted with the information needed to carry out their jobs effectively.
15. Be assigned a direct supervisor.

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers have the responsibility to:

1. Represent the National Park Service in a professional manner.
2. Follow the park's policies and guidelines and understand its organizational structure.
3. Seek and accept the guidance and support needed to complete assignments.
4. Work as a team with paid staff and respect mutual roles.
5. Be reliable in fulfilling assignments.
6. Do a quality, professional job.
7. Respect access to information, facilities and equipment, etc.
8. Learn from and participate in training sessions and meetings.
9. Provide notice of absence.
10. Make a good- faith effort to resolve differences or problems.
11. Care for park resources.
12. Work safely and smartly.