



VolunteerMatch

VolunteerMatch Learning Center
Core Components

Playing by the Rules: Creating an Effective Volunteer Handbook

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Agenda

- Why Handbooks are important
- What goes into a Handbook?
- Sections and Components
- Getting buy-in for policies
- Enforcing the policies
- Putting Handbooks to Use
- Evaluating your current Handbook

Why Handbooks Are Important

Set the stage for volunteer engagement

- Help volunteers and paid staff understand how they work together

Share your philosophy or goals

- With volunteers
- With paid staff

Create a single set of rules

- Base the volunteer handbook on employee handbook

Living document - Update as program changes

What goes into a Handbook

Things you want a volunteer to know as part of your organization

- Information on the Organization
- Mission, vision, values
- Philosophy of volunteer engagement
- Welcome letter, history of organization
- Information on clients, programs, funding
- Organization structure chart, Staff Directory
- Benefits of volunteering

What goes into a Handbook

Things everyone needs to know as part of your organization

- Guidelines for Participation
- Building or facility policies - smoking, pets, etc.
- Policies for a safe work place - ADA, discrimination harassment, reporting accidents, emergency procedures
- Policies for understanding org culture - parking, break room etiquette, dress code
- General codes of conduct, cultural statements

What goes into a Handbook

Specific things that volunteers need to know to be a part of your organization

- Volunteer specific policies or procedures
- Volunteer code or conduct, Ethics of volunteering
- Actions volunteers must take - recording hours, finding substitutes, completing background checks
- Policies for all volunteers - speaking with the media, representing the organization, IP and real property
- Training requirements or pathways
- Policies for specific positions - front desk, client interaction

What goes into a Handbook

What to do when things go wrong

- Problem solving and disciplinary procedures
- Conflicts between volunteers, between volunteers and clients, volunteers and staff
- Include what volunteers should do if they have a conflict with you
- What policies must be followed/can't be broken
- Outline process for dismissal for policy violations - warnings, recourse for volunteers
- Include termination procedures

Getting Buy-In

Engage volunteers in the process of developing handbook and policies

- Allow volunteers to define their own code of conduct
- Include volunteers in the enforcement or monitoring of policies

Help the organization understand what these policies mean

- Dependability/reliability of volunteers
- What employees should do if they have conflicts with volunteers

Getting Buy-In

Present information at the right time

- Introduce ideas when volunteers are receptive
- Visit important policies more than once
- Include key policies in more than one way in more than one
- place

Document the understanding and the responsibility

- Acknowledgement Form
- Ongoing updates, trainings, and discussions of policies and procedures

Enforcing the Policies

Include the enforcement plan in the handbook

- Everyone knows the rules and reference the policies

Be prepared to follow through

- Policies are only effective if they are enforced
- Don't be the only policeman

Create leadership positions for volunteers

- Engage volunteers in the planning, writing and training
- Empower volunteers to enforce and monitor their own community

Put the Handbook to Use

It's a living document

- Keep paid and volunteer staff engaged with ongoing updates or changes

Be prepared to follow through

Modify sections for different programs/needs

- Create one-pagers for episodic roles
- Pull sections on intellectual property to include in pro bono consultant agreements

Evaluating Your Handbook

What can you start with?

- Employee handbook, HR policies and procedures

What needs to be added?

- Develop policies or procedures to address probable situations

Don't work alone.

- Work with volunteers and paid staff to evaluate what you have, determine what needs to be included, and to write, train on, and enforce the new policies
- Recruit an HR profession to help

Thank you!

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