

***The Volunteer Management Handbook: Leadership Strategies for Success (Second Edition)***

Edited by Tracy D. Conners, Wiley (436 pages.)

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Reviewed by Janet E. Fox, Ph.D.

In an era where volunteers are a progressively significant part of non-profit agencies, the second edition of *The Volunteer Management Handbook* is an invaluable reference manual providing a plethora of research-based, practical information on volunteer resource management. Contributions are featured from visionary non-profit professionals providing a wide scope of present and futurist trends and topics that help guide and position the volunteer resource manager. Covering all aspects of administering volunteer programs, *The Volunteer Management Handbook* includes the latest in organizational assessment and planning; program management; operational assessment and planning; strategic deployment and implementation accession; training; communications; program management; results and evaluation; and applied management practice. The book is organized into four major parts: (1) volunteer resource program assessment, (2) analysis and planning; (3) strategic deployment and implementation accession; and (4) results, and evaluation and applied management practice.

The first part of the book focuses on volunteer resource program assessment, analysis, and planning targeting organizational assessment and planning and operational assessment and planning. Chapter one provides a thorough foundation regarding historical and contemporary volunteer management models. Chapter two discusses volunteer demographics as well as service across the life span, connecting

human development to volunteerism and generational cohorts. In Chapter three, preparing the organization for volunteers, the author shares preparing the organization for volunteers by setting reasonable expectations for volunteers, establishing the rationale and goals for the volunteer program, and integrating volunteer participation into the organization. Chapter three also offers guidance on creating positions of program leadership, developing written volunteer job descriptions, and designing systems that support and manage volunteer involvement. In chapter four, the author discusses shaping an organizational culture of employee and volunteer commitment. This section of the book provides a wide range of research-based information, guidelines, and tools to support an organizational culture that promotes a growth-filled environment for volunteers and staff. In discussing maximizing volunteer engagement, chapter five provides an overview of the volunteer involvement framework and provides dialogue around managing the volunteer investment. Chapter six, policy development for volunteer involvement, shares vital information about the benefits and challenges of having a volunteer program. The chapter provides information on job analysis looking at and providing tools for comparing volunteer role descriptions and role specifications. Wrapping up part one of the book, chapter seven shares vital information regarding policy development for volunteer involvement taking the discussion from distinguishing between policies and

procedures, the importance of policies and the link between policy and risk management. In the discussion around where are policies needed, the book covers the functions of policies providing examples of published policies as well as providing tools for developing policies.

With the groundwork laid in the first part of the book, the second part of the book focuses on strategic deployment and implementation access, training, communications, and program management. Chapter eight examines the latest approach to volunteer recruitment: competency-competence pathways and volunteer management systems. Chapter nine, orientation, provides a foundation for how to welcome new volunteers into the organization by providing examples of potential agenda components, formats for delivery, and the timing of orientation. In focusing on training, chapter ten provides a thorough background for training volunteers. In this chapter, several visual representations are used to convey information related to training. Chapters eleven and twelve focus on communications in targeting volunteer and staff. Chapter eleven, which focuses on volunteer and staff relations, shares insights on putting together and managing effective volunteer-staff teams. Chapter twelve covers the area of communicating with volunteers and staff: which includes information on the communication process, theories of communication, communication campaign, and potential pitfalls of internal communication.

In the program management section of the book, chapter thirteen discusses volunteer performance management, and takes the reader on a step-by-step process through the impact wheel, which focuses on purpose, priority, path and performance. This chapter is easy to read with plenty of graphs and tools for assessing volunteer

performance. In chapter fourteen, the author explores risk management in volunteer involvement by providing a firm foundation for understanding risk management. Bullet lists, step-by-step procedures, models, and other exhibits provide support for managing people, property, income, goodwill, and liability risks in volunteer programs.

Part three focuses on results and evaluation. Chapter fifteen provides the context and models for evaluating volunteer programs while chapter sixteen discusses evaluating the impact of volunteer programs. In chapter fifteen, a purpose-based evaluation framework for valuing volunteers serves as the underpinning for endorsing the value of volunteering to volunteers and to clients. In chapter sixteen, the author provides a thorough background on the relationship between evaluation, impact, and accountability. The author explains four foundational questions in volunteer program impact including: (1) Why do I need to evaluate the volunteer program?; (2) How will I collect the required impact evaluation data?; (3) Who wants or needs to know about the evaluation findings?; and, (4) How do I communicate the evaluation findings?

The second edition of *The Volunteer Management Handbook* is unique in that is available both as an online and print publication. The final part of the book offers 17 additional chapters focusing on applied management practices. It provides a wide variety of digital files for support ranging from mission fulfillment during challenging times to professional ethics of volunteers to professionalism and credentialing in the field to international volunteer management. Not only are the advanced technologies available in the final chapters, but the online resource files also provide vital supplemental material at every stage of the volunteer resource management process.

The book's editor, Tracy D. Conners, has published eight nonprofit management handbooks, an unsurpassed publication record in the field of non-profit management. Now, he has put together another valuable resource. The book provides an excellent reference guide for the

volunteer resource manager, non-profit administrator, or university professor has everything the reader could want to know about volunteer resource management...and more! It is well worth the investment to add this outstanding "must have" resource to your volunteer management library.

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### **About the Reviewer**

Janet E. Fox, Ph.D., is a Professor and Associate Department Head for 4-H Youth and Family Development Department at the Louisiana State University AgCenter. Prior to her current position, Janet was the Volunteer and Leadership Development Specialist at LSU AgCenter and a 4-H Youth Development Specialist for the University of Nebraska Southeast Research and Extension Center. As a 4-H Youth Development Specialist, Janet supported volunteer and leadership development programs, and community service programs. Two different Nebraska governors appointed Janet to the Volunteer Service Commission in which she served for four years on the Executive Committee. Janet received her bachelors and masters degrees from Mississippi State University and her Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska.