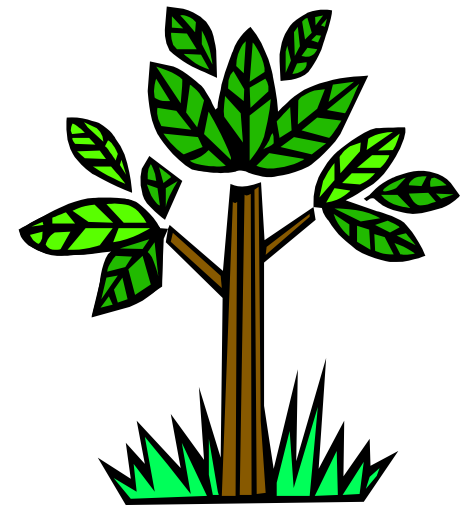


# Volunteers Don't Grow on Trees!

Nurturing our Communities' Most Precious People

October 2001



"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

- Gandhi



# Learning Objectives



- Understand the role volunteers play in the nonprofit sector
- Understand the reasons why people volunteer, what their expectations are, and how organizations need to apply this knowledge when designing volunteer programs
- Learn the types of jobs within organizations best suited for volunteers
- Understand the risks and responsibilities of using volunteers to develop and deliver programs
- Learn specific ways to mitigate these risks and use volunteers effectively

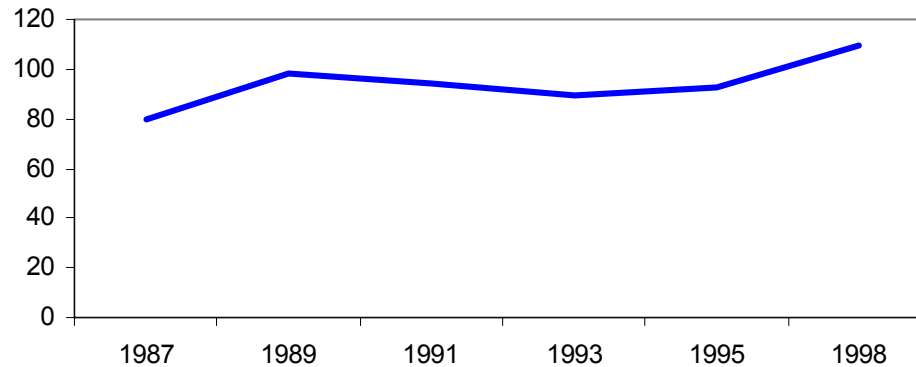
# Agenda

- Volunteering in America
- Recruiting volunteers
- Risks and responsibilities
- Train and support volunteers
- Recognize and reward volunteers
- Document their efforts
- Additional information

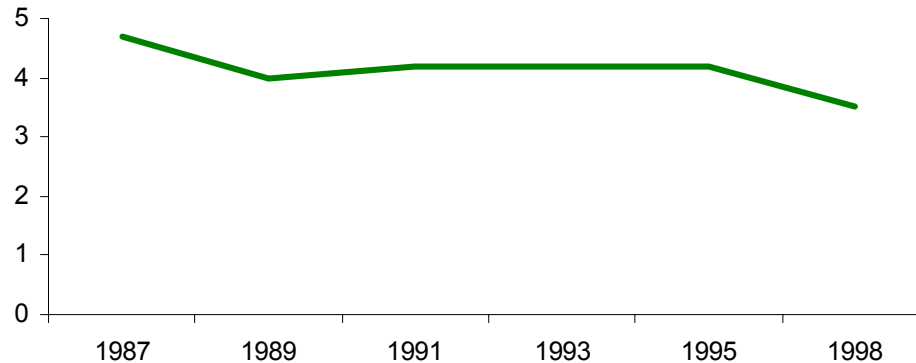


# U.S. Volunteerism Trends

Millions of U.S. Volunteers



Average Hours Per Week



Source: Independent Sector 1999 Survey

# Why People Volunteer (in General)



People volunteer for a specific organization because:

- they were asked by someone
- they participate in an organization
- through a family member or relative

What they get out of volunteering:

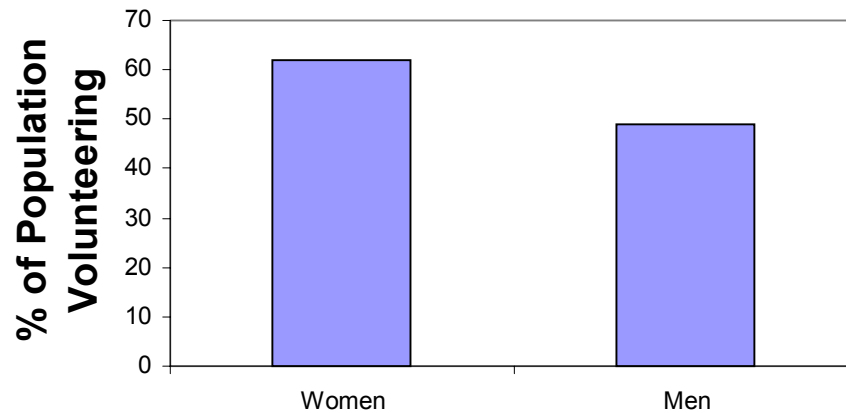
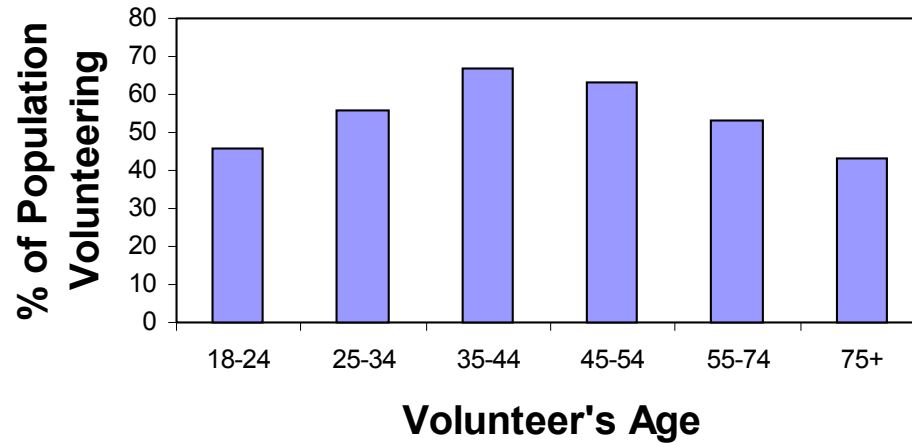
- personal satisfaction
- giving back to society
- socializing and friendships
- fills time

# Volunteers Expect To...

- have their time not wasted
- be treated with respect and appreciation
- learn new skills and gain experience helpful for job prospects
- apply their existing knowledge and experience
- receive any necessary orientation or training
- be heard
- make a difference

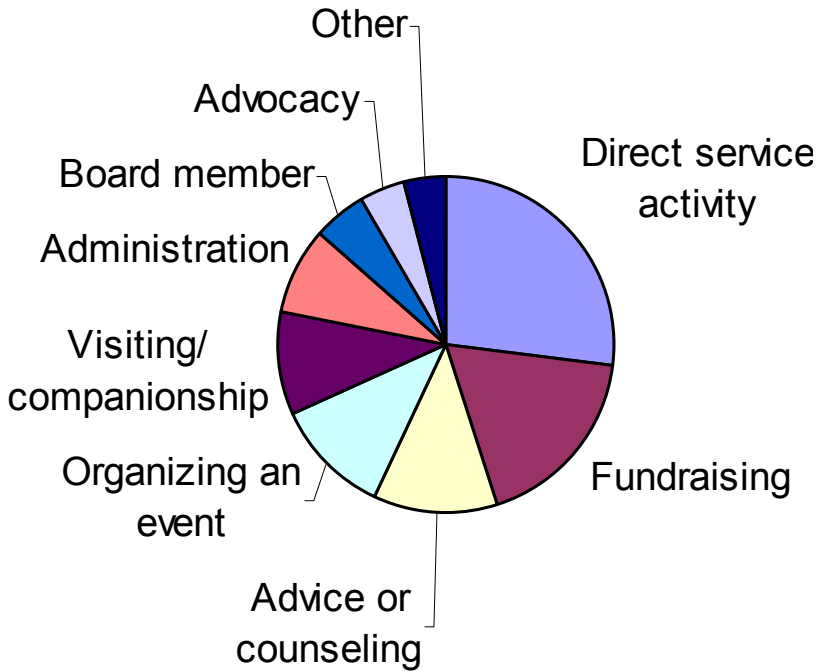


# Who Volunteers?

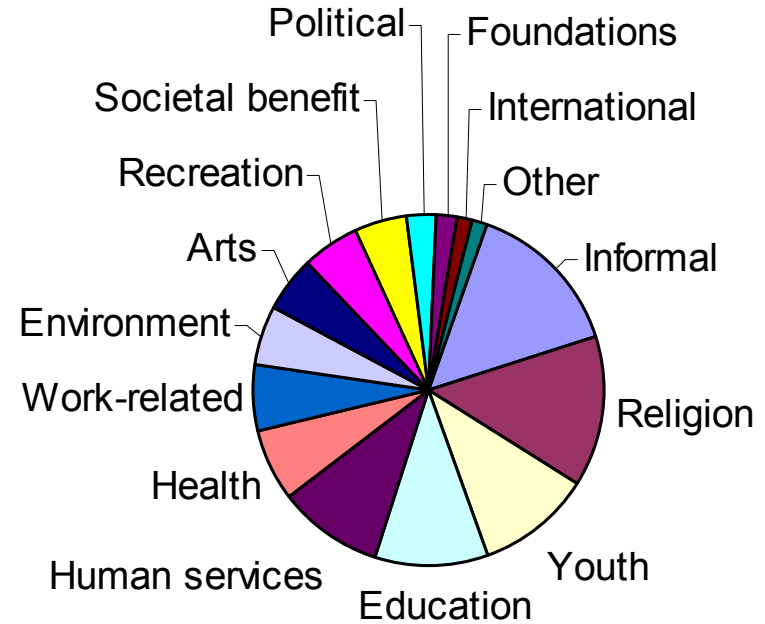


Source: Independent Sector 1999 Survey

# What Do Volunteers Do?



Jobs Suited for Volunteers



Work Sector

Source: Independent Sector 1999 Survey

# Recruiting Volunteers

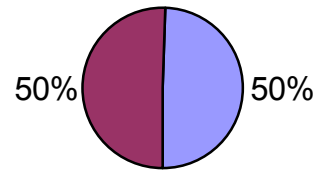
- Board members, committee members and program volunteers require different approaches
- Different positions ask for different commitment levels
- Promoting from within vs. “hiring” from outside
- “Skills grid” for seeking committee members and program volunteers
- Business partnerships



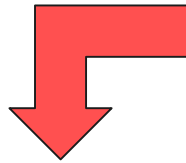
...Seek out appropriate people from your contacts, or a friend of your contact

# It Pays to Ask...

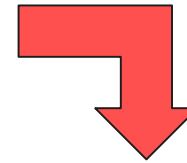
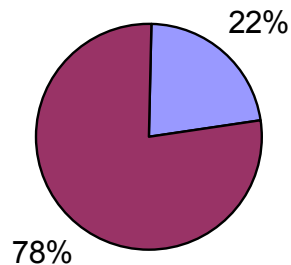
## Asked to Volunteer?



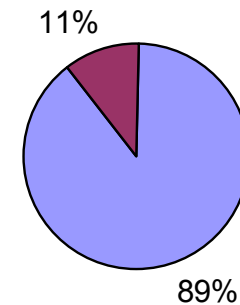
■ Yes ■ No



### Volunteer When Not Asked



### Volunteer When Asked



Source: Independent Sector 1999 Survey

# Risks and Responsibilities of Using Volunteers

- Screen volunteers for responsibility/ background checks
- Match volunteer abilities with degree of public exposure
- Insurance and bonding
- Liability – “reasonable and prudent person”
- Duty of care

The organization is always liable and responsible for its volunteers' actions!



# Screening, Hiring and Firing Volunteers

- Match volunteer interests and abilities with your needs – another look at the “skills grid”
- Quality is more important than quantity
- Give new volunteers their job description and an orientation session
- When necessary, promote or reassign a volunteer to a new role
- Deal decisively with undependable volunteers or risk harming other volunteers



# Job Descriptions as Recruitment and Screening Tools

- Board and advisory board members – see sample descriptions from “Board Basics” workshop
- Committee members – sample description
- Program volunteers – responsibilities, level of effort, time of day, days of week, for how many months, who with
- Publish descriptions in newsletters, flyers, and newspaper; *but* realize only 6% of volunteers come from responses to an ad



# Leadership Responsibilities

Leaders should recruit and train *two* “deep” for the leadership roles



Since not everyone has training and recruitment skills, it's important to designate someone to be in charge of volunteerism for your organization

# Characteristics of Good Volunteers

- Dependable and reliable
- Commitment to the “cause”
- Common sense (not very common!)
- Openness – a desire to learn and grow
- Sense of humor!



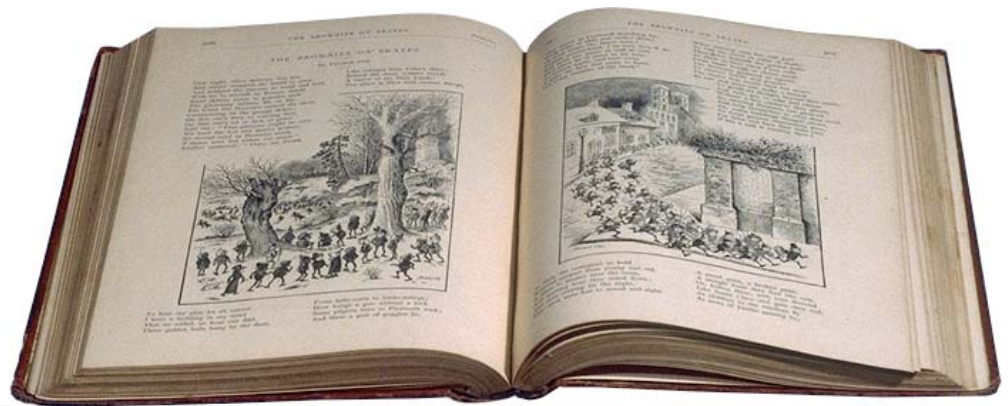
# Consider Using a Volunteer Coordinator

- Staff role (full or part-time) vs. volunteer role
- Coordinate, organize and supervise volunteer efforts
- Case study: Volunteer Speakers Bureau
  - Key volunteer
  - Define job responsibilities
  - Provide training for all speakers
  - Manage publicity
  - Coordinate assignments

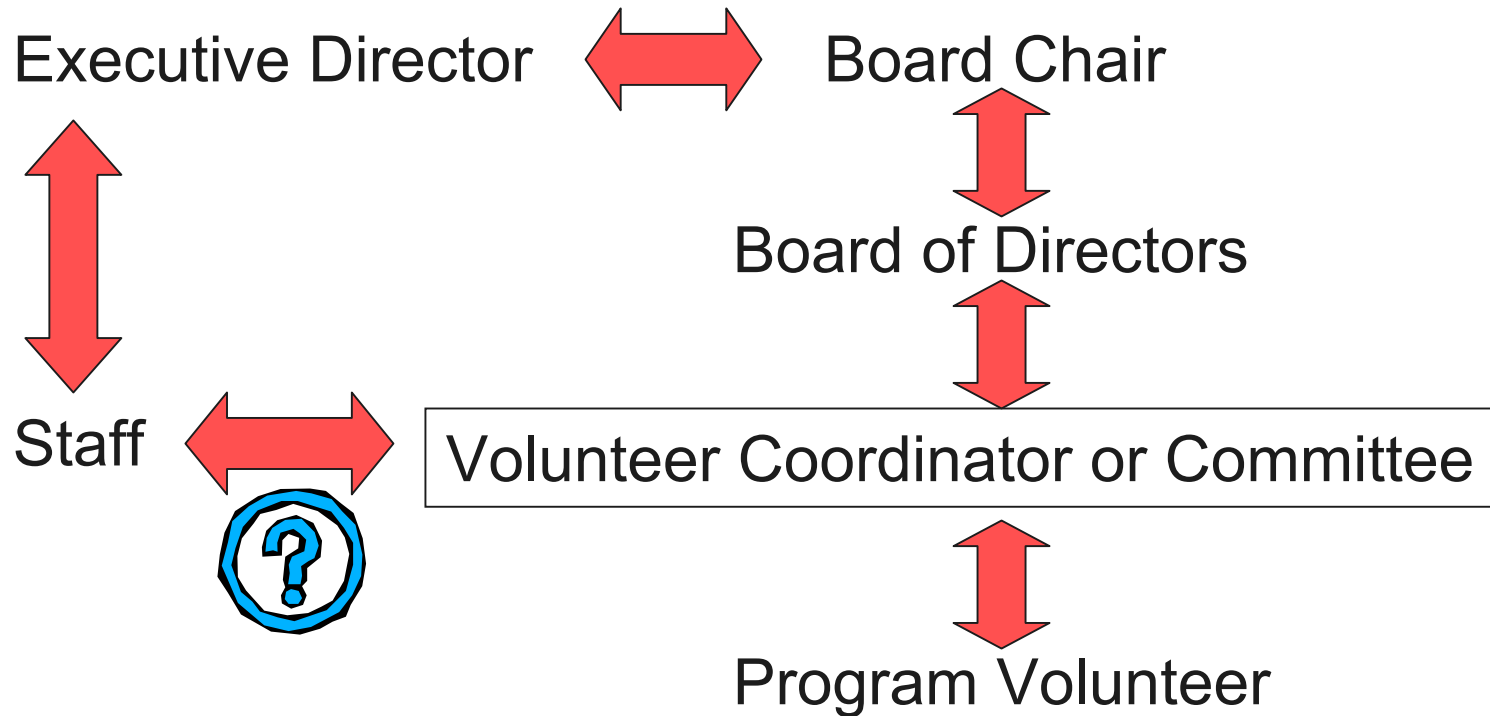


# Mitigate Risks Through Training and Supervision

- On-the-job training
- Buddy system
- Formal sessions (evening get togethers, annual retreats for board members)
- Annual evaluations for long-term volunteers
- Risk management policies and activities



# Staff-Volunteer Relationships



...volunteers often work closely with and report to a staff member

# Support Volunteer Efforts

- Establish communication channels and easy contacts
  - establish backup contacts for volunteers
  - have backup plans for no-shows
- Provide volunteers the materials and tools they need
  - don't skimp on equipment or software that will save significant time
  - automate processes as much as possible so that volunteer efforts are spent on “higher value” activities rather than envelope stuffing
  - build institutional memories and traditions – recruit someone with “detail personality” to be an “archivist” to write down procedures and processes



# Recognize Volunteers Early and Often



- Good recognition is *targeted, specific, informal*
- Recognition is the art of catching people being good and telling them so! (Caught Doing Good)
- We recognize people when we say:
  - Here's what I want you to do.
  - Wow!
  - Great job!
  - Wonderful!
  - Will you teach others?
  - Tell me how you do that!
  - Here's honest feedback.
  - You really help our clients.
  - I wrote your boss about the great job you do for us.



# Reward Volunteers

- Ongoing appreciation – regular thank yous, volunteer of the month/year, newsletter articles about them and their work, holiday and birthday cards
- Public recognition – press releases
- Awards ceremony at annual meeting (but not only this!)
- Naming awards after key volunteers
- Nominating them for regional or national awards

*101 Ways to Reward Volunteers* by Sue Vinyard and Steve McCurley

# Document Volunteer Efforts

- Keep records
  - all hours volunteered
  - tasks performed
- Include volunteer hours and dollar value in grant proposals as in-kind contributions
- Showcase volunteer commitment
- Need to plan and develop systems for this



# Additional Resources

- [www.EnergizeInc.com](http://www.EnergizeInc.com)
  - bookstore, volunteer center, and all things volunteer
- [www.e-volunteerism.com](http://www.e-volunteerism.com)
  - Steve McCurley’s legal issues of volunteer programs
- [www.avaintl.org](http://www.avaintl.org)
  - Association for Volunteer Administration
- [www.helping.org](http://www.helping.org)
  - Meta site for volunteers and nonprofits
- [www.CharityVillage.com](http://www.CharityVillage.com)
  - Canada’s supersite for volunteers and nonprofits
- [www.PointsOfLight.org](http://www.PointsOfLight.org)
  - Points of Light Foundation
- MN Office of Volunteer Services
  - *Planning it Safe – Liability Issues of Volunteer Programs*
- TACS nonprofit help line 1-888-206-3076

