Working with Volunteers

Volunteer Management Best Practices
An effective Volunteer Manager plays many roles. He or she will communicate with volunteers prior to their arrival; greet, orient, and manage, volunteers the day they are helping, and stay in touch with volunteers after they are gone. Effective volunteer management is the key to keeping your program “stocked” with enthusiastic, helpful volunteer assistance!

**PRE- ARRIVAL**

- Communicate with volunteers prior to their arrival, send directions, answer questions, confirm details, etc.
- Provide a phone number and/or e-mail address where volunteers can reach you. Return their calls or e-mails within 24-48 hours.
- Be at the volunteer site before volunteers arrive.
- Be prepared all materials before volunteers arrive, bags, food, etc
- Make sure any staff working with volunteers knows the group is coming

**DURING THE PROJECT**

- Welcome volunteers as they arrive, introduce yourself and explain your role.
- Have volunteers Sign-In
- Give volunteers an orientation about your program. (How many meals do you serve/bags do you distribute, etc)
- Communicate any rules, regulations, or guidelines
Delegate responsibilities; make sure all volunteers are comfortable with the task assigned to them.

If a volunteer is not comfortable with the task assigned, find something more appropriate for that specific volunteer.

Make sure that there is enough work for the day, that all volunteers are engaged.

Be accessible and visible to volunteers during the event, making it clear that you’re available if they have any questions or concerns.

Keep track of volunteers. If they must split up, agree on a time when all will reconnect.

Try to facilitate connections between volunteers; introduce new volunteers to long-term volunteers.

Always speak respectfully to volunteers, remember that they are there to help!

**POST PROJECT**

- At the end of the project, bring the group together and debrief: a. Thank volunteers, highlight what got done/the impact of their work b. Have an evaluation, written or discussion about the project
- Hand out flyers with up and coming volunteer opportunities, events or news about your organization, encourage volunteers to return/stay involved.
- Stay in touch with volunteers, use e-mail addresses/mailing address to send thank you letters and invite them back to volunteer, come to an event, donate, etc.
Volunteer Job Descriptions

Client Intake Helper/Intake Volunteer
• Welcome clients to program
• Verify identity of clients
• Verify number of individuals in household • Obtain signatures for pantry bags

Pantry bag distributor
• Provide pantry bags to client based on information received from client intake staff

Pantry bag packer
• Pack grocery bags with items from pantry, based on predetermined plan

Cleanup crew/volunteer
• Wipe dust off top of cans and shelves
• Defrost and clean refrigerator/freezer
• Sweep pantry area

Shelf Stocker/Stock room helper
• Assist with unloading delivered food products
• Add date food was delivered to food products
• Stock shelves with food products
• Could require the breakdown of cardboard boxes

Server
• Serve hot/cold meals to clients
• Serve hot/cold beverages to clients

Food preparer
• Work with kitchen staff to assemble items for meals
• May involve cutting/chopping, mixing and cooking of food items