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# Volunteer Centers: Gearing Up for the 1990s



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## **Volunteer Centers: Gearing Up for the 1990s**

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Susan J. Ellis  
President, ENERGIZE Associates



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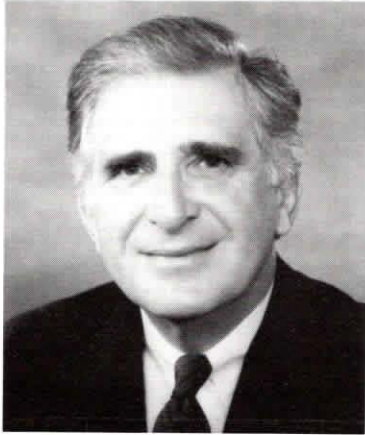
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## Foreword

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We are a nation of doers and of givers, and volunteering is second nature to most of us. We are active in politics and civic affairs, have religious commitments, and volunteer freely and enthusiastically on many fronts, including the fine arts, community problems, human and health-care needs, education, and emerging critical issues.

Our Second Century Initiative sets forth the challenge for each United Way to double volunteer capacity—including its own volunteers and volunteers communitywide. The best possible mechanism for achieving this goal involves a strong and visible Volunteer Center activity. This book will help you look at the issues and decide how, when, where, and what you need in a Volunteer Center.

**William Aramony**  
President  
United Way of America

## About the Author

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Susan J. Ellis is the founder and president of ENERGIZE Associates, a national consulting and training firm that specializes in volunteerism. Since starting the company in 1977, Ms. Ellis' presentations and written works have reached an audience of more than 55,000 volunteer program managers, and executives in settings that represent the full range of volunteer activities—from health and social services to the arts. ENERGIZE Associates has conducted workshops and consulted with not-for-profit organizations, government agencies, and corporations in every region of the United States and Canada.

Ms. Ellis blends her personal hands-on management experience with extensive research in the trends and issues that affect volunteerism. She is recognized as a national leader in the volunteer field, and is author or coauthor of more than thirty articles and five books, including *From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success*, and the videotape "COLLEAGUES: The Volunteer/Employee Relationship."

## Introduction

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This handbook focuses on the value of a Volunteer Center and explores the reasons Volunteer Center services are important to a community and to United Way. Specifically, the book:

- Advocates a vision of volunteerism as a powerful force in every community.
- Explores the relationship of Volunteer Center operations to United Way goals of doubling *both* financial and volunteer resources.
- Presents options for the placement of a Volunteer Center and outlines the decision-making process about that placement—the Volunteer Center as an independent agency or as a United Way division.
- Provides step-by-step guidelines for starting and assessing Volunteer Center services.

Readers can use the handbook to approach the subject of a Volunteer Center from one of several perspectives. For example:

- *Your Community Needs a Volunteer Center:* Your community may not have a Volunteer Center or any other mechanism for coordinating volunteer recruitment and placement.
- *Your Community Needs to Assess the Relationship Between United Way and a Volunteer Center:* Your community may have a need to consider the optimal relationship between its Volunteer Center and United Way.
- *Your Community Needs to Maximize Service Effectiveness:* A Volunteer Center that is an internal division of United Way may want to assess whether it is functioning as effectively as possible.

This handbook is organized to allow for each of these perspectives, as well as others. In its opening chapter, the book provides historical information and expresses a “vision of volunteerism.” The second chapter addresses community needs for a Volunteer Center and offers guidelines for assessing current volunteerism resources. Chapter II also offers a definition of a Volunteer Center’s mission, discusses priority-setting, and identifies a Center’s market for services. Chapter III describes basic (or frequently offered) Volunteer Center services. It also addresses services that are not as frequently offered but would, nevertheless, serve well to double volunteer and financial resources. Additionally, the chapter identifies some innovative service ideas.

In Chapter IV, the book adopts the viewpoint that a United Way has decided to establish a Volunteer Center as an in-house division. Neither the book nor this chapter prescribes internal placement, but the material is presented from that perspective. There are, of course, a number of options open to United Ways. These include increasing support for existing Volunteer Center services or programs; encouraging the formation of a Volunteer Center as an independent 501(c)(3) agency; funding an existing agency to begin Volunteer Center operations; or creating a Volunteer Center as an in-house division of United Way.


“Operating the Volunteer Center,” Chapter V, addresses operational issues such as how to locate volunteer opportunities, and recruit and target volunteers. The chapter also addresses how the Center relates to other volunteerism organizations. Appendices A, B, and C offer referrals to resources on volunteerism, organizations in the volunteer field, and to United Way-operated Volunteer Centers.

Clearly, this book also underscores the importance of Volunteer Center services in meeting community needs. Taken from any perspective, a Volunteer Center encourages citizen involvement in all the activities that make for a better society.

From a United Way perspective, Volunteer Centers enhance year-round communications about health and human-care services, offer all members of a community the opportunity to be served by United Way, extend United Way support to nonfunded or affiliated agencies, and provide a high level of visibility for United Way in the community.

This book offers the means for taking a hard look at how volunteer services are delivered in your community, and how to strengthen those services. There are already many excellent books on management assistance and on the development of agency volunteer programs; this book is not meant to duplicate them. In fact, every attempt is made to direct the reader to existing resources. The goal here is to define the purpose and services of a Volunteer Center in a way that expresses a vision of volunteerism—and that will move both the United Way and the community toward that vision.

The real challenge in developing a Volunteer Center is to meet an individual community's needs effectively and efficiently. This can be accomplished by carefully assessing the needs, resources, and services useful to a particular community and researching other successfully tested programs. Each community will have different needs and different resources and make different decisions about Volunteer Center operations. There is no limit to the diversity of projects that a Volunteer Center might initiate—no limit to what it can achieve.



#### **A Volunteer Center is:**

- A concept—an expression of a communitywide vision of volunteerism that is inclusive of people and causes;
- A place—where diverse groups can meet in mutual concern for the support of volunteers; and
- A focal point—for visibility and coordination of volunteer efforts.



## Chapter I: The Potential of a Volunteer Center

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### 1: A Brief History

The attempt to provide some coordination to volunteer efforts in a community is not new. For the most part, today's Volunteer Centers can trace their roots back to the 1930s when the National Committee on Volunteers was formed (1932) and became an Associate Group of the National Conference of Social Work (1933). The Committee was concerned with fostering the relationship between volunteers and the growing profession of social work, particularly in response to the overwhelming demands of the Depression. It also had the objective of encouraging more volunteering and sponsored the creation of "volunteer bureaus." By the end of 1933, such bureaus existed in 28 cities, often affiliated with the local council of social service agencies. The main purpose of these volunteer bureaus was to refer potential volunteers to the various social agencies in a community.

World War II brought about major changes. The need to organize civilian support for the war effort became the country's priority. When the federal government formed the Office of Civilian Defense in 1941, the National Committee on Volunteers suspended operations and the 50 volunteer bureaus then in existence became an official part of the newly formed Defense Councils. By 1943, an estimated 4,300 civil-defense volunteer offices were operating around the country, recruiting volunteers for a wide variety of defense-related activities.

As the war drew to a close, the National Committee on Volunteers again began to press for the formation of volunteer bureaus to aid in the recruitment of volunteers on behalf of needed community services. In 1944, the Association of Junior Leagues of America and the Community Chests and Councils of America\* jointly financed a study of postwar plans for mobilizing volunteers. When the Office of Civilian Defense was disbanded in 1945, the Community Chests and Councils renewed their commitment to the support of volunteer bureaus by establishing the Advisory Committee on Citizen Participation in cooperation with the National Social Welfare Assembly. By 1950, there were 81 formal volunteer bureaus across the United States and Canada.

In 1951, the Association of Volunteer Bureaus (AVB) was formed and continued as an independent organization for more than 30 years. AVB created a network of volunteer bureaus, offered training in volunteer management, developed standards of excellence for volunteer programs, and generally promoted volunteerism in local communities. For a time, AVB received funding from United Way of America and its national office was located in United Way of America's building.

During the 1970s, major changes in volunteerism occurred in tandem with other social changes of the times. During this period, United Way of America worked with a number of bureaus to upgrade their operations and encouraged a name change to "Voluntary Action Center," conveying a new image of "doing." In 1971, United Way of America was asked to spearhead the establishment of the National Center for Voluntary Action (NCVA) to provide training and consultation to the volunteer field.

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\*Community Chests and Councils of America was the forerunner of today's United Way of America. For more history, see *People and Events: A History of the United Way*, United Way of America, 1977.

The 1980s have brought additional changes. The Association of Volunteer Bureaus (AVB) disbanded and merged into the organization now known as VOLUNTEER: The National Center—itsself a result of a 1979 merger between NCVA and the National Information Center on Volunteerism (NICOV) in Colorado. VOLUNTEER continues to offer a wide range of services to “Volunteer Bureaus,” “Voluntary Action Centers,” and—the newest name —“Volunteer Centers.”\*

## Volunteer Center Sponsors

United Way has a long tradition of supporting the volunteer clearinghouse function. The Community Chest movement recognized the importance of Volunteer Centers as early as 1919. In 1986, 115 Volunteer Centers were internal divisions of United Ways; at the same time, 90 percent of all other Volunteer Centers received a portion of their funding from United Way.

In addition to United Way, there have been and continue to be other sponsors of community efforts to coordinate volunteer activity.

One of the most active sponsors is The Junior League. Even today, Leagues in a large number of communities put up the seed money for a Volunteer Center. Though additional funding sources are later found (often the United Way), Junior Leagues in some locales maintain the Volunteer Center as an ongoing service.

American Red Cross chapters also have a long and pivotal history of support to the Volunteer Center concept. In some communities, the Red Cross chapter actually operates as a Volunteer Center, recruiting people to be volunteers, orienting them to volunteerism, and then placing them with not-for-profit agencies.

A few Volunteer Centers operate as part of municipal government, frequently out of the mayor's office.

There is some question about the number of formal Volunteer Centers in operation. In 1987, VOLUNTEER estimated that approximately 300 Volunteer Centers were operating in the United States. There are Volunteer Centers throughout Canada and Great Britain which also benefit from a network of “Volunteer Bureaux” coordinated by The Volunteer Centre in Great Britain. Similar clearinghouses can be found in other European countries, though not as diversified in their services as in England, Canada, or the United States.

The problem with estimating the number of Volunteer Centers is that they are not all “registered” anywhere (especially if they are still in the developmental stage) and because so many volunteer coordinating efforts are not independent. Thus, if a local Red Cross chapter is serving its community by recruiting and placing volunteers as just described, it is functioning as a Volunteer Center, but may not be identified as such in any directory. Similarly, not all Junior League volunteer efforts are specifically designated as Volunteer Centers. The number of groups and organizations in the United States whose goals embrace mobilizing volunteers on behalf of community agencies is probably closer to 600.

Regardless of the number accepted, there are still far more cities and towns without a Volunteer Center than with one. Despite more than 50 years of history, the concept of Volunteer Centers has yet to receive support in many communities.

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\*Throughout this book, Volunteer Center, or Center, will be used to refer to all of these entities.

## **Volunteerism on the Horizon**

The following pages will discuss the enormous changes and important trends occurring in volunteering, volunteer programs, and in the types of people who volunteer. Perhaps now more than ever, the concept of a Volunteer Center makes sense for every American community. It certainly meshes with United Ways' Second Century Initiative goal of doubling "volunteer capacity." People need to be asked to volunteer and then supported in their work. An effective Volunteer Center does both.

The limited growth of Volunteer Centers is not an indictment of the services they have provided. It is, rather, an indication that a wider effort is needed to demonstrate the full impact of volunteering—beyond social work—in our society. Limited growth is also a result of unwillingness to spend money on what is seen as a "free" resource. The funds and effort expended on promoting volunteering are returned many times over in the value of the services provided by the right volunteers in the right assignments. There is a vital future for creative and up-to-date Volunteer Centers.

## **2: The Important Rationale**

### **Why Have a Volunteer Center?**

There are some who might question the basic rationale for expending United Way monies on a Volunteer Center. Part of the answer is that active citizen participation does not just happen by chance. People need assistance in finding volunteer opportunities. For the United Way to be a catalyst for community problem solving, it must bring people and needs together—which is exactly what a Volunteer Center does.

Here are a few key reasons to start a Volunteer Center:

#### **Volunteer Network Access:**

The delivery of services has become complex and most people are unaware of the many different types of organizations that could benefit from the help of volunteers. A Volunteer Center provides a genuine "community service" by making sure that those who are interested in giving of their time and talent know where to offer them.

#### **Strong Service Delivery System:**

No not-for-profit organization can survive without some form of volunteer support. At a minimum, all not-for-profit agencies have volunteer boards of directors. Further, in the vast majority of agencies, volunteers provide direct services to agency clients, and volunteers are involved in all types of fund raising. This means that when a United Way supports a Volunteer Center, United Way is providing an additional substantive form of assistance to every agency it supports with dollars, as well as to the broader agency community.

#### **Effective Volunteer Program Management:**

One of the goals of many United Ways is to strengthen the management of not-for-profit organizations. The management of volunteers is a critical, too often invisible, element in overall agency administration. Because volunteers are the "nonsalaried personnel" of an agency, Volunteer Centers focus on encouraging and aiding effective management of volunteer efforts and this, in turn, translates into better-managed human service delivery on all levels.

**Fund-Raising Support:**

A number of surveys (including those by Gallup and by Yankelovich noted in Appendix B) have shown that people who volunteer for organizations ultimately donate money to the organizations as well. It is logical that when a person gives time to a group and sees the important work being done, he or she may be more willing to provide financial support. What this means to the United Way is that a Volunteer Center successful at mobilizing volunteers—especially people not previously involved—ultimately increases the fund-raising level of a community.

**Coalition Building:**

United Ways have become more inclusive—of people and agencies—in an effort to serve the whole community, to serve as a catalyst for community change, and to link community resources to one another. To meet this goal, a Volunteer Center can and should be a source of information and help to organizations beyond the funding scope of the United Way. The Volunteer Center can offer meaningful help to groups that the United Way cannot fund with dollars—and thereby also bring such groups and their resources into contact with the United Way. This includes cultural-arts organizations, government programs, and cause-related groups that do not come under the umbrella of the United Way—but which are very much concerned with maintaining a volunteer force. Because United Way seeks to address community problems by bringing together the full range of a community's resources, a Volunteer Center can be integral in locating everyone who could work together toward mutual goals.

**Community Problem Solving:**

Volunteering gives everyone a chance to be involved and make a difference, regardless of their financial ability. The Volunteer Center assists all individuals to have an impact, as active volunteers, on the issues that concern them most. Volunteering is a form of empowerment.

**Inclusiveness:**

Finally, a Volunteer Center is a service for the full spectrum of our society because it involves people of all ages, both sexes, and every conceivable background.

### Possible Issues

In planning for a Volunteer Center, certain obstacles might surface. It is important to consider these issues and formulate reasonable responses to them. By doing so, obstacles can be transformed into opportunities.

Issues might include:

1. If a United Way attempts to add the responsibilities for a Volunteer Center to the job of existing staff, there may be concern that this will "divert" the staff from doing other United Way work. On the other hand, if new personnel are hired to staff the Volunteer Center, there may be concern that their attention will be focused mainly on helping with in-house United Way volunteers, rather than serving the community at large.
2. Some might raise the issue that a Volunteer Center is a direct service and that the United Way should not be providing direct services. However, this is similar to arguments about the Information and Referral (I&R) function and other services appropriate for a full-service United Way. In fact, a Volunteer Center is a specialized form of I&R, linking resources to needs.
3. Because Volunteer Centers encourage a wide diversity of organizations to list volunteer jobs, the Volunteer Center's list will go far beyond United Way-funded agencies to include special interest groups, neighborhood groups, and advocacy organizations. It is possible that a Volunteer Center might therefore find itself in the position of assisting programs or agencies that are somewhat controversial. Some controversy may be unavoidable if a Volunteer Center meets its legitimate mandate of serving the full scope of volunteerism. A United Way needs to consider this issue and its position carefully and early in the planning stages.

4. Depending on the volunteerism groups already operating in a community, there might be some concern that the United Way is "competing" with existing agencies. Clearly, the level of such concern will vary with each community.

The United Way needs to be clear about the role and mission of the Volunteer Center. If the Volunteer Center is viewed as a mobilizer of the widest possible range of community resources, then it will be seen as a major partner in the team effort of the other divisions of United Way and of the other community groups involved in volunteerism.

Leaders are fond of saying that "money cannot do it alone." That is precisely the premise upon which every Volunteer Center operates.

### **3: A Vision of Volunteerism: The Full Scope**

Volunteers have historically been inseparable from the United Way movement. In taking on the ambitious goal of doubling volunteer capacity, United Ways recognize the important role volunteers play in our organizations and communities. United Ways are looking to identify and expand the full range of volunteer resources in their communities.

#### **The Value of Volunteers**

Before a United Way can plan for a Volunteer Center, it must be able to articulate the reasons why volunteers are so important. Too frequently, volunteering is viewed as a substitute for adequate funding of human-service programs. In reality, volunteers are necessary even when funding is adequate. This is because volunteers bring a dimension to human services that is very different from that brought by paid staff.

- Extra hands and the potential to do more than could be done simply with limited salaried staff; this "more" might mean an increased amount of service, expanded hours of operation, or different/new types of services.
- Diversity; volunteers may be different from the salaried staff in terms of age, race, social background, income, educational level, etc. This translates into many more points of view and perhaps even a sort of checks and balances to the danger of the staff becoming myopic or inbred.
- Skills that augment the ones salaried staff already possess. Ideally, volunteers are recruited exactly because the salaried staff cannot have every skill or talent necessary to do all aspects of the job. These skills can be very concrete such as being bilingual, knowing how to dry herbs, or being able to produce a newsletter. Or, they can be less tangible, such as being able to relate to teenagers or the disabled.
- Access to the community, because most volunteers live nearby (as does the salaried staff, but their credibility is often less than that of volunteers). This also means good public relations, in that happy volunteers will speak well of the organization to their neighbors.

- The option to focus intensively on a particular issue or client, even to the exclusion of everything else. This is a luxury of concentration and time not normally justifiable for the salaried staff, while volunteers can actually be recruited to provide such individualized attention.
- In addition to all of the above, studies have shown that satisfied volunteers frequently are so supportive of the organizations with which they serve that they become donors of money and goods as well. They also support special events and fundraisers by attending themselves and bringing along family and friends.\*

These are some of the reasons why agencies would want to involve volunteers regardless of funding level. However, this does not even begin to address the reasons why individuals want to volunteer. It is true that, as volunteers, people have the opportunity to share their skills, support causes in which they believe, gain work experience, and have fun—plus a long list of other very powerful motivators. We'll return to this point in the section on how to recruit volunteers.

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\*Susan J. Ellis, *From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success*, ENERGIZE Books, 1986.

The following are the unique qualities volunteers offer an organization—qualities so special to volunteers that paying a salary negates or changes them completely:

- Volunteers have **credibility because they are unsalaried**. Paid staff are always perceived as “spokespeople” with a degree of *vested interest* in the outcome of a legislative hearing or funding proposal, since their livelihood depends upon the outcome. Volunteers, because their motivation is not profit-oriented, are seen by donors, clients, legislators, and the public as more objective and even as more sincere. This is what makes them such a public-relations asset.

Note that this perception of volunteers as having no vested interest sometimes has nothing to do with the truth. For example, if a volunteer’s grandmother founded the organization, then s/he has a different form of “vested interest”! Also, if s/he has been on the board for 20 years, objectivity may be questionable. But the fact remains that the *perception and assumption* of the listener or recipient are that the volunteer is more credible.

- Another version of this is that receiving assistance from a volunteer (rather than from a salaried staff member) **makes a difference to the recipient**. Many consumers are distrustful of salaried service providers and are therefore more likely to believe and follow a volunteer’s suggestions.

In some circumstances, the important factor is the feeling that the volunteer is doing the task willingly—voluntarily—while the salaried staff are simply “doing a job.” This is why prisoners, for example, are more willing to talk with volunteer visitors than with guards or state social workers. It is why patients in hospitals are more cheered by the visit of a volunteer than a nurse: volunteers demonstrate that neighbors have not forgotten them nor are they “turned off” by their illness. Nurses, on the other hand, must provide service, regardless of their personal feelings about the patient.

Finally, some programs, such as one-to-one home visitation or Big Brothers/Big Sisters, would change radically in their purpose without volunteers. If we salary a Big Brother, we give the child another baby-sitter. The very word “brother” in the volunteer’s title indicates that the service is not based on its being a “job.” The same idea is at work with the title of “friendly visitor.”

- Volunteers are valuable as **objective policy makers** and would therefore still be involved as members of boards of directors. Since the ultimate power of a board is to close the agency, it is clear that such decision making should be done by people who are not personally affected by such an action nor by less drastic measures such as cutting some programs, etc. Also, the objectivity of volunteers is aided by not being on-site full time. Distance provides perspective.

- Volunteers are more **free to criticize** than are salaried staff. Again, this is a function of being outside the career ladder, without promotion-seeking concerns that are often legitimate for the salaried staff.

- Because volunteers are not dependent upon the organization for their livelihood, they can approach assignments with **less pressure** and stress, often an asset in accomplishing the tasks to be done.

- Because volunteers are always “**private citizens**,” they are free to contact legislators, newspapers, etc., in a way the salaried staff may not be permitted to do. Volunteers can be powerful advocates. Similarly, though volunteers act as “agents” of your organization, they have more flexibility in cutting through some of the red tape of bureaucratic systems, political boundaries, and other artificial barriers.

- Volunteers can **experiment** with new ideas and service approaches that are not yet ready to be funded—or that no one wants to fund for a wide variety of reasons. Historically, in fact, volunteers have always been the pioneers in creating new services, often against the tide of more traditional institutions.\*

\*Reprinted with permission from Susan J. Ellis, *From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success*. Philadelphia, ENERGIZE Books, 1986, pp. 6-8.

## **The Scope of Volunteerism**

In thinking about the development of a Volunteer Center, a United Way should be aware of the full scope of volunteerism. Only when all the possible definitions of "volunteering" are recognized can a Volunteer Center truly activate all possible human resources.

Unfortunately, stereotypes about volunteers persist. Many people think of volunteers as middle-class women with lots of free time. It is true that agencies *have* benefited from the services of volunteers with this profile, but it is absolutely incorrect to draw the conclusion that all volunteers have the same characteristics. For example, men have always been volunteers—they have simply been called "coaches, trustees, and firemen."

The accompanying table shows data on the profile of volunteers gathered by the Gallup Poll under the direction of the Independent Sector in 1985. These statistics demonstrate how widespread volunteering is throughout our population.



**Table 1**  
**Volunteers: Proportion Volunteering**  
**Past 12 Months by Selected Demographic**  
**Characteristics\***

Characteristics	October 1985	March 1981
All	18%	52%
Sex		
Male	45	47
Female	51	56
Age		
14-17	52	53
18-24	43	54
25-34	53	NA
25-64	51	55
35-49	54	NA
50-64	44	NA
65 and older	38	37
65-74	43	NA
75 and older	26	NA
Color		
White	49	54
Black and other races	38	41
Marital status		
Married	52	53
Single	39	58
Divorced/separated/widowed	39	42
Employment		
Full-time	49	55
Part-time	62	65
Education		
Grade school	29	26
Some high school	38	31
4-year high school	46	54
College, less than 4 years	61	65
College, 4 years or more	65	75
Income		
Under \$10,000	40%	36%
\$10,000-\$19,999	42	49
\$20,000-\$29,999	44	NA
\$20,000-\$39,999	52	64
\$30,000-\$39,999	64	NA
\$40,000-\$49,999	67	NA
\$50,000+	60	62
Children under 18 in house		
Yes	54	57
No	42	48
Region		
East	43	51
Midwest	52	54
South	44	48
West	54	57

\*Americans Volunteer 1985. Independent Sector, Washington, D.C., 1986.

The labeling of one's public service as volunteering or as something else is not to be taken lightly. For example, a wide variety of professions encourage community service activities but call this "*pro bono publico*" work. Similarly, colleges and universities have always expected students to do various types of community activities but have frequently used terminology such as "service learning" or "internships" rather than "volunteering" because they are using vocabulary that defines the students' volunteer activities from the perspective of educational benefits to the student.

Further, every community benefits from the activities of many all-volunteer membership organizations and associations. While some of these are incorporated as 501(c)(3) organizations and others are less formalized, they all represent a vital way that people take on volunteer service projects.

It would be important for any Volunteer Center to include services to such organizations. This is one area that has hardly been touched by existing Volunteer Centers and is an example of the way in which the Second Century Initiative can be met. There are large numbers of membership organizations that are seeking meaningful projects to tackle, and a Volunteer Center could direct them into service needs identified by United Way and the agencies in its constituency.

While United Way is most concerned with human-service agencies, volunteers participate in just about every aspect of community life. This is one reason that this handbook uses the term "volunteerism" rather than "voluntarism." "Voluntarism" is a term appropriately applied in discussions of the independent sector, in reference to the voluntary nature of the not-for-profit sector. The word "volunteerism" focuses on the individual act of volunteering without regard to the setting in which the work takes place—which may not be in the voluntary sector.

For example, there is a great deal of volunteer involvement in government at all levels, including parks and recreation, courts and corrections, federal tax assistance, etc. The cultural arts could hardly survive without volunteer support. Environmental protection organizations, animal rights groups, and a host of other cause-related organizations also depend on volunteer involvement. For that matter, all political parties depend on the efforts of volunteers.

Finally, it should not be overlooked that religion in the United States is largely a matter of voluntary participation. All churches, synagogues, mosques, or religious groups rely on the support and activities of their members to accomplish their work.

When a community is viewed from the volunteer perspective, it becomes hard not to recognize the instrumental role volunteers play in daily life. A Volunteer Center is in the middle of all this activity. Whether the volunteering is long-term, such as visiting regularly with a homebound person, or is one-time, such as marching in a commemorative parade, the Volunteer Center has a role.

One more trend is worth mentioning here. Over the last two decades, the profession of "volunteer administration" has emerged. Increasing numbers of organizations now hire salaried Directors of Volunteers to develop volunteer programs on a part- or full-time basis. Increased numbers of full-time employees involved in the administration of volunteer programs mean an expanded market for Volunteer Center services.

## **New Types of Volunteers**

In recent years, the volunteer world has expanded to include categories of volunteers that might still be controversial to those who believe that a volunteer is simply an "unpaid worker."

### **"Court-Ordered" Volunteers**

For example, many communities now have some form of court-ordered public service, sometimes known as "alternative sentencing" or "public restitution" programs. In such projects, people convicted of minor crimes are offered the opportunity to perform a certain number of hours of volunteer work in lieu of a fine or a jail term.

Though there is some debate as to whether or not this type of public service is voluntary, the fact remains that Volunteer Centers have a unique role to play in assisting the court system to find the best placements for such citizens. Early studies show that a high percentage of people who begin volunteering under a court order continue to volunteer after their allotted time has been completed, suggesting that alternative sentencing programs are adding to the pool of community resources for the long term.\*

### **"Transitional" Volunteers**

The mental-health system has also begun to rely on volunteer assignments as a transitional therapeutic opportunity for people who are coping with a variety of problems. These range from drug or alcohol abuse rehabilitation to recovering from the death of a loved one. In many cases, the person is not yet ready for a full-time salaried job, but finds volunteering a marvelous way to gain confidence while also contributing something meaningful to an organization.

### **Unemployed Volunteers**

Volunteering has value for the unemployed, too. For some, volunteer work is a morale booster and a way to fill the gap of unemployed time on a resume. For others, volunteering holds the potential of retraining for new job paths.

### **Youth Service Volunteers**

There will likely be even more variations on the theme of "volunteering" in the years to come. The various proponents of a "National Youth Service" see such a plan as a way to make sure that all young adults contribute to their communities. While the various proposals for National Youth Service range from purely volunteer-type assignments to stipended or hourly wage plans, there is no doubt that if such a program passes Congress, there will be a tremendous need for information about volunteer opportunities for young people. It seems clear that Volunteer Centers will be in the forefront of Youth Service placements.

The implication of all this is that an effective Volunteer Center must have a vision of volunteerism that encompasses the broadest possible definition of the term. In fact, this handbook encourages a Volunteer Center to concern itself with any potential resource in a community—anything that can provide assistance with a minimum of real dollars. On the day-to-day level, the various special types of volunteers just described might require some adapted management techniques, but they have needs similar to any "traditional" volunteer.

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\*Note: Twenty-six United Way Volunteer Centers reported administration of a court-referred volunteer program in 1986.

## **In the Future**

The Volunteer Center can look to a number of still underutilized target audiences as potential volunteers:

- Family units and children themselves. The youngest end of the age spectrum is too often left out of participation in problem solving, and the concept of families spending time together in community service has only recently been promoted.
- Disabled people. Increasingly, those with special needs want recognition for their many abilities rather than for their physical differences.
- More active older Americans. Our ideas about retired people and older Americans will change radically. Many believe that older Americans will become the backbone of direct voluntary service, though current statistics show this age group (55 and older) is still underinvolved in volunteering.
- Homebound persons have much to give. With off-site computer access and other technological changes, off-site volunteering can be a rewarding enterprise for those who cannot travel to a volunteer site.
- Mid-life career changers, for whom volunteering is an innovative and often risk-free way to test new career paths.
- Individuals who want to contribute to a cause but do not want to be connected to a structured agency.
- New Americans, who bring diversity of experience and talent, and for whom volunteering is an avenue to joining a community.

There is also much to be done to enable the full involvement of minority populations, whether this means race, religion, or ethnic background. Helping others is a universal desire. The Volunteer Center must find ways to translate—literally and figuratively—the language of volunteerism to all people.

## Chapter II: Planning for a Volunteer Center

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### 4: Current Resource Assessment

The very first step in planning for a Volunteer Center is to identify current volunteerism resources in your community—who is doing what now? There may very well be groups who are providing leadership in volunteerism and who might be concerned if the United Way plunges into forming a Volunteer Center without recognizing what already exists. These are the very groups a United Way Volunteer Center would need as a supportive network on a daily basis. The goal, of course, is to fill a gap in community services, not to duplicate the efforts of others.

Here is a checklist you can use to assess your local volunteer resources:

1. How many agencies are you aware of that have some sort of formal volunteer program and/or a salaried Director of Volunteers? What kind of agencies are these? How many of them receive funds from United Way?
2. How far away is the nearest Volunteer Center? Does it currently handle any requests from your community?
3. Are there any specialized volunteer recruitment and placement programs operating in your community? Examples would be: Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP); Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) (for small business consultation); Accountants for the Public Interest; Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts or Business Volunteers for the Arts.
4. Does the United Way Information and Referral service presently collect any information related to volunteers or volunteer opportunities?
5. How has your United Way handled volunteer-related questions in the past?
6. Are any workshops or courses in volunteer management or leadership offered in your area? Are they offered by:
  - a) An area college?
  - b) A community college or junior college?
  - c) Large volunteer-using agencies such as Red Cross?
  - d) All-volunteer groups such as the Junior League or Kiwanis?
  - e) State government?
  - f) Regional clusters of national groups such as the Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA)?
  - g) A community-leadership training group?
  - h) Private consultants?
  - i) United Way itself?
7. Is there a "State Office of Volunteerism" in your state?

A State Office is a coordinating body generally operating out of the Governor's Office or in a State Department. It serves as a support mechanism for the activities of volunteer projects in a state. Approximately 30 states have such an office (which may have a different name, such as the "Governor's Office for Volunteer Services" or some other variation on the theme). If you are in one of the states that has such an office, you will find this to be an important group with which to touch base early on.\*

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\*A list of state offices of volunteerism can be obtained from the Volunteer and Outreach Services Department, United Way of America.

8. Is there a "State Association" for Volunteerism or for Volunteer Administrators in your state?

This is a membership organization of individuals and groups who share a common concern for volunteer activities. Often, such state associations will sponsor training events and other types of self-help programs. There may be a state association, whether there is a State Office of Volunteerism or not. Again, such groups go by many different names.

9. Does your Mayor's Office have anyone who is responsible for volunteers on a citywide basis?

There may even be a Mayor's "Office for Voluntary Action." Such an office coordinates volunteers specifically for work on behalf of local government services but may also refer people to various community agencies.

10. Is there a "DOVIA" in your community?

A DOVIA is an organization of Directors of Volunteers in Agencies who meet regularly to share experiences and obtain training in volunteer management. (DOVIA is a generic name and the group in your area may use another title.) A DOVIA is an important resource to tap if one exists.

11. Does your community have a "Corporate Volunteer Council" (CVC)?

A CVC is a membership group made up of people from corporations who are responsible for running their companies' employee volunteer programs.

12. Is there an affiliate of the American Society of Directors of Volunteer Services (ASDVS) of the American Hospital Association in your state? Is there a chapter in your geographic area?

ASDVS is the professional association for Directors of Volunteers in hospitals.

13. Is there some sort of "President's Council" in your community?

This would be an umbrella association of the leaders of all-volunteer membership groups, particularly civic associations.

14. Is there a "Church Council" or some type of ecumenical church/synagogue leadership organization?

15. Given your responses to the preceding questions, is there any indication that any of the above collaborate on projects or are coordinated in any way?

After answering these questions, you can rate your community as to its existing volunteerism services: whether there is a lack of services, a moderate number of services, or a large number of services; and whether or not these are coordinated. Your assessment is a critical first step in defining the type of Volunteer Center you want.

Once you have identified existing resources, it is probably also helpful to consider which of these groups, if any, might oppose the United Way moving into a prominent position in the coordination of volunteer effort. By identifying any organization that might see a United Way Volunteer Center as threatening, you will be able to anticipate and alleviate possible concerns from the very beginning. You can expect many community agencies to be pleased to take part in the planning process if asked. They can provide valuable input based on their prior experience in handling some of the work that the Volunteer Center might now do.

### **Checklist for Community Resource Assessment**

1. How many agencies are you aware of that have some sort of formal volunteer program and/or a salaried Director of Volunteers? Which kinds of agencies are these? How many of them receive funds from the United Way?
2. How far away is the nearest Volunteer Center? Does it currently handle any requests from your community?
3. Are there any specialized volunteer recruitment and placement programs?
4. Does the United Way Information and Referral service presently collect any information related to volunteers or volunteer opportunities?
5. How has your United Way handled volunteer-related questions in the past?
6. Are any workshops or courses in volunteer management or leadership offered in your area?
7. Is there a "State Office of Volunteerism" in your state?
8. Is there a "State Association" for Volunteerism or Volunteer Administrators in your state?
9. Does your Mayor's Office have anyone who is responsible for volunteers on a citywide basis?
10. Is there a "DOVIA" in your community?
11. Is there a "Corporate Volunteer Council?"
12. Is there an affiliate of the American Society for Directors of Volunteer Services of the American Hospital Association in your state? Is there a chapter in your geographic area?
13. Is there some sort of "President's Council" in your community?
14. Is there a Council of Churches or some type of ecumenical church/synagogue leadership organization?
15. Given your responses to the above questions, is there any indication that any of the above collaborate on projects or are coordinated in any way?

## 5: Defining the Volunteer Center's Mission and Priorities

### Select the Planning Committee

Whether you recruit your planning committee before, during or after the examination of possible constituents (see Chapter II: Section 6; "Possible Constituents"), it is vital to form the committee before articulating the Volunteer Center's mission. Select representatives from the four major constituent categories and from the existing volunteerism resources you identified in Chapter II: Section 4. By recruiting this planning group, you will demonstrate United Way's desire to work with already-established organizations, rather than to proceed unilaterally.



#### Four Major Constituents of a Volunteer Center:

- The SETTINGS in which volunteers work;
- The SOURCES from which volunteers are drawn;
- The LEADERS of volunteers; and
- The VOLUNTEERS themselves.

Regardless of the general makeup of the planning committee, it is important to include several United Way board members from the start. If the Volunteer Center is to be an integral part of your United Way, it will need to draw on United Way resources and add to United Way services. The board must therefore provide leadership in the Volunteer Center's early stages.

Later we will discuss the formation of an ongoing Advisory Council for the Volunteer Center. You may want to ask some of the members of the planning committee to join the Council, but do not feel compelled to create a team of long-term advisors right away. Give yourself the freedom to determine your continuing needs after the initial planning is completed.

### The Mission of the United Way

Before attempting to define the mission of your Volunteer Center, examine the mission statement and goals of your United Way. Are volunteers mentioned? Is there anything about "promoting and encouraging" voluntary efforts? If so, then the mission of the Volunteer Center should reflect this aspect of the United Way's purpose. If not, the United Way should integrate volunteerism into its goals. One reason this manual recommends that members of the United Way board of directors serve on the Volunteer Center planning committee is to have direct access to the board to advocate for volunteerism.

The Second Century Initiative encourages and supports efforts to incorporate increased volunteering into United Way plans for the immediate and long-term future. So do the current United Way of America *Standards of Excellence*<sup>\*</sup>, which strongly support a coordinating body such as a Volunteer Center.

<sup>\*</sup>United Way of America *Standards of Excellence*; published in the fourth quarter, 1988.



## Volunteer Development

The role of the Volunteer Center is also to ensure that every community has an organized capacity to inspire and mobilize people to care for one another through individual voluntary initiative as well as through organized voluntary action.

### *Suggested Elements*

A. Develop, support, and maintain a community-based system which assures effective deployment of volunteers to both United Way-supported agencies and other nonprofit organizations. The system should include programs for volunteer recruitment, training, referral, and/or placement, follow-up/evaluation, and recognition.

It should also effectively target for greater involvement those markets critical to United Way's future, including: youth, employees of for-profit and nonprofit organizations, retirees, minority populations, and new Americans (permanent residents and immigrants).

B. Develop and maintain United Way's capacity to recruit, train, place, recognize, and track their own volunteers. This system should:

1. Have organization-wide application, covering volunteers involved in all United Way activities or functions.
2. Provide for greater volunteer development through systematic "volunteer career planning," especially for key volunteer positions.
3. Provide for easy exchange among United Ways of information about volunteers who move/are transferred in or out of communities.

C. Develop programming aimed at strengthening volunteer leadership for non-profit groups through effective board training and placement programs. This should involve:

1. Delivery or sponsorship of high-quality volunteer leadership training programs targeted to members of not-for-profit boards and aimed at producing stronger board stewardship, responsibility, and governance.
2. Development and/or support of board banks through which qualified volunteers are placed for board service assignments.

D. Promote widespread community support for and commitment to the intrinsic values of volunteerism and voluntarism through effective year-round public education efforts.

E. Develop and maintain a comprehensive data base on state-of-the-art volunteer management practices and the field of volunteerism.\*

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\*United Way of America *Standards of Excellence*.

## **The Volunteer Center's Mission Statement**

A number of years ago, ENERGIZE Associates helped the board of directors of an existing Volunteer Center reassess that Center's mission. At that time, ENERGIZE led the board through a series of exercises to produce a mission statement which has been reworded to serve as an example here:

The Volunteer Center is dedicated to support, to promote, and to foster volunteerism in (geographic area): by serving the full range of the volunteer community, including the settings in which volunteers are active, the sources from which volunteers are drawn, the leadership of volunteers, and volunteers themselves; and by serving as a catalyst for action and the exchange of information about the creative and effective utilization of volunteers. The Volunteer Center will initiate projects beyond the scope and ability of any one agency, group or person, and that extend the capability of the volunteer community and enhance its visibility.

Note the elements of this statement: all four constituent categories (see Section 6: Possible Constituencies); the role of catalyst; the desire to do what single agencies cannot do alone. This statement is focused but also broad enough to encompass a wide range of services and projects. Most important, your Volunteer Center mission should reflect the priorities of your community.

## **Priority Goals**

Once a mission statement has been articulated, the next step is to establish long-range goals, which means selecting priority audiences and programs. As priorities are selected, it may be useful to develop criteria for your choices. The following is a starter list of such criteria:

1. Does this activity promote or help volunteerism in our area?
2. Does our Volunteer Center have the resources—in terms of staff expertise, support services necessary, and dollars—to provide this service?
3. Can success be measured in short-term as well as long-term intervals? Can quantity and quality of service be measured?
4. Do we know if anyone needs or wants this service?
5. Is any other organization already providing this service? If so, what must the Volunteer Center do to avoid duplicating a service or providing unwarranted competition?
6. Should fees be charged for this service? Can the project be supported through special grants or donations?
7. Does this service extend the capacity of agencies to utilize volunteers and perform services? Does the service offer agencies something one agency could not do for itself?
8. How long will it take to initiate this service and make it visible?
9. Does this service have a "multiplier effect"? Will it stimulate the development of other projects?
10. Does this service demonstrate effective utilization of volunteers?


There are few “bad choices” that can be made in selecting priorities for the Volunteer Center. In most communities, a great deal needs to be done to promote volunteerism, and almost any effort toward that end will be helpful. The key is to avoid duplicating existing efforts or allowing service gaps to continue. The priority-setting task, therefore, becomes an exercise in community needs assessment—what does your community genuinely need/want most in support of volunteerism?

Because excellent guides have already been written on community needs assessment, we will not repeat such strategies here. Similarly, United Ways already know much about determining long- and short-range goals and objectives to assure impact and measurability.\* Therefore, this manual offers what does not already exist in print: the choices available for Volunteer Center constituencies and services.

## 6: Possible Constituencies

Once you have identified your community’s present volunteerism resources and identified a committee of planners for development of a mission statement, the next task is to determine *exactly* what the mission of your Volunteer Center should be and how this relates to the mission of United Way. The planning group should be representative of the various constituencies that the Volunteer Center will serve . . . and therefore it is important to know who those constituents will be.

In considering the possible constituencies of any Volunteer Center, there are four major categories that define the dimensions of volunteerism in a community.



### **Four Major Constituents of a Volunteer Center:**

- The SETTINGS in which volunteers work;
- The SOURCES from which volunteers are drawn;
- The LEADERS of volunteers; and
- The VOLUNTEERS themselves.

If the initial planning body is made up of people who can reasonably represent the perspectives of these four categories, then the United Way can be assured of a well-rounded discussion. Other points of view can be sought out through surveys and interviews.

\*United Way of America publications are available through the United Way Resource Catalog or from the Community Initiatives Division, United Way of America. (See Appendix B.)

## **Enormous Scope of Possible Audiences**

Each of the four major categories encompasses a wide range of possible constituents. The accompanying worksheets can be used by the planning group to identify the full range of constituents, audiences, and target markets for the Volunteer Center.

These worksheets should be used with Chapter III (Volunteer Center Service Options) to focus on the program choices open to the Volunteer Center. Only by working through all of the options can the planning group articulate a mission for the Volunteer Center that allows for the successful development of some or all of these services. Then, as long- and short-range goals are selected, each possibility can be weighed according to its value to the particular community and its feasibility for your Volunteer Center.

As these various categories are examined, also consider the variable of geography. Will your Volunteer Center serve the same geographic boundaries as the United Way? Or will the area served be smaller or larger?

## **Possible Restrictions**

Spend time carefully considering if there are any restrictions you wish to place on the possible volunteer settings, sources, or programs to be served by the Volunteer Center. Why would a Volunteer Center place restrictions on certain organizations? The most common concerns revolve around recognition:

- That the group is partisan in its politics;
- That the group serves only one religion, one race, or adopts generally exclusionary policies; or
- That the group is for-profit and therefore volunteers might only be involved in carefully selected assignments, if at all.

While these concerns may seem reasonable on the surface, the Volunteer Center's planners should weigh the benefits of being selective versus the benefits of including as many perspectives as possible.

As always, there are choices for the type of restrictions that can be applied:

1. The Volunteer Center can simply not serve a particular type of organization.
2. "Passive" or "reactive" services only can be offered, such as placing any group in the Volunteer Center's directory simply because they ask to be included.
3. The Volunteer Center can actively identify certain types of organizations by using qualifying language in its directory (this is something similar to the model of the Better Business Bureau).
4. Even if the Volunteer Center does not serve certain groups by referring volunteers, it may still wish to maintain information on them and link them into community "partnerships" that will be stimulated.

**Instructions for Using the Worksheets:  
Possible Volunteer Center Constituencies**

1. Convene a group or committee to focus on the need to identify Volunteer Center constituents.
2. Go through the list in the "Range of Possibilities" column, item by item, and be sure everyone understands each group. Initially vote a simple "yes" or "no" for whether each group is indeed a possibility. Next to each group note any concerns expressed by the committee and note if any restrictions were suggested. If a "no" vote occurs, be sure to record why.
3. Then take all the "yes" items in each category and prioritize them. This can be done by ranking everything from one to whichever number would be the last, or by first indicating which items fall into "top" priority, into "moderate" priority, or into "low" priority assessment. Again, use the last column to explain strong feelings in either direction. If there is time, return to the "top priority" group and assign these ranked numbers in order of importance.

## Worksheet for Possible Volunteer Center Constituencies

Yes/No	Category	Range of Possibilities	Priority Ranking	Concerns/Restriction Comments
	1. SETTINGS	<p>A. Voluntary, not-for-profit agencies in human-service delivery:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. United Way affiliate</li> <li>2. Non-United Way affiliate</li> </ol>		
		<p>B. Voluntary, not-for-profit agencies in fields other than human-services, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arts/culture</li> <li>2. Civic improvement</li> <li>3. Public health and safety (e.g., ambulance corps)</li> <li>4. Management assistance programs, including those already utilizing volunteers as consultants: SCORE, VISTA, Business Volunteers for the Arts, Executive Service Corps, etc.</li> <li>5. Zoos, botanical gardens, public buildings</li> <li>6. Other: _____</li> </ol>		
		<p>C. Governmental agencies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Human-service related, includes:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Schools</li> <li>b. Courts/probation/parole</li> <li>c. Prisons</li> <li>d. Family and child services</li> <li>e. Public welfare</li> <li>f. Senior citizen services</li> <li>g. Mental health facilities</li> <li>h. Various institutions</li> </ol> </li> </ol>		

## Worksheet for Possible Volunteer Center Constituencies

Yes/No	Category	Range of Possibilities	Priority Ranking	Concerns/Restriction Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Other fields of service, includes:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Parks and recreation</li> <li>b. Commerce</li> <li>c. Small-business services</li> <li>d. Streets and maintenance</li> <li>e. Citizen complaints</li> <li>f. Information and referral</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Municipal level</li> <li>4. County level</li> <li>5. State level (particularly if offices are located in the community)</li> <li>6. National level (particularly if offices located in the community)</li> </ul>		
		<p>D. All-volunteer organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Incorporated associations</li> <li>2. Nonincorporated but structured groups</li> <li>3. Informal, neighborhood groups</li> <li>4. Self-help groups</li> <li>5. Activist organizations</li> </ul>		
		E. Political parties		
		<p>F. Proprietary care providers (e.g., privately owned and managed, such as some hospitals and nursing homes)</p>		
		<p>G. Businesses needing consulting assistance or offering internships</p>		
		<p>H. Annual special events, such as charity golf tournaments, historic re-enactments, etc.</p>		

### Worksheet for Possible Volunteer Center Constituencies

Yes/No	Category	Range of Possibilities	Priority Ranking	Concerns/Restriction Comments
		I. Settings <i>with</i> established volunteer programs		
		J. Settings <i>without</i> established volunteer programs		
		K. Other: _____		
	2. SOURCES	A. The public-at-large (anyone)		
		B. Special target audiences of the public, including: 1. Children and youth 2. Seniors 3. Families 4. Young professionals 5. The disabled 6. Ethnic or racial minorities 7. New Americans		
		C. The for-profit sector 1. Large corporations 2. Mid-sized or regional corporations 3. Small businesses 4. Partnerships/single practices/self-employed 5. Proprietary (private) human-service providers 6. Professional firms 7. Professional societies and associations		
		D. Labor unions		
		E. Schools (all levels), colleges, and universities. 1. For-credit programs 2. Career exploration 3. Service clubs 4. Volunteer programs		



### Worksheet for Possible Volunteer Center Constituencies

Yes/No	Category	Range of Possibilities	Priority Ranking	Concerns/Restriction Comments
		F. Churches, synagogues, and other places of worship		
		G. Rehabilitation programs, including: 1. Court-referred, alternative sentencing 2. Probation, parole, prison programs 3. Mental health transitional programs 4. Addiction recovery		
		H. Work training programs		
		I. All-volunteer membership organizations, especially those seeking community service projects		
		J. Sources seeking volunteer opportunities		
		K. Sources as yet unaware of volunteer opportunities		
		L. Other: _____		

### Worksheet for Possible Volunteer Center Constituencies

Yes/No	Category	Range of Possibilities	Priority Ranking	Concerns/Restriction Comments
	3. LEADERSHIP	A. Directors of volunteers in agencies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Salaried</li> <li>2. Volunteer</li> <li>3. Full-time</li> <li>4. Part-time, but focused on their volunteer management function</li> <li>5. Part-time re: volunteers, but also handling other tasks in their agencies</li> </ol>		
		B. Officers of all-volunteer associations		
		C. Officers of not-for-profit boards of directors		
		D. People who manage volunteers but do not necessarily identify themselves as directors of volunteers, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Political campaign managers</li> <li>2. Clergy</li> <li>3. Chiefs of volunteer fire companies</li> <li>4. College alumni office staff</li> <li>5. Special events fund raisers</li> <li>6. Civic event coordinators</li> </ol>		
		E. Other: _____		

### Worksheet for Possible Volunteer Center Constituencies

Yes/No	Category	Range of Possibilities	Priority Ranking	Concerns/Restriction Comments
	4. VOLUNTEERS	A. Direct service volunteers in any setting 1. Individuals 2. Groups		
		B. Board members of not-for-profit agencies		
		C. Advisory committees, commissions, or task forces of governmental agencies		
		D. Individuals who want to act on a problem or for a cause without affiliating with an organization . . . or before there is an organization that is interested		
		E. Brand-new volunteers		
		F. Experienced volunteers		
		G. Volunteers active in specialized programs, including SCORE, Business Volunteers for the Arts, VISTA, etc.		
		H. Other: _____		






## Chapter III: Volunteer Center Service Options

### 7: The Most Common Services

As already indicated, there is no one model for a successful Volunteer Center. Rather, within a broad mission statement, your Volunteer Center should provide services that meet the most pressing needs of your community. Sections 7 and 8 offer a “menu” from which you can select the service options that are best for your community.

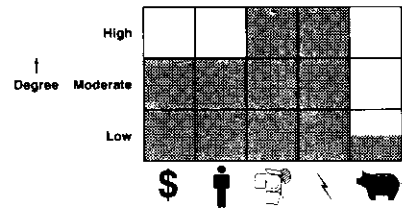
This section describes some of the services most frequently offered by Volunteer Centers. Do not be tempted to create a service just because other Volunteer Centers offer it. In fact, some of these projects may actually direct the energies of Centers away from more innovative and meaningful services.

As you read through the options presented, note the bar grid next to each item. The grid assesses the “cost” in money and time in relation to a service’s degree of impact and effect on the visibility of volunteerism.

	High					
↑ Degree	Moderate					
	Low					
						
		Dollar Cost	People Time Cost	Visibility of Volunteerism	Impact (Numbers Types of People Affected)	Fee Generating

Note that many service options have the potential of generating fees or other income. While your United Way will be funding the Volunteer Center as a public service, and while many of the Center’s projects are not income-generating by design, there is no reason why every service of the Center must be free. In fact, many Volunteer Centers now operating have realized the value of charging fees for service. However, the ability to charge fees will come after the Volunteer Center establishes that it can provide quality assistance of proven value to its constituents. There is real potential for developing a “membership package” of services for which agencies and organizations would willingly pay a predetermined fee in order to have needed support from the Volunteer Center.

Three of the following service options are common to most Volunteer Centers: a databank of volunteer opportunities; advocacy of a positive image for volunteering; and recruitment of volunteers. These are recommended as the foundation on which to build other programs. Because these three services are so basic to the Volunteer Center concept, Chapter IV gives more details on the how-tos of implementing these services.



## Databank of Volunteer Opportunities

All Volunteer Centers maintain some sort of listing of local organizations that are seeking volunteers. While not-for-profit human-service providers are generally a major portion of the organizations surveyed for their volunteer needs, the databank frequently includes government agencies, cultural arts groups, and neighborhood or civic organizations. Well-established databanks attempt to offer prospective volunteers the widest possible range of options. Frequently the databank includes descriptions of all volunteer jobs available in each agency. While many Volunteer Centers maintain this file manually, an increasing number use computers to maintain the database.

Software for Volunteer Center programs is commercially available. You are encouraged to review the capabilities of commercially available software and to discuss computer use and application with Volunteer Center staffs who are users of those packages.\*

The information in a Center's databank is usually categorized in various ways. For example, the material might be indexed by type of agency or by type of client served. Another option is to index by the type of assignment or skill required (such as tutoring, editing a newsletter, etc.). Zip codes or other geographic indicators also assist in matching people to assignments.

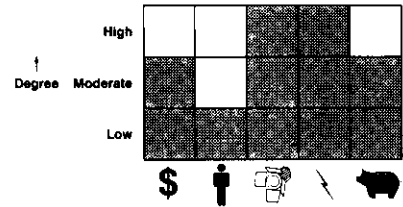
Inclusion in a databank may be offered only to those organizations meeting basic standards set by the Volunteer Center. On the other hand, especially as a databank is being built, agency listings can be entered before any kind of evaluation is done. Sometimes a notation identifies which volunteer opportunities have been screened and those which are simply listed as the agency submitted them.

There is a clear relationship between the databank of volunteer opportunities and the data maintained by Information and Referral services provided or supported by a United Way. It is likely that most not-for-profit agencies and many of the government services listed in an I&R directory will also have some need for recruiting volunteers.

### Variations

- Either before or after agencies are listed in the databank, your Volunteer Center may make site visits to evaluate agency operations or to confirm reported activities.
- You may include other information as well as available volunteer opportunities.

\*In the first quarter of 1989, United Way of America will have completed a review of available software in an effort to develop expanded programs that can maintain an information base about both communitywide volunteers and United Way volunteers. Call Volunteer and Outreach Services, United Way of America.



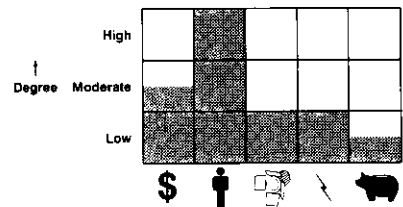
## Directories of Volunteer Opportunities

Development of a databank of volunteer opportunities may result in a "hard copy" list of possible volunteer assignments. Such directories can be distributed to all agencies listed, all United Way-funded agencies, and special sources who could refer people to volunteer assignments (high-school guidance counselors, corporate public relations officers).

Directories may be produced free of charge, or a small fee may be paid by each organization listed. A small cost per copy may be charged to purchase the directory; though most Volunteer Centers prefer not to ask individual volunteers to pay for a directory, this reluctance does not apply to other users such as libraries or corporations.

### Variations

- Volunteer Centers with the technological resources may consider producing directories of volunteer opportunities on microfiche, and there is the possibility of going "on line" with a direct, interactive computer directory.
- Specialized directories can be developed, such as those focused on opportunities for young volunteers, for senior volunteers, or for disabled volunteers.



## Skillsbanks

Today's volunteers increasingly prefer to give their time in a shorter time frame and at different frequencies than most ongoing volunteer assignments permit. Many Volunteer Centers have begun to provide a "matching service" linking the needs of agencies for specialized or technical assistance with individuals who have the necessary skills and are willing to help for a few hours at a time. This service is referred to as a "skillsbank."

Skillsbanks often utilize computer technology, though a Center may run a manual system. The most important job to be done in a skillsbank operation is the assessment of a request being made for a volunteer and recruitment of the person with the right skills to handle the job.

Skillsbanks are actually far more complex than they appear to be. They cannot succeed if the computer is expected to do all the matching. Skillsbank computers require human intervention to properly assess the probable success of a volunteer/agency match. Follow-up is also critical. Some Volunteer Centers ask both the volunteer and the agency to evaluate the placement several times during the assignment.

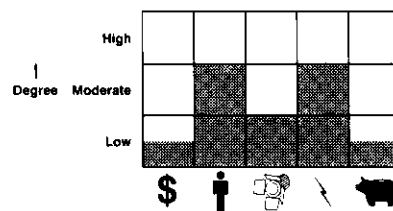
While a skillsbank may look like a variation of the databank already described, it is in fact a direct service. This is because skillsbank volunteers are under the supervision of the Volunteer Center. Deployed to various agencies as needed, the volunteers “return” to the skillsbank file to await further assignment. For example, a volunteer accountant registered with the skillsbank might provide services to one agency—to help set up their books—but would then be available for additional assignment to other agencies. Managerially, therefore, such volunteers are part of the Volunteer Center.

Your Volunteer Center needs to decide how the skillsbank will be operated. Will volunteers who apply for inclusion in the skillsbank be screened or tested to determine their actual skill level, or will their self-assessment be accepted? Will the Volunteer Center offer any training to the skillsbank volunteers in such subjects as “How to be a consultant” or on “How not-for-profit organizations work?” Will volunteers be asked to commit for a duration of time (i.e., one year) or for however long it takes to fulfill, say, three different assignments? What will the Volunteer Center do to utilize volunteers whose skills have not been required in the past year or so?

If an agency asks for help and there is no qualified volunteer already listed, will the Volunteer Center actively recruit a volunteer to match the specific request? Will the Center “advertise” the availability of certain skilled volunteers, thereby stimulating requests for such assistance?

### Variations

- Publish a newsletter highlighting special “one-shot” or short-term opportunities such as planning a party or writing a grant proposal. Send it to individuals who have indicated an interest in receiving such notices.
- Handle bookings for entertainers who have offered to volunteer for organizations.



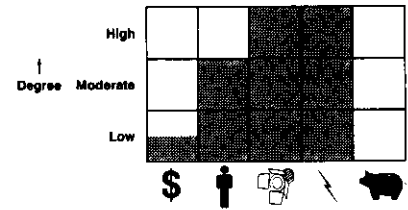
### Board Placement Service/Board Banks

This is a specialized clearinghouse service that enables not-for-profit organizations to register their needs for board members with the Volunteer Center. Your Center may either hold the information and allow possible candidates to see the list of board positions, or the Volunteer Center may specifically recruit to fill vacancies.

The Volunteer Center can also provide boardsmanship training, either for new board members recruited through the board placement service or for an entire board of directors of a particular organization. United Way of America’s BoardWALK program is an ideal tool for this.\*

\*BoardWALK: Working at Leadership Knowledge. United Way of America, 1985.

BoardWALK is a comprehensive training package which provides curriculum for workshops which address the essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes for successful participation on a citizen board in voluntary settings. Workshop titles include Operational Strategies for Boards, Managing Change, Marketing, Legal Issues, and Cooperative Action in the Community.



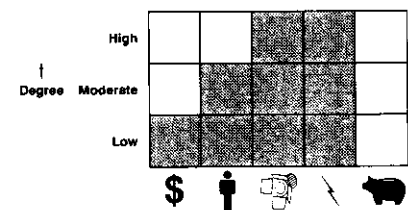
## Advocacy for Volunteering

A Volunteer Center represents the full scope of volunteerism in any community and has a responsibility to keep volunteerism as visible as possible. This means media contact—stimulating feature stories and public-service announcements that focus on the diversity and value of community involvement. Such publicity is important, and you may seek ways to connect local issues to the work of volunteers. Also, if stereotypes about volunteers are perpetuated in a media story or public forum, the Volunteer Center should attempt to correct the image.

Media relations are closely connected to two of the most important Volunteer Center services: recruitment and recognition of volunteers. Both require the support and involvement of local television, radio, and newspapers. But year-round promotion of volunteerism in general is as important as targeted media “blitzes” such as those undertaken during National Volunteer Week.

## Variations

- Speakers bureaus to provide presentations about volunteerism to a wide variety of community audiences.
- Radio call-in shows to answer the public’s questions.
- Involvement of the local Ad Council or other public relations specialists in designing a slogan, logo, or button to convey a positive, upbeat attitude about volunteering.



## Recruitment of Volunteers

One of the major roles of Volunteer Centers is to stimulate the recruitment of volunteers to fill the many available assignments. There is a close correlation between promotion to ensure visibility and successful recruitment. The Volunteer Center may be interested in two levels of recruitment: the general encouragement of the community’s residents to seek out individual volunteer opportunities; or specific, targeted attempts to get prospective volunteers to contact the Volunteer Center itself for referrals to listed agencies.



## **United Way and Television: A Partnership in the Making**

An intensive new public-service campaign called "Time to Care" is presenting local television stations and United Ways with a unique opportunity to work together to encourage America's spirit of caring.

Created by Group W Television, "Time to Care" comes at a most opportune moment—a time when Americans are rediscovering that individual efforts *do* make a difference. And it comes at a time when United Ways are seeking to double their communities' volunteer capacity.

Through "Time to Care," television stations and United Ways around the country can form partnerships to rekindle community involvement. Stations that commit to the program receive a comprehensive package of broadcast materials geared to educating people about opportunities to get involved in community service and honoring people who are already involved. Each station, in turn, customizes the materials to reflect local concerns and highlight local citizens. United Ways can play an important role in providing the resources a station needs to better understand and communicate local needs and opportunities.

### **How United Ways Can Help**

Because each United Way—like each television station—operates in its own unique way, each partnership forged for the "Time to Care" campaign will be unique. And the contributions that each partner makes will vary according to each one's structure and resources.

Generally, television stations can look to United Ways to:

- Link people who want to get involved with the community organizations and individuals who can use their help;
- Generate media support for the campaign;
- Provide vital information about community needs to stations;
- Assist in many aspects of production and programming; and
- Provide appreciation and recognition for individuals who take the "Time to Care."

At the time of publication, "Time to Care" campaigns were scheduled to run in more than 60 communities across the country. For a list, contact United Way of America's Volunteer and Outreach Services Department.

## The Volunteer Connection

The Volunteer Connection is a nationwide media campaign to recruit volunteers. Its goals are to:

- Raise public knowledge of local volunteer needs;
- Dramatically increase the number of people volunteering; and
- Bring organizations and individuals together to meet community needs.

The Volunteer Connection, the most successful media-based recruitment of volunteers ever conducted, was pioneered in Dallas-Ft. Worth, where the campaign nearly doubled the number of people volunteering. A new partnership between Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) and VOLUNTEER: The National Center will make the Volunteer Connection a nationwide project involving local Volunteer Centers throughout the United States.

The Volunteer Connection has three major components:

- Community preparation—insuring that organizations and agencies which rely on volunteer help are appropriately prepared to manage and effectively involve more volunteers.
- Television promotion—the commitment by one or more local television stations of significant air time for public-service announcements and news features.
- Ancillary promotions—the development of a comprehensive local campaign of related radio and print promotion (billboards, posters, grocery bag stuffers, etc.).

Because The Volunteer Connection is essentially a local program, its scope and design will vary from community to community. In some, as in Dallas-Ft. Worth, it will be the primary public-service activity of a single television station. In others, it will be undertaken as a collaborative effort of several. In still others, it will begin as a print and/or radio campaign.

Local leadership for The Volunteer Connection is the responsibility of the Volunteer Center, the only local organization with the sole mission of promoting and supporting more effective volunteering in the community.

Development of this campaign is the responsibility of AAL and VOLUNTEER, national cosponsors of The Volunteer Connection. AAL will provide financial support for the project and, as an in-kind contribution, will produce national broadcast and print media materials. VOLUNTEER will manage the project, provide support services to participating Volunteer Centers, and work with television stations and the print media to insure maximum visibility for The Volunteer Connection.\*

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\*Reprinted with permission from VOLUNTEER: The National Center. For more information about the Volunteer Connection, contact VOLUNTEER: The National Center. (See Appendix B.)

Recruitment techniques coordinated by Volunteer Centers vary widely. Examples include:

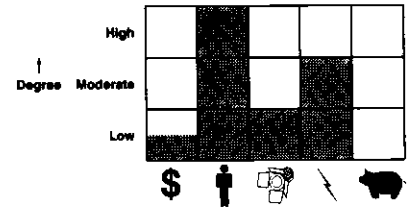
- “Want-ad”-type columns in the newspaper describing current volunteer job openings;
- Distribution of the Volunteer Opportunity Directory to key referral sites;
- Volunteer “fairs” in which the Volunteer Center coordinates the placement of numerous booths/exhibits staffed by agencies themselves at selected locations such as shopping malls, corporate cafeterias, or college dorms.
- “Volunteer Connection” or “Time to Care” projects, or similar media-based promotion/recruitment efforts.

In recent years, many Volunteer Centers have been involved in media-based recruitment projects. Some Centers, and participating media organizations, have launched full-fledged telethons in which a particular broadcast area is saturated for several hours (sometimes over several days) with messages about volunteer opportunities. Viewers are urged to telephone the station or the Volunteer Center to receive more information or to pledge their time as volunteers.

Media-based recruitment campaigns need a great deal of preparation. They do generate marvelous publicity and can motivate a lot of callers (which has occurred with some of the “Volunteer Connection” campaigns in various cities), but a media campaign requires careful preparation to ensure that phones are staffed, placements are available, and callers receive timely follow-up.

### **Variations**

- Intensive recruitment campaigns for critical local causes, such as response to a physical disaster, a special historical celebration, or a cause receiving national attention.
- Targeted campaigns at particular types of potential volunteers, including youth, senior citizens, the disabled, young single adults, families, etc.
- Preretirement seminars stressing volunteering as a transition from full-time employment.
- Recruitment of volunteers in groups to work on special projects, often one-time events. This may mean helping an employer organize a team of employees, mobilizing a scout troop, or involving a whole church in a particular assignment. “Adopt-an-Agency” or “Adopt-a-School” programs are examples of major group projects.



## Interviewing Potential Volunteers

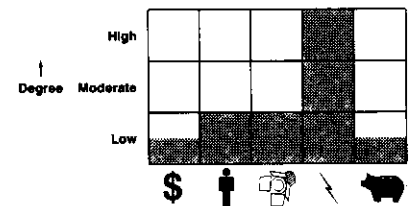
Smaller Volunteer Centers have traditionally worked on a one-to-one basis with individuals to help them select appropriate volunteer opportunities. This has meant that each person completed an application, was interviewed, reviewed the databank, and was referred to one or more possible placement sites—often with an introductory telephone call or letter from the Volunteer Center. Today this process is rarely intended to replace the need for each agency to do its own screening, but it can be a direct service to both the prospective volunteer and the recipient organization.

Many larger Volunteer Centers have stopped the practice of personal interviews and specific agency referrals—mostly because of the numbers of referrals requested. All Volunteer Centers respond to questions about volunteer sites by referral even if they cannot offer screening interviews.

Referrals made by a Volunteer Center are generally given some follow-up, if only to ascertain whether or not the referred person became a volunteer.

## Variations

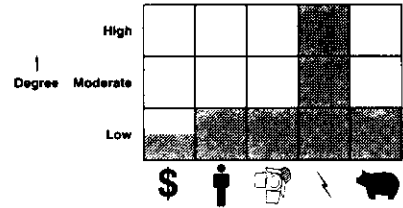
- Allowing the public to come to the Volunteer Center and “browse” through the databank or directory.
- Contracting with a corporation to do individualized volunteer placements of employees for a fee. (See “Less Common Services” for other contractual placement programs.)



## DOVIA Formation and Support

Directors of Volunteers in agencies are a major constituent group of any Volunteer Center. Directors of Volunteers need contact with peers who have similar concerns and professional situations. In a growing number of communities, self-help networks have been formed which are known as DOVIAs—Directors of Volunteers in Agencies. These groups meet from four to 12 times a year to exchange information and learn about volunteer management techniques.

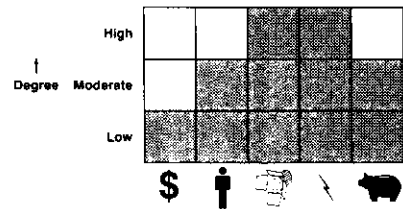
Volunteer Centers have been instrumental in starting local DOVIAs, by virtue of the fact that Directors of Volunteers are already in communication with the Center—they are the ones listing their volunteer needs in the databank. Once a DOVIA has been formed, the Volunteer Center can play a support role that ranges from providing meeting space to mailing meeting notices. Together, the Volunteer Center and the DOVIA can plan events such as National Volunteer Week activities or training workshops.



## CVC Formation and Support

As employee volunteer programs become more formalized, larger corporations are designating staff members to serve as program coordinators. These coordinators are actually specialized “Directors of Volunteers” and have the same need for networking with their peers as do those in not-for-profit agencies. Often these coordinators form “Corporate Volunteer Councils” (CVCs) which meet on a regular basis. Again, the Volunteer Center can be instrumental in starting a CVC and in supporting and collaborating with its activities.

Corporate Volunteer Councils are represented nationally by an umbrella group called the National Council on Corporate Volunteerism (NCCV). NCCV has a President’s Council, through which information about CVCs can be obtained—how to start a CVC, develop programs and information about CVCs nationwide. Contact the NCCV Division at VOLUNTEER: The National Center (see Appendix B).



## Volunteer Recognition Events

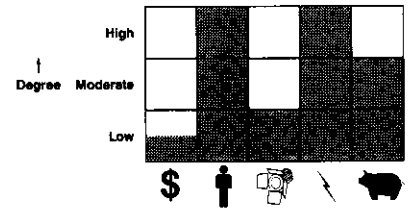
The recognition of volunteers is an important aspect of good volunteer management. It is also an opportunity to bring visibility to the subject of volunteering. Most volunteer recognition is done at the agency level for individual volunteers. However, the Volunteer Center can do a variety of things to increase the publicity value of such recognition—and thereby have the secondary effect of stimulating recruitment of new volunteers.

There are various techniques that Volunteer Centers utilize to provide communitywide recognition. These include:

- Establishing and giving awards for volunteers in various categories.
- Organizing a wide range of events such as luncheons, parades, balloon launches, and mural paintings to make volunteers and volunteerism visible to a wider community.
- Tying local recognition events to National Volunteer Week, which occurs annually in the third week of April.
- Developing a recognition kit which is localized for each community. This kit might include sample press releases, camera-ready certificates of appreciation, etc.
- Encouraging the involvement of the local mayor or legislators in issuing proclamations on behalf of volunteers.
- Inviting media representatives to special breakfasts or other events to give them information about volunteer recognition activities in the community.

### Variations

- Printing volunteer tax planning sheets or booklets, carrying the Volunteer Center logo, which can be purchased in bulk by agencies for distribution to their volunteers as a special "Happy New Year" gift.
- Commissioning special recognition pens or mugs which can be given to volunteers active in various agencies.

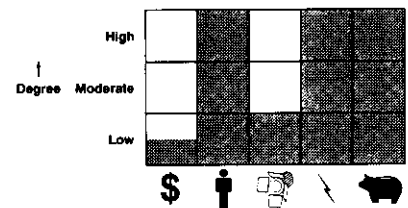


### Consultation on Starting a Volunteer Program

A Volunteer Center has a wide base of knowledge on what it takes to create good volunteer programs. Therefore, among the services offered are often consultations to individual not-for-profit agencies, units of government, or private corporations on how to start a volunteer program. Generally the focus is on developing a volunteer program that recruits members of the general public into an organization as volunteers on a regular basis. However, as in the case of corporations and colleges, the consultation can include how to offer the services of a group of potential volunteers.

### Variations

- Consultations can be offered about specific issues; for example: how to hire a director of volunteers; how to fund a volunteer program.
- Your Volunteer Center might provide in-house training to the staff of agencies establishing volunteer programs.

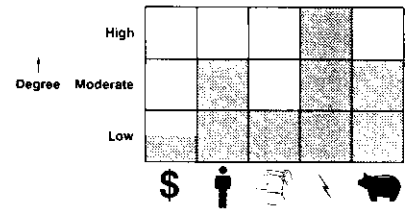


### Consultation to Ongoing Volunteer Programs

This type of consultation can involve quite a diversity of subject areas. For example, an organization might want help in redefining its volunteer recruitment campaign, record-keeping systems, or supervision of volunteer workers.

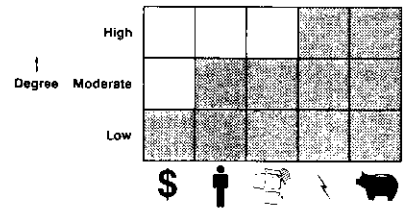
### Variations

- Your Volunteer Center can establish "Standards" programs in which organizations are evaluated along set criteria to see whether or not they have effective volunteer programs. Such a project might also involve certificates of award to those agencies meeting the standards.
- Conducting a volunteer program evaluation as an "outside evaluator."



## Orientation for New Directors of Volunteers

Because very few people receive formal education on how to run a volunteer program, it often happens that individuals are hired into the job of directing volunteers without prior experience in the field. Some Volunteer Centers have therefore established regular orientation sessions for new directors of volunteers to introduce these people to the field they have just joined. This is also an opportunity to explain the services of the Volunteer Center and to encourage membership in the local DOVIA.



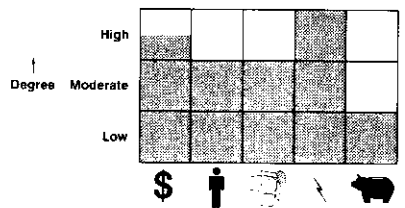
## Training Events

Volunteer Centers are in the position not only to recognize the needs for information among their constituents, but also to support the professional growth of those leading volunteer programs through training. Therefore, Volunteer Centers are often the sponsors or cosponsors of training workshops and conferences on volunteer management. Such programs can either be led by Volunteer Center staff or by local people with good track records for achievement, or the Volunteer Center can seek outside experts and bring them into the community to provide the training.

The topics for such training vary from all elements of volunteer program development and management to more specialized areas such as "boardsmanship" (that set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for success as a board member), corporate volunteer programs, and marketing.

## Variations

- Leadership development aimed directly at certain types of volunteers, e.g., certain ethnic groups, women, or officers of all-volunteer groups.
- Joining with a local college to offer a series of workshops that result in a "certificate" or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) in volunteer management. This can be tied to a Volunteer Center's "Standards" program.

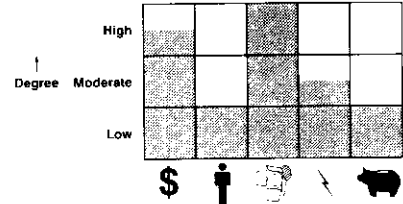


## A Volunteerism Library

With the growing number of books and articles on the subject of volunteering, most Volunteer Centers have begun to collect such materials for their own use and to make them available to the public as space permits.

## Variations

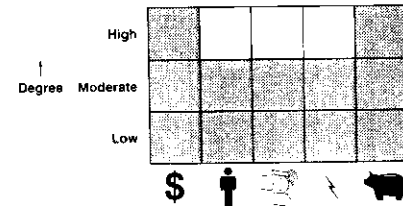
- Books and audiovisual materials in the library can be loaned or rented.
- Since most volunteerism books are not available in retail bookstores, they can be sold to the public by the Volunteer Center, often on a consignment basis from the publisher.
- Students doing research on volunteerism can be assisted in finding materials and in locating agencies in the community willing to serve as statistical samples or sites for research projects.



## Newsletter

Many Volunteer Centers utilize a regularly issued newsletter to keep all their constituents informed about developments in the volunteer world. The content of the newsletter generally includes: a calendar of events related to volunteerism, such as the dates of recognition events, training workshops, and conferences; highlights of new volunteer programs and Volunteer Center achievements; book reviews of new materials in volunteerism; and updates on legislation regarding volunteers.

The newsletter can have a wide distribution beyond the agencies working frequently with the Volunteer Center. Other possible recipients include the Mayor's or County Commissioners' offices, major local foundations, and the media. The newsletter can become a form of press release.



## Manuals and Other Publications

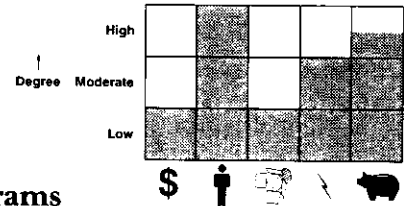
Volunteer Centers can produce manuals to meet needs for information that consistently arise. For example, it may be possible to develop manuals for new directors of volunteers or manuals on how to develop a good volunteer-recruitment campaign.

If something as labor-intensive as a manual is not feasible, it is possible to develop multipage worksheets or "white papers" giving information on specific topics.



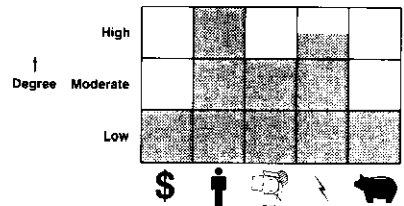
## 8: Less Common Services

The following program options are being implemented around the country by numerous Volunteer Centers. None are offered as frequently as the services described in Section 7. Several of these options are likely to grow in importance as the trends they reflect work their way across the nation.



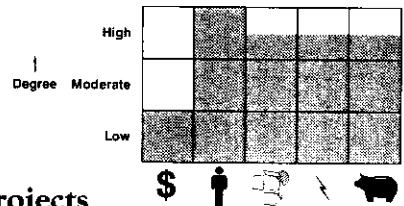
### Management of Court-Referred Volunteer Programs

More and more communities are developing court-referred volunteer programs. They can be labeled "alternative sentencing," "community restitution," or some other name, but the common denominator is that offenders are sentenced to a certain number of hours of community service work, usually in lieu of paying a fine or spending time in jail. While some still debate whether or not such people are "volunteers," other Volunteer Centers have taken over the role of coordinating the court referrals. This means locating agencies willing to accept this special group of volunteers, interviewing people who are directed to the program, and matching them to the right volunteer assignment. It also usually involves keeping records on each person's success so that a report can be made to the court. These programs frequently involve a contractual fee arrangement between the Volunteer Center and the court.



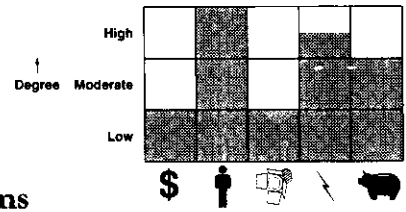
### Management of Student Volunteer and/or Internship Programs

In many communities, the presence of high schools and colleges warrants the Volunteer Center's involvement in stimulating student community service. This means working with agencies to find good, educational volunteer assignments and recruiting students to fill these assignments. Again, the Volunteer Center's role is one of matchmaker and monitor.



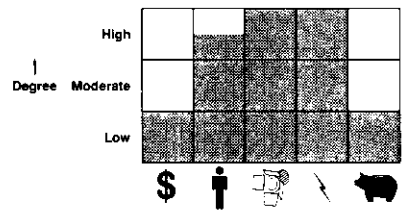
### Management of Local Government Volunteer Projects

There is increased interest in having volunteers support their cities or counties by doing volunteer work in government agencies. Volunteer Centers can also coordinate this type of program on behalf of the government.



## Management of Transitional Volunteers Programs

“Transitional volunteers” are people who are undergoing some type of change in their lives. In volunteer work this term may refer to people who are recovering from a mental health problem, drug or alcohol addiction, or accident that left them with a physical disability. It can also be broadened to include displaced homemakers, displaced workers, or people coping with the death of a loved one. In many cases, mental health professionals believe people experiencing such change will derive therapeutic benefits from volunteer work. Some Volunteer Centers therefore manage a “matching” program for this group of volunteers.



## Clearinghouse for In-Kind Donations

Businesses, government agencies, and, in some instances, not-for-profit organizations know that one type of contribution they can make to the community is “in-kind”—a gift of goods or services. They may not know how to locate recipients, and Volunteer Centers may set up a way to identify agencies needing in-kind donations and a mechanism for storage and distribution of donated goods.

Gifts In Kind, Inc., a national organization created by United Way of America, encourages companies to expand their giving to include contributions of products and property to the not-for-profit community. Gifts in Kind, Inc., has helped companies give over \$135 million of their top-quality products to more than 40,000 voluntary agencies through a nationwide network of United Ways. This national effort has resulted in the formation of 271 well-established local programs, and over 200 other programs now in various stages of development. Sometimes these programs are operated by a Volunteer Center.

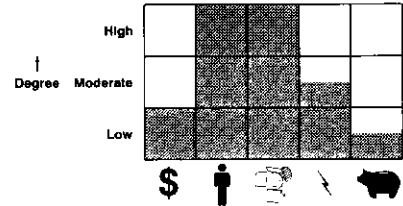
Gifts-in-kind programs seek top-quality merchandise from manufacturers, usable company property that has been used in the course of doing business, and products available for donation such as seasonal merchandise or refurbished products. Local programs coordinate distribution of national donations as well as those generated locally.

Volunteer Centers know the needs of the agencies with which they work, have the community contacts, and can rally the volunteers and resources necessary to complete the donation transaction from company to agency. They are a good channel through which in-kind programs can operate.

For more information, contact Gifts In Kind, Inc., 700 North Fairfax Street, Suite 610, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 836-2121.

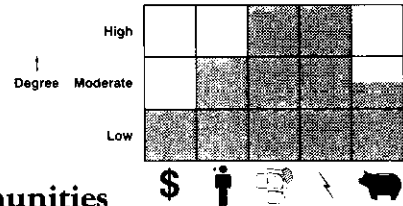
## Variations

- Receiving and storing goods and supplies for distribution to community agencies.
- Establishing with Gifts In Kind, Inc., a fully developed in-kind giving program.
- Soliciting a list of needs from community agencies and seeking out in-kind donations to meet those needs.
- Linking with government surplus programs.
- Developing a discount program for United Way-affiliated agencies or for an identified group of agencies.



## Holiday Bureaus

At the Christmas and Chanukah season many Volunteer Centers coordinate special programs of holiday giving in their communities. This can range from actually collecting food and toys at a central location and supervising the distribution of these items, to publishing a "wish list" which tells individuals and corporations what agencies in the community need.



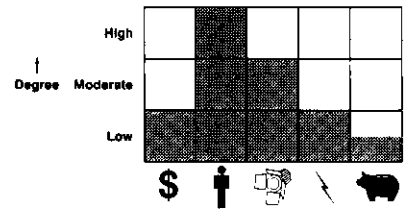
## Special Programs Linked With Particular Communities

Some communities are unique because of the resources or needs specific to those communities. For example, if there is a military installation or a state prison in a community, the Volunteer Center can develop projects with such major facilities.

Sometimes the need is time-specific, such as a bicentennial event, the arrival of the Olympics, or an influx of refugees from a particular country.

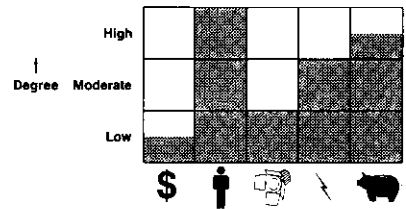
If located in a state capital, the Volunteer Center may be involved in projects with the employees of state government.

Such special programs can either be targeted to the unique need by recruiting the community to help, or to the special facility by developing programs to provide volunteers to the community at large.



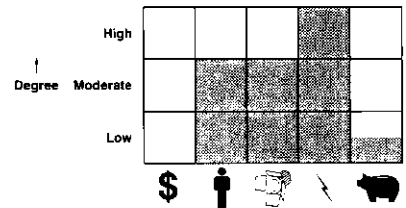
### Direct Services to Clients

Especially in smaller or rural communities, some Volunteer Centers are involved in coordinating volunteer efforts on behalf of particular clients. Two common areas of service are transportation programs (in which volunteers are recruited to drive clients to various places) and telephone reassurance programs (in which volunteers are matched on a one-to-one basis with children or elderly people in the community who can benefit from daily telephone contact).



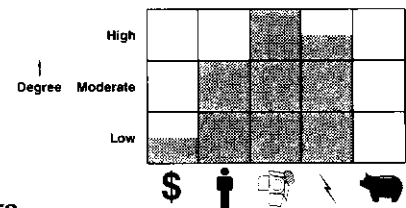
### Sponsoring Special Grant Projects

Some Volunteer Centers are the recipients of grants to run their communities' Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Senior Companion, or Foster Grandparent programs, or federally funded youth volunteer programs.\* This may mean hiring staff specifically to coordinate such targeted volunteer programs.



### Links With Local Colleges

Because Volunteer Centers are involved in the ongoing training of volunteer managers, they frequently work with their local community colleges or with four-year institutions to establish credit, certificate, and degree programs in Volunteer Administration.



### Gathering and Disseminating Volunteerism Data

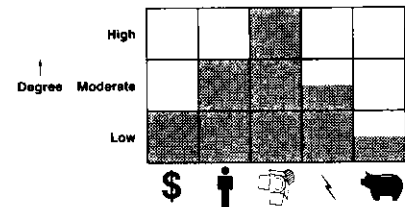
As Volunteer Centers request information from agencies about their need for volunteers, it is often possible to elicit other pertinent information at the same time. This includes asking for statistics about the number of volunteers in an organization, the age range of these volunteers, and other profile information about the volunteers, such as sex, race, educational level, or other identifiers.

Information can also be gathered on the types of activities these volunteers engage in and the agency resources allocated to supporting volunteers.

\*See the listing for ACTION in Appendix B.

As a result of this research, the Volunteer Center can provide invaluable information to planners, executives, and the public at large. Tying the number of volunteer hours contributed to the delivery of a service and quantifying the value of that time can leverage more support for services needed in the community. Support for the Volunteer Center's own operations can be significantly increased if the Volunteer Center is keeping adequate and meaningful statistics about services, hours, and the value of volunteer time. However, this is only a secondary outcome of data collection. The most important reasons for having the information is for planning purposes, and to assist the whole community, including agencies.

Once such information is gathered, there are many ways a Volunteer Center can disseminate the collected data. Various reports can be issued to the community and the press. If the Volunteer Center is part of United Way, the United Way Planning and Allocations Committee might benefit from the data. Further, it is possible to identify gaps in volunteer services through this collection and analysis.



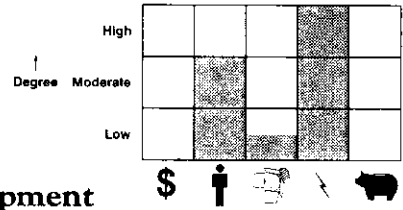
### Recognition of Volunteer Managers

While it is common for communities to thank and praise volunteers, it is less usual to provide recognition to those people who lead volunteer efforts. Because many Volunteer Centers are very interested in increasing the professionalism of volunteer administrators, some Centers have begun to include recognition of volunteer managers in their annual calendars. These events often include the bosses of volunteer directors so that the top executive level of an organization has the chance to see the worth of the contribution made by the Director of Volunteers.

### Other Types of Services

There are still other types of services offered by Volunteer Centers around the country. A few include:

- A "five percent club," in which corporations are encouraged by the Volunteer Center to give five percent of their gross profits to philanthropic causes.
- A newspaper clipping service for not-for-profit agencies.
- A job reentry program for women who have been out of the work force.
- Decentralized offices, such as a branch on a college campus or in outlying areas of a large metropolitan community.



### Consultation on United Way Volunteer Development

Because the United Way itself is a volunteer-driven organization, the Volunteer Center has a key role to play in making sure that United Way volunteers are recruited, trained, and supported according to the highest possible standards.

In some communities, the Volunteer Center takes an active role in helping United Way define volunteer job descriptions for its various committees, recruit the best volunteers, maintain records on their efforts, and provide recognition and thanks when the work is done. Some Centers also encourage wider utilization of direct service volunteers within the United Way system—in fund raising, community problem solving, fund distribution, information and referral, and other functions.

## 9: 25 Innovative Service Ideas

The real challenge in developing a Volunteer Center comes from selecting the best services being offered elsewhere and adding the services of most value to your own community. What follows is a list of “starter ideas” that were elicited during the course of research for this handbook, and through interviews with present Volunteer Center staffs and with others in the volunteer community.

A few of these ideas may actually have been tried by some Volunteer Centers, perhaps in a limited way. None of the following ideas are meant to be taken as recommendations; they are meant to stimulate creative thinking. All have possibilities and all can be adapted in a variety of ways. Here are some ideas:

**1. Small Business Involvement.** The vast majority of attention to business volunteering has been directed at large corporations. However, small businesses have an enormous interest in the local community. Volunteer Centers could find ways to encourage increased public service by small businesses, professional associations, sole practitioners, and self-employed people. The local Chamber of Commerce might be an interested partner in this outreach effort.

**2. Services to Individual Volunteers.** Volunteer Centers can provide information and networking support to concerned citizens seeking to mobilize other community members around a cause (from traffic safety to toxic waste).

**3. Meeting Space and Office Services.** Volunteer Centers could provide (even for a fee) support to all-volunteer associations by offering meeting space, clerical services, copy machines, etc. This might also mean serving as a permanent mail-collection site for organizations with officers that change annually. This type of assistance would also be valued by organizations that have only one or two paid staff and many volunteers.

**4. Evening and Weekend Hours.** The Volunteer Center should consider being open during evening and weekend hours to demonstrate a commitment to individuals who are seeking volunteer opportunities during these times. Working people need opportunities to connect with the Center after work or on weekend days.

**5. Meeting Special Volunteer Needs.** This means taking an active role in addressing some major needs such as transportation, enabling funds, and child care for the volunteers themselves. A Volunteer Center could coordinate fund raising for these needs or could designate special funds for this. Alternatively, they might run a van to transport volunteers, arrange for free parking spaces, or provide child care to volunteers.

**6. Barter.** Many not-for-profit and for-profit organizations have materials and talents that could be exchanged. This is what “barter” is all about—the exchange of goods for goods or services for services without a cash transaction. It is the absence of dollar involvement that places barter into the volunteer world. A Volunteer Center could coordinate a barter project that allows individuals and groups to register what they have to offer and what they are seeking to find.

**7. Sharing Volunteers.** A Volunteer Center could stimulate the more creative deployment of volunteers. Rather than have agencies consider volunteers “theirs,” the Volunteer Center could coordinate the sharing of particular volunteers with skills needed by several organizations. This is similar to a skillsbank but has the goal of ongoing rather than short-term service. For example, a volunteer with artistic skills could illustrate the newsletters of several organizations throughout the course of a year.

**8. Leadership Training.** Volunteer Centers could offer annual “institutes” on the skills involved in working with volunteer committees and advisory groups. The training may be open to committee chairpersons anywhere in the community—trustees and government commission members, and officers of civic clubs and other all-volunteer associations. This is a variation on the theme of boardmanship training which is already offered by many existing Volunteer Centers.

**9. Training for Executive Directors.** This sort of training would help two constituencies: agencies and directors of volunteers. Subjects of interest to executive directors include: budgeting for a volunteer program; insurance and legal issues; avoiding volunteer/salaried staff tensions; and training staff to work with volunteers. A segment of United Way of America's MANAGE\* curriculum deals with many of these concerns and is a good starting point for Volunteer Center training programs.

**10. Model Volunteer Projects.** A Volunteer Center could have its own "Director of Volunteers" and could pilot new volunteer projects out of the Volunteer Center. These "demonstration projects" could spin off or be adopted by another organization. In this way, the Volunteer Center would be a model of the best creative volunteer management while filling gaps in community services.

**11. Services to Support Major Community Events.** A Volunteer Center could and should be the "staffing" agency for big community events (annual folk festivals, parades, historic reenactments, etc.). This is a possible fee-generating service that would also serve to make the Volunteer Center visible. Recruiting, training, and coordinating large numbers of volunteers for such events would not only demonstrate the expertise of a Volunteer Center, but would establish contacts with civic and community groups and allow for continuity between events and the volunteers who staff them. It would probably prove true that some volunteers will agree to serve several times a year at various events—continuity that will make such staffing easier each time.

**12. New Types of Assignments.** A Volunteer Center could work with agencies to pilot new ideas, such as roles for children as volunteers or for family units working together. Then the Volunteer Center could disseminate information about these test situations, including writing guidebooks, to help others wishing to try the same idea. This could similarly mean encouraging innovative ways to work with volunteers from populations considered by some as hard-to-reach. For example, the Center could design volunteer opportunities for new Americans with limited English-speaking ability.

**13. Liaison With Other Communities.** Volunteer Centers could stimulate regional events on behalf of volunteerism. Major volunteer recognition events or a coordinated volunteer transportation plan are examples of this regional concept.

**14. Archives and Repository.** The Volunteer Center library could expand to act as an archive for volunteer organizations, maintaining, preserving and cataloguing records of community groups. Also, the library could be a resource for sample materials which would allow new Directors of Volunteers to learn from the experiences of other volunteer programs in the community.

**15. Volunteer References.** Just as continuing-education programs keep records of the workshops completed by students, a Volunteer Center could maintain information about the past volunteer experiences of those who wish to register with them. This could supply materials for the recognition of active volunteers, could help agencies seeking new board members, and be used, at the request of the volunteer, to provide prospective employers with references.

**16. Legislative Advocacy.** A Volunteer Center could work actively to introduce legislation favorable to volunteers, encourage more versatile insurance policies for volunteers, and get recognition of volunteer work on job applications. Strategies might include position papers and surveys of the volunteer community.

Advocacy implies being able to recognize and react to issues affecting volunteerism and mobilizing the volunteer community. An example of issues that could benefit from the leadership of a Volunteer Center would be proposals for programs such as National Youth Service. The Volunteer Center can become the voice of the volunteer community by expressing their collective opinion.

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\**Managing A Not-for-Profit Agency: Guidelines for Excellence.* United Way of America, 1987. MANAGE is a curriculum package targeted to the executive officers of newer and smaller agencies, as well as to agencies addressing emerging community needs. The topics covered include: Planning; Change Management, Environmental Analysis, and Marketing; The Board and the Chief Executive Officer; Managing Staff and Service Volunteers; and Conflict Management and Cooperative Action.



Be sure to consult with legal counsel to gain understanding of Internal Revenue Service law on lobbying by not-for-profit organizations before you begin intensive efforts. This law encourages nonprofits to lobby on behalf of their concerns, but limits the amount of resources that can be devoted to lobbying and prohibits involvement in political campaigns. Such appropriate cautions, however, should not stop a Volunteer Center from being an advocate on behalf of volunteers.

**17. Retraining Unemployed Adults.** Much has been written about the potential rewards unemployed people can derive from volunteering. For some, volunteering is a way to "fill the gaps" on a resume, to demonstrate continued activity between paid jobs. If the work is challenging, a volunteer can improve certain skills and therefore have a stepping-stone to a desired salaried position. But for displaced workers and for those considered "hard core" unemployed, few existing volunteer assignments provide the opportunity to learn something with long-term job applicability.

A Volunteer Center could stimulate the formation of such volunteer assignments by training agencies about the needs and potential of these prospective volunteers. The state Employment Service offices would be a valuable partner in this effort.

**18. Recruitment and Recognition Videos.** While many Volunteer Centers have begun to develop localized recruitment posters and pins, in the future it will be easier to assist in the production of localized videotapes as well. This might mean actually producing a video or collaborating with the local public- or cable-television station. Videos can be utilized as public service spots on television or in displays throughout the community.

**19. Leadership Techniques Book.** Both to provide training materials and to recognize competent leaders of volunteers, the Volunteer Center could produce a book of techniques or strategies gathered from local managers of volunteer programs. This would be a compilation of successful techniques—very much along the line of recipe books which are put together by membership organizations—and could serve as an income-generating vehicle.

**20. Unions.** Unions are sometimes overlooked as givers of volunteer service even though most organized labor groups sponsor charitable activities. Annually, thousands of union members are trained through AFL-CIO Union Counselor Training Programs. These members serve as referral agents to their co-workers.

The Volunteer Center can offer support to unions and organized employees in their volunteer activities and can ensure that labor is represented on planning and steering committees for community events.

In individual cases, the relationship of unions and agency volunteer programs can sometimes be strained as a result of misunderstood roles, strike situations, and other issues. A Volunteer Center can help clarify the unique role of volunteers and unions and foster communications between labor leaders and volunteer program directors.

For information on how to contact state and local Labor Councils, contact United Way of America's Department of Labor Participation.

**21. Decentralized Offices.** Decentralized offices bring the Volunteer Center to the people. If a Volunteer Center is computerized, it might be possible to establish self-service computer terminals in various locations which are tied to the central office computer. The Center might also go "off-site" through the use of telephones which "direct dial" the Volunteer Center when they are picked up (much like the telephones in airports that contact hotels or taxi services). Department stores, employment offices, or other sites might be considered.

**22. Mobile Van.** A mobile van would allow the Volunteer Center to travel to many neighborhoods to do specialized recruiting. This is an idea that has proven successful for libraries and could be equally successful for Volunteer Centers, particularly in rural areas or in city neighborhoods.

**23. Group Insurance.** There are several insurance companies that will not write insurance policies for very small volunteer programs. It may be possible, however, for the Volunteer Center to establish an "umbrella" organization that would apply for such insurance on behalf of a number of groups. As insurance becomes more and more difficult to obtain, such a service might prove invaluable. (See Appendix B for readings about liability/risk management.)

**24. Training Cooperatives.** There is a great deal of duplication in the training given to volunteers by community agencies. For example, all hotlines and crisis centers train volunteers in the proper use of the telephone. Similarly, many agencies teach volunteers how to work with special populations, such as older people or teenagers, with no reference to a particular volunteer assignment. The Volunteer Center could stimulate the formation of "training cooperatives" in which agencies with similar training needs would join together to offer training to all the volunteers in their various programs. This not only trains more volunteers at one time, but it also limits the amount of staff time that has to be given by any single agency—the training responsibilities are shared throughout a calendar year.

**25. Coordination With Other Umbrella Groups.** There are a variety of organizations in every community that serve as coordinating bodies or clearinghouses for certain volunteer settings. Examples are Chambers of Commerce, Councils of Churches, or cultural arts development councils. Because most of these coordinating bodies are run by volunteer leaders and sponsor service projects, the Volunteer Center has a role to play in supporting their efforts.

## Chapter IV: Organizing Your Volunteer Center

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### 10: Important Preliminary Decisions

In setting up a Volunteer Center you will need to decide if your United Way should launch it as an independent organization or as a division of United Way. Both options are viable. In the final analysis, you will have to make your choice based on the specifics of your situation. Consider the answers to the following questions:

1. Based on our assessment of current volunteerism resources in this community (see Chapter II; Section 4), does any existing organization already function as a Volunteer Center?
2. What constituents are already being served by existing sources . . . and which are not?
3. How are United Way's own volunteer recruitment and development needs being met?
4. Would it cause problems if a United Way-administered Volunteer Center served a broader constituency than human-service not-for-profit agencies and/or groups that might be considered controversial?
5. What is the most cost-effective way of setting up a Volunteer Center in our community? Is it more or less cost-effective to establish the Volunteer Center as an independent agency or as a division of United Way?
6. Does our United Way have sufficient resources, including space, office equipment, reception services, etc.? Would funding an independent agency cause less strain on United Way facilities?
7. What would the United Way gain and/or lose by having administrative control over the Volunteer Center?
8. Would the community be more or less likely to cooperate with a Volunteer Center that is independent versus one that is a part of United Way?
9. What option would meet both the United Way's needs and those of the community?
10. Would an external or an internal Volunteer Center provide the best support to United Way's other functions, such as placement of volunteers from the workplace?
11. What are the local United Way policies regarding fund raising to support Volunteer Center programs? How would those policies apply to a Volunteer Center funded by United Way? To a Volunteer Center that is a division of United Way?

The accompanying worksheet takes most of these questions and rewords them in quantifiable terms. Have each member of the planning committee complete the worksheet individually. Use the responses to begin discussions about the internal/external status of the Volunteer Center.

**Discussion Starter Worksheet: Considering the "Inside/Outside"  
Option for a Volunteer Center**

For each consideration below, indicate a score of 1 to 5 (1 = lowest and 5 = highest) under *both* the "inside" and "outside" options. Then total the score in each column to compare the two options. Use this as a discussion starter in answering the questions posed in section 10.

**Consideration**

- A. Ability to work with existing volunteerism resources.
- B. Ability to meet United Way's internal volunteer recruitment and development needs.
- C. Ability to serve groups beyond United Way-funded agencies.
- D. Cost-effectiveness.
- E. Ability of United Way to provide funds for the budget.
- F. Availability of United Way in-kind services and resources.
- G. Likelihood that the community will support the Center.
- H. Ability to support other United Way program functions.
- I. Ability to raise funds independently.

**If the Volunteer Center is:**  
**INSIDE      OUTSIDE**

	INSIDE	OUTSIDE

**TOTAL SCORE:**      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_

## The Decision Is Yours

For the purposes of this book, we have assumed that you have decided to create a Volunteer Center as a part of the United Way. This is not an endorsement of the “inside” option but a way to address issues that are unique to a United Way Volunteer Center. There are already many resources available that describe the step-by-step process of starting a new agency, including how to form a board of directors, what legal forms to file, etc. (See some titles in Appendix B.) If you opt for an autonomous Volunteer Center, you are encouraged to research such materials. On the other hand, there is very little in writing that describes the process of starting a new in-house service. This handbook will try to fill that gap.

## Organizational Placement of the Volunteer Center

If you decide to establish an internal Volunteer Center, the next decision is where to “place” it within the United Way structure. While there are no recommended models, it is helpful to realize that the Volunteer Center has unique aspects. For example:

- The Volunteer Center relies on public relations to conduct publicity campaigns to recruit and recognize volunteers. On the other hand, the Center is also doing direct service work (which a PR or Communications division does not) by placing individual volunteers with agencies or coordinating special volunteer projects.
- The Volunteer Center may well operate on hours different from the rest of the United Way, since the Center must be responsive to the needs of the constituents it serves.
- Though not in terms of cash donations, the Volunteer Center is indeed in the business of resource development. This means that it will be in contact with the same corporations, agencies, and individuals who might well be contacted by United Way for money. The Center might also seek in-kind donations or develop a local gifts-in-kind program. The Center’s activities must be coordinated with other resource development efforts of United Way.
- Because the Volunteer Center will be communicating with agencies about their volunteer programs and volunteer management skills development, the Center indirectly will be in the position of knowing a great deal about the operational level of those agencies. Agencies may want the Volunteer Center to report their program successes to the United Way allocation committees. The Volunteer Center needs to be very sensitive with respect to how this information is shared. Of course, each local United Way, Volunteer Center, and the agencies served by the Volunteer Center will establish their own communication procedures.
- The Volunteer Center will be a valuable partner to all divisions of United Way in developing United Way volunteer leaders.
- The Center might be recruiting volunteers to assist in the direct service work of United Way, e.g., with Information and Referral.
- The Volunteer Center can develop pilot programs for volunteers working for the Center, for United Way, and for other community-based organizations.

All of these elements of the Volunteer Center’s potential need to be considered in positioning this service within United Way. The goal is to place the Center where it can maximize service to the community, receive the best staff and resource support, and coordinate with other United Way programs.

For information on how other United Ways have approached the placement of their Volunteer Centers, refer to United Way of America’s publication, *Volunteer Centers: What They Do and How They Do It\**. The most frequently reported placement is in a Community Services or Community Resources Division—or as a division in its own right.

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\**Volunteer Centers: What They Do and How They Do It*. United Way of America: 1988.

## 11: The Budget

What will the Volunteer Center cost? This critical question does not have a single answer. The Center's budget will be determined primarily by the service goals set. If the Center is expected to provide a wide range of services and programs, it will necessarily require more staff and support than if its scope is limited to, say, simply compiling a list of organizations seeking volunteers.

As you consider the possible budget for the Volunteer Center, keep in mind that the first year start-up budget will be higher than the continuing operating budget. Higher costs are attributable to your need to purchase equipment, conduct surveys, develop introductory publicity campaigns, and to other activities that are needed to get the venture off the ground.

This section examines the various budget categories. For each line item, consider whether or not your United Way already has resources to share with the new Volunteer Center. Consider, too, if it might be possible to obtain in-kind donations or services to meet some of these needs. In addition, you may wish to conduct special fund-raising activities to support Volunteer Center needs and programs. Finally, consider the possibility of charging fees for some services. (See Chapter III: Sections 7, 8, 9; Volunteer Center Service Options.)

### Personnel

As already mentioned, the number, type, and schedule of the Volunteer Center staff you designate or hire will depend upon many other program decisions. The personnel-budget category will, of course, include the cost of hiring the Volunteer Center director, other professional staff, clerical staff, and providing employee benefits. Section 12 discusses staffing more fully.

Determining the salary of the Volunteer Center director might be based on the following criteria:

What are you presently paying other United Way division heads?

Compare the role your Volunteer Center director will be expected to play with the positions of other United Way employees. Then select a salary range that is commensurate with assigned responsibilities.

You may also wish to consider salary ranges for Volunteer Center director positions in communities of similar size and circumstance.

### Office and Meeting Space

The Volunteer Center is a public facility. Many people will want to come to the Center to use its materials. Therefore, the Center needs office space that affords the following on a daily basis:

- Easy access from the entrance of the United Way building.
- Work space for the paid and volunteer staff, including private areas for interviewing those seeking volunteer opportunities.
- Meeting space for committees and other planning groups.

In addition to such ongoing space needs, the Volunteer Center will periodically require space for larger group meetings, such as training workshops.

If you have decided to offer decentralized services, you will need to budget for space in branch offices.

## **Furniture and Equipment**

Assess furniture and equipment needs in terms of the impact of many people (employees and volunteers) coming into the Volunteer Center at various hours. Most of the items in the following list are capital expenditures which will not have to be repeated each year. However, associated maintenance costs should also be considered.

- Desks, tables, and chairs are needed for the volunteer staff as well as for the permanent staff. Because meetings will often be held at the Center, tables and chairs should be available.
- Coat racks and storage space for personal belongings.
- A small computer or access to the United Way's mainframe computer, and a printer.
- Typewriters for the Center's clerical staff and at least one extra one for the volunteers who will be helping out.
- File cabinets. One of the more common Volunteer Center services is the maintenance of files on volunteer opportunities. This will mean records on a wide array of community agencies, including sample brochures, etc.
- Bookshelves and display racks. The number needed will depend upon the size of the library expected. Some thought needs to be given to how material will be arranged for the public to "browse" through information about volunteer opportunities.
- Slide projector and screen for various recruitment, recognition, and other presentations. It will be helpful to have access to a VCR and television monitor, since videotapes are increasingly common, especially for training sessions.
- Comfortable furniture for a conversation/interview area or as a reading room.
- Bulletin boards for posting a variety of information. Such bulletin boards might be mounted throughout the United Way building so that all visitors can be kept informed about volunteerism issues.
- Copying equipment (or access to it), including a mimeograph or other low-cost duplication machine.

## **Telephone**

The number of telephone instruments and lines will depend upon the size and nature of the Volunteer Center's activities. Recognize that the Volunteer Center will need to be in constant contact with the public and that the telephone is an essential tool for Center activities.

Consider the impact on the United Way's present telephone system when you add a Volunteer Center to the load of calls. Ideally, the Center should have a direct line so that the public has direct access. If you cannot arrange a private line, be certain that your present switchboard can indeed handle the increased number of calls.

Consider temporary lines which can be installed if the Volunteer Center launches a special recruitment campaign, such as a telethon.

Because rates for telephone service are still changing, it is difficult to predict how this budget line item may increase in the future. Even local calls will incur expense and should therefore be anticipated in planning for the Volunteer Center.

## **Supplies**

This is a budget category that is too often treated as a minor expense line. It isn't. Budgeting for supplies should be done on the basis of both the number of Volunteer Center employees and the number of volunteers assisting the Center. Consumption of supplies will increase as the number of active volunteers increases—productivity comes at the cost of support materials.

## **Printing and Reproduction**

This is a major line item for a Volunteer Center, especially in the first year. The following items will all require printing or duplication of some sort:

- Brochure describing the Volunteer Center
- Agency surveys and questionnaires
- Volunteer opportunity forms
- Lists or directories of volunteer opportunities
- Applications for volunteer placement and/or referral
- Various record-keeping forms
- Recruitment brochures, flyers, posters, etc.
- Targeted mailings, including press releases
- Recognition-event invitations, programs, certificates, etc.
- Volunteer Center newsletter
- Training materials
- Mailing labels

The cost of such items depends on the variables of quantity, quality, and possible in-kind donations. Check with your Communications division (or marketing and/or communications volunteers) for information about these costs.

## **Postage**

Postage may be a costly item if many mass mailings are contemplated for agency surveys, volunteer recruitment, etc. Newsletters require postage. The timeliness of certain communications may necessitate first-class postage rather than less expensive bulk mail.

## **Support for Volunteer Center Volunteers**

The Volunteer Center has the responsibility to act on its own best advice. The Center must provide its own volunteers with the support needed to do their jobs well. Such support includes:

- Recognition of Volunteer Center volunteers, such as certificates, periodic special events, or small gifts;
- Funds to reimburse volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses such as transportation, child care, mid-day meals, etc.;
- Access to refreshments during the work day, such as coffee, soft drinks, or fruit; and
- Insurance coverage for accidents or liability incurred through work on behalf of the Volunteer Center.



## **Insurance**

Having mentioned insurance for Volunteer Center volunteers, it would be prudent to discuss the potential insurance coverage needs for the Volunteer Center (and United Way) itself. In today's litigation-minded society, it is necessary to protect against the possibility of lawsuits. Clarify which activities are already covered under present United Way insurance policies and which are not. Do not assume full coverage! For example, if the Volunteer Center coordinates a celebration for National Volunteer Week, do you have/need special events coverage for that one day?\*

## **Books and Other Volunteerism Resources**

Most public and college libraries do not maintain extensive collections on volunteerism. So most Volunteer Centers find it necessary to begin collecting books, magazines, and other materials on the subject of volunteer management. Apart from an annual book-purchasing budget (which will be determined by the expectations of the size of the Center's library), monies will be needed for ongoing subscriptions to volunteerism periodicals, such as *The Journal of Volunteer Administration* and *Voluntary Action Leadership*.\*

A recent development in the volunteer field has been the availability of audiovisual training materials, including videotapes, films, and slides. The Volunteer Center might well wish to purchase such resources for its own training events and also for loan (or rental) to community agencies.

## **Professional Fees and Conference Expenses**

The Volunteer Center needs to be part of the widest-possible network of volunteerism organizations. Not only is this helpful for the professional development of the staff, but it also increases the value of the Volunteer Center to the community—others can then depend upon the Center to be “in the know” about what is happening on the state and national levels.

Therefore, funds need to be allocated for memberships in various volunteerism associations (see Chapter V: Section 16: Interrelationships; and Appendix B: Resources). In many cases, such membership fees include subscriptions to pertinent journals and discounts to conferences.

The Volunteer Center staff will want to participate in volunteerism conferences. This means a budget line item(s) for registration fees, travel, lodging, and incidental expenses. The Director should have some flexibility in how to expend this conference budget. For example, certain conferences may be valuable enough to enable more than one Volunteer Center employee to attend. Also, it is a form of volunteer recognition to offer at least partial expense reimbursement to Center volunteers (perhaps, for example, a member of the Advisory Council) to attend a volunteerism conference with the staff—or as the representative of the Center.

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\*See Appendix B, Special Resources.

## **Consultants and Trainers**

Consultants and trainers who are specialists in volunteer administration have become available as the volunteer field has developed. The Volunteer Center might wish to tap this source of expertise for Advisory Council training, tailored consultation on some aspects of Center work, or as presenters at public training workshops.

The Volunteer Center also has frequent need of someone with design expertise, such as a graphic artist, to create posters and other materials with a special "look." While such assistance might be found on a volunteer basis, the volume and print deadlines involved might require paying a fee to ensure the best product.

## **The Unusual**

Be prepared for the Volunteer Center to develop out-of-the-ordinary needs. The creative aspects of recruitment, advocacy, and recognition require materials that set an upbeat tone or atmosphere. So expect the unusual.

## **United Way In-Kind Services**

The integration of a Volunteer Center within United Way also implies the provision of necessary in-kind services. If United Way is unable to offer these items, they will need to be budgeted as cash expenses:

- Rent and utilities
- Reception services
- Mail room services (which may include mailing list management)
- In-house printing or duplication (since some of the materials needed by the Volunteer Center may be beyond the capability of most in-house print shops, the Center budget should still include a line item for outside printing)
- Custodial services
- Security services

## **Budget Range**

It is impossible to recommend a standard budget for a Volunteer Center. However, it might be useful to know that United Way of America surveyed 115 United Way Volunteer Centers at the end of 1986 and learned that their budgets ranged from zero to a high of \$233,000.00.\* The median total operating budget (including payroll) was \$32,135.00.

Clearly, this spread implies wide diversity in the types of services provided by these Volunteer Centers and in the number of employees staffing them. Your own decisions about services, resources, and staff will guide your budget development.

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\**Volunteer Centers: What They Do and How They Do It.* United Way of America, 1988.

## Volunteer Center Budget Worksheet

### PERSONNEL

Director  
(full-time or \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other assigned staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Benefits \_\_\_\_\_

**Subtotal—Personnel:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

Office furniture, including desks, chairs, lamps, etc. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Typewriter(s) \_\_\_\_\_

File cabinets \_\_\_\_\_

Bookshelves \_\_\_\_\_

Coat racks, storage cabinets, lounge furniture, etc., for Center volunteers and visitors \_\_\_\_\_

Bulletin boards and exhibit equipment \_\_\_\_\_

Slide projector and screen \_\_\_\_\_

Copier or other duplicating equipment \_\_\_\_\_

Minicomputer and printer \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Subtotal—Furniture and Equipment:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### TELEPHONE

Installation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly service charge × 12 \_\_\_\_\_

Toll calls/long distance × 12 \_\_\_\_\_

**Subtotal—Telephone:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLIES**

Office and maintenance supplies, estimated @ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month  
× 12 . . . taking the number of volunteers into consideration as users of supplies,  
along with salaried staff. \_\_\_\_\_

**Subtotal—Supplies:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**PRINTING AND REPRODUCTION**

Photocopying at \$ \_\_\_\_\_ /mo. × 12 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Printing (typesetting included where necessary): \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Center descriptive brochure \_\_\_\_\_

Full range of forms and stationery \_\_\_\_\_

Recruitment materials \_\_\_\_\_

Databank survey materials \_\_\_\_\_

Recognition-event certificates, programs, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Center newsletter (× \_\_\_\_\_ issues per year) \_\_\_\_\_

Training manuals and handbooks \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Subtotal—Printing:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**POSTAGE**

Regular correspondence, \$ \_\_\_\_\_ /mo. × 12 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Periodic mass mailings for surveying and recruitment \_\_\_\_\_

Periodic bulk mailing of newsletter and special-event announcements \_\_\_\_\_

**Subtotal—Postage:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEER CENTER VOLUNTEERS**

Recognition items \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Reimbursement for transportation/mileage and for out-of-pocket expenses \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance \_\_\_\_\_

**Subtotal—Volunteer Support:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**INSURANCE**

(May be included in overall United Way policy, or may need to be a special rider  
or specific new policy.)

**Subtotal—Insurance:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**BOOKS AND OTHER VOLUNTEERISM RESOURCES**

Book purchases \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Subscriptions to journals \_\_\_\_\_  
Audiovisual materials purchase or rental \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Subtotal—Books:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**PROFESSIONAL FEES AND CONFERENCE EXPENSES**

Membership fees in volunteerism professional associations \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Registration fees for seminars, conferences, etc. (for paid staff or designated volunteers) \_\_\_\_\_  
Travel and expenses for conferences \_\_\_\_\_  
**Subtotal—Professional Fees:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**CONSULTANTS AND TRAINERS**

Fees for expert consultation \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Fees to guest trainers at Volunteer Center workshops \_\_\_\_\_  
**Subtotal—Fees:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER**

Miscellaneous: preparation for the "unusual" \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**Subtotal—Other:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL COSTS** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**ALLOCATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES**

Space, rent, utilities, and maintenance services \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Reception services \_\_\_\_\_  
Mail room services \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff time \_\_\_\_\_  
Equipment and supplies \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## 12: Staffing the Center

### Full- or Part-Time Staff

Decisions regarding the staffing of the Volunteer Center are vital to the success of its mission. How you designate or hire the Center's staff will be influenced by the goals you have set for the Center—you will need the number and type of employees to carry out the activities desired. So there is not one simple formula for staffing.

In United Way of America's survey of Volunteer Centers, a number of United Ways noted that they have only part-time Volunteer Center staff. Often this means that a full-time United Way employee is assigned to develop the Volunteer Center. This new function may be added to the person's existing job description. If you are considering this option, be certain that the designated staff person welcomes the opportunity and is given the time to perform the work.

A full-service Volunteer Center will need a full-time director from the start. If you are not able to budget for this position, recognize that the Center's programs will be limited. If you must begin with a part-time position, clarify your expectations:

- What exactly does "part-time" mean? How many hours of the day or week will be devoted to the Volunteer Center? How will the Center be "covered" when the part-time staff is unavailable? For example, who will answer the phone?
- If present United Way staff are reassigned to the Volunteer Center as an added responsibility, how will their existing workloads be decreased to "make room" for Volunteer Center activities?
- At what level of program growth will the part-time status be reviewed to determine whether more staff time is needed and if the Volunteer Center is ready for full-time staff?
- Does the rest of the United Way staff understand the demands of the Volunteer Center function and stand ready to support its activities when the workload is especially heavy (such as during National Volunteer Week)?

The question may arise as to whether a *volunteer* could be found to serve as the Volunteer Center director. While this may sound like an elegant solution to a funding challenge, recruiting a volunteer as director is only an interim possibility at best. The issue is not one of *competence*—there are many men and women with the skills necessary to head a Volunteer Center who might be willing to offer their expertise at no salary. But very few of them will be available eight hours a day, five days a week. So the issue is one of *continuity*.

A volunteer might be found to initiate the Volunteer Center planning process on a part-time basis. Once the position requires full-time attention, however, the pool of people financially able to volunteer 40 hours a week will be small. If several volunteers attempt to "job share" the position, the Volunteer Center will have no clear leader, its operations may suffer, and the situation will be very confusing to the public.

There is also the consideration of sponsor commitment. Whether the Volunteer Center is a part of United Way or a self-incorporated agency, the decision to expend funds for necessary staffing is a tangible demonstration of support for the work of the Center. Therefore, the best route to follow is to *budget* an adequate salary for the director and all desired staff. If the Volunteer Center is then fortunate enough to identify one or more volunteers willing to work in any of the positions for no remuneration, that will be their choice. If such volunteers leave after a period of time, the Volunteer Center's budget will be in place to enable the possible hiring of replacements.

There is nothing inherent in the work of a Volunteer Center that makes it more or less appropriate to utilize volunteers to do it. So be careful of any assumptions that conclude it is somehow "right" to recruit volunteers for this function. If you are debating whether or not to go the volunteer staffing route, ask yourself if you would be leaning towards unsalaried full-time positions in the public relations, accounting, or maintenance departments.

## Staff Functions

At a minimum, your Volunteer Center should have a director and a secretary. Secretarial support is vital to the Center to handle the demands of the typing, mass mailings, computer data entry, record keeping, and telephone answering required by an active program. Telephone coverage is especially important because recruitment and other publicity campaigns will generate calls from the public. The director (even if full-time) will often be in the field and therefore the Center secretary must be there to respond to the Center's constituents. Further, the secretary may well be the staff member supervising the volunteers who assist the Center itself.

Volunteers can be recruited to help with clerical work, but it is not realistic to expect the Volunteer Center director to recruit volunteers for all secretarial needs. The problem is one of schedule, not of skills. A salary allows the employer to "demand" specific work hours; volunteers have the choice of working only a few hours a week. This means that, without a paid secretary, the Volunteer Center director might have to recruit and supervise as many as eight or ten different clerical volunteers each week—making the "cost" of such support extremely high and at the expense of the director's other tasks. Secretarial support is not the area in which to "save" money.

Apart from the director and secretary, the Volunteer Center may need staff to fulfill major program functions such as:

- Handling the various computer-related projects, such as the databank of volunteer opportunities or a skillsbank.
- Public relations, especially media relations. The person handling this function might write a newsletter, monthly reports, position papers, and training materials.
- Developing and maintaining the library. This is a major task in the beginning, when materials have to be located and ordered. The library function can include working with new directors of volunteers to introduce them to available resources, handling consignment sales of books, and coordinating the audio-visual loan/rental program.
- Developing orientation and training curricula for regularly scheduled workshops; conducting the ongoing training (this presupposes expertise in volunteer administration); and working with outside consultants hired to conduct special training workshops.
- Recruiting and managing in-house volunteers.
- Coordinating special projects. A number of the potential Volunteer Center services in Section 8 would require a staff member designated to manage the service.

One variable in determining the Center's staffing needs is the availability of skills within the United Way itself. Can existing public relations staff handle the increased workload of the Volunteer Center's communications needs? Do United Way's Information and Referral staff have the time to design the Volunteer Center's data collection surveys and/or can the data be integrated into the I&R records?

## Qualifications for a Volunteer Center Director

The demands of the director position will vary greatly with the expectations for the Center itself. Rather than offer a job description, this section will consider the qualifications needed by a Volunteer Center director.

In the past, some United Ways have seen volunteer administration as an extension of social work and have therefore sought out people holding Master of Social Work degrees as ideal candidates for the Volunteer Center directorship. Having a social-work background may be an appealing aspect to a particular candidate's resume in applying for the job of Volunteer Center director, but it should not be United Way's prime requirement. In fact, there is no one academic discipline that prepares candidates for a Volunteer Center director position. Be open to a variety of applicant backgrounds.

The job is first and foremost a management position. The candidate must be able to demonstrate competence in planning and implementing programs through paid and volunteer staff.

Consider the following possible qualifications:

- Ability to articulate a positive image of volunteers: why they are important; what their potential is for service delivery. This is vital—you don't want to hire someone with negative stereotypes about volunteers.
- Vision—of what volunteers can accomplish and of where the Volunteer Center might go in the future.
- Marketing skills—capable of creatively promoting volunteerism and the Volunteer Center.
- Ability to assess community needs.
- Knowledge about public relations, especially media contacts.
- Up-to-date understanding of the field of volunteerism, particularly of its scope and of trends and issues affecting it.
- Knowledge of your community, especially in terms of knowing at least the volunteerism-related agencies, organizations, and clearinghouses already active. This should include a working knowledge of the United Way itself. (Note: If you hire someone from outside your geographic area, be aware that she/he will have to get acquainted with your community and cannot "hit the ground running" in coordinating local services. This does not mean that a newcomer cannot be effective, however, especially if the candidate has prior volunteer program experience in another geographic area.)
- Leadership experience at another agency in your community. Be certain his/her reputation was positive in terms of willingness to cooperate and ability to follow through.
- Strong general management skills; experience in budget development and budget control.
- Proven ability to work with both paid and volunteer staff.
- Understanding of the elements of a successful volunteer program, ideally through personal experience in leading a volunteer project.
- Strong interpersonal skills. An effective Volunteer Center director has enthusiasm and energy, and can motivate diverse individuals and organizations by demonstrating genuine interest and understanding.
- A comfortable presentation style—the Volunteer Center director is often called upon to speak to audiences large and small.
- Creativity and the ability to see the community as a source of potential resources and to recognize possible solutions to social problems.

It is helpful to ask job applicants what volunteering they themselves have done in the past or are doing now. The way they answer this question—tone and enthusiasm as well as concrete details—should be a clue to their attitude about volunteerism. However, be careful not to assume that just because a person has been an active volunteer, he or she automatically understands the dynamics of administering volunteer programs. Being a direct-service volunteer is useful background for understanding the value and potential of volunteers, but is no substitute for experience in management-level responsibilities.



## **How to Find a Volunteer Center Director**

Increasingly, it is possible to find people with experience in volunteer administration. While someone who has been a "director of volunteers" in one setting may need to learn the wider issues of the community at large, the generic skills of managing a volunteer program have great applicability to the Volunteer Center's work. Also, the Center will be serving directors of volunteers as one major constituency. Someone who has "been there" and understands the demands of this job will be better received than someone who speaks only theoretically about working with volunteers.

Potential candidates for the position of Volunteer Center director include directors of volunteers in larger community agencies or officers of large membership organizations. In both cases, the person must be able to coordinate diverse volunteer activities effectively.

Some candidates might show the letters "CVA" after their names. This means the candidate is "Certified in Volunteer Administration," a designation earned by completing the Association for Volunteer Administration's certification program. "CVA" is earned by the demonstration of competency in the functions of a volunteer administrator to a peer review panel. It is an excellent indicator of the candidate's experience in and commitment to volunteerism.

Another approach to locating a Volunteer Center director is to consider positions that involve successful management in areas not necessarily labeled "volunteerism." This would include:

- Political campaign managers
- Issues/legislative advocacy coordinators
- Special- or community-events organizers
- Staff of collaborative ventures, such as church councils or youth services associations
- Legislative assistants
- College student activities coordinators
- Community or neighborhood organizers
- Fund raisers who specialize in special events
- Civic planners

## **Volunteer Staff**

The Volunteer Center should serve as a model for the effective utilization of volunteers. Possible volunteer assignments at the Center are as varied as the programs themselves. There are roles for skilled and generalist volunteers, for short-term and ongoing assignments, for individuals, and for groups. Qualified "administrative volunteers" can direct projects independently.

There are as many sources of volunteers for Volunteer Center positions as are available to any community agency. Student interns, retired professionals, past presidents of civic groups, and directors of volunteers seeking personal professional development are all potential candidates.

Your United Way might also consider placement with the Volunteer Center as a prime option for its annual group of loaned executives. A loaned executive with expertise in, for example, marketing, might make an enormous difference in the outreach efforts of the Volunteer Center . . . and therefore of the United Way.

## 13: The Advisory Committee

Your Volunteer Center should be able to draw upon the expertise of the entire United Way in accomplishing its work. However, it is extremely valuable to identify a consistent group of advisors that meets periodically to help the Volunteer Center in several ways by:

1. Reacting to proposed services and projects, assessing need and feasibility; and projecting possible outcomes.
2. Sharing expertise, information, or contacts in specific areas to which the Center's staff may not otherwise have access.
3. Helping to evaluate the Volunteer Center from an "outside" perspective.
4. Keeping the Center alert to the volunteer community's concerns.
5. Broadening the perspective beyond that of the United Way.
6. Serving as a source of and sounding board for new ideas.
7. Endorsing Volunteer Center projects and helping gain support for them.
8. Representing the Volunteer Center on the United Way board.

This group, which is usually known as an Advisory Council or Committee, should be small enough to allow lively interaction among members at meetings. Members can be asked to divide their service between time spent at meetings and time spent individually sharing their special expertise with the Center's staff.

### Selecting Members

Possible Advisory Committee candidates include:

- At least one member of the United Way board of directors—to ensure a direct line of communication to the board.
- At least one United Way staff member or volunteer from another division—to offer the perspective of other closely related divisions of the organization.
- Representatives of other volunteer "clearinghouses" in the community (possibly the Red Cross, RSVP, SCORE, Business Volunteers for the Arts, etc.).
- A representative from the DOVIA, CVC, and other volunteer leadership associations in the community.
- Not-for-profit agency executive directors from United Way-funded agencies and from non-United Way-funded agencies, from human-service agencies, and from other types of programs and organizations.
- A continuing-education staff member from a local college.
- Staff from the mayor's office or the county commissioner's office.
- A representative of the local foundation community.
- Representatives of large all-volunteer service organizations.
- Someone from the local Ad Council or similar group.
- A representative of the mass media.
- People in leadership roles for certain target populations: the elderly, youth, minorities, new Americans, etc. (Clearly, the Advisory Committee should be a diverse group of men and women, of varied ages, races, and backgrounds.)

One category missing from the above list is “volunteers.” Imagine trying to find a representative “worker” or “employee.” Instead, ensure that every member of the Advisory Committee is, in addition to his or her other qualifications, also a volunteer in some capacity.

Another approach to recruiting Advisory Committee members is to identify the skills or expertise needed and find people who can offer them. Some useful skills might be: computer programming; public relations; marketing; or communications.

Each member should also provide talent needed by your Volunteer Center. The Committee Composition Analysis Chart (insert) examines members in terms of the constituencies they represent, that is, sex, age, race or ethnic background, business or occupation, and geographic area. It also lists area of expertise for each member and relationships with other persons in the community who are instrumental to the success of the agency.



## **Making the Advisory Committee Effective**

In developing your Advisory Committee, be sure to practice good volunteer management techniques. This means:

1. Develop a written job description for members. The description should include expectations regarding attendance at meetings as well as preparation for the meetings. It also should specify the length of term in office and how new members are to be recruited.
2. Orient new Advisory Committee members to the mission, goals, and current activities of the Volunteer Center. Share pertinent materials (such as long-range plans) and keep advisors informed of progress.
3. Acknowledge the Committee's input. This does not mean that you must follow every recommendation made, but it does mean that you have an obligation to consider suggestions and indicate why certain ideas were not accepted. Your advisors will do a better job if they understand why their advice is or is not useful.
4. Provide recognition for work done. This means giving public credit for good ideas and thanking volunteers for their service as advisors.

You have the option of allowing the Advisory Committee to elect its own officers and then asking the chairperson to run the Committee meetings. Because the Advisory Committee does not have a policy-making role and serves at the Volunteer Center's request, it is legitimate to have the Volunteer Center director develop the agenda and chair the meetings. In many instances, the Chair of the Advisory Committee is a member of the United Way board and the Volunteer Center Committee is a Standing Committee of that board.

## **Annual Volunteer Center Evaluation**

A regular reporting system will undoubtedly be determined for the Volunteer Center to keep the United Way informed of progress in meeting goals and objectives. The Advisory Committee should be seen as an important additional mechanism for ensuring that the Volunteer Center stays on track.

At least annually, Committee members can survey their own colleagues to gain insight into the Volunteer Center's reputation. Develop a system in which the Volunteer Center can ask the Committee to present questions about the impact and value of Center services to the community. Committee members can offer their own opinions about needs that should be addressed, as well as report the responses from other community groups and leaders.

If users of Volunteer Center services are to be surveyed periodically for evaluation purposes, Committee members might be appropriately used to conduct the interviews.\*

An instrument for use in a Customer Survey has recently been developed by the Volunteer Center of the Mile High United Way. Copies of the survey can be obtained from United Way of America's Volunteer and Outreach Services Department.\*\*

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\*An *Evaluation Packet*, for use in assessing programs, is available from United Way of America's Community Initiatives Division.

\*\*Customer Survey, Mile High United Way, Denver, Colorado. 1988.

## Chapter V: Operating the Volunteer Center

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### 14: Locating Volunteer Opportunities

One key to a Volunteer Center's success is the quality of its data about where and how volunteers are being utilized or are needed in the community. Do not expect to gather this information in a short time. It is an important, ongoing task.

If you return to the worksheet on "Possible Volunteer Center Constituencies," you will have an excellent starting point for collecting data on volunteer opportunities. The "Settings" heading will give you good ideas about agencies and groups that should be included in the survey. These settings fall into two major categories:

- Organizations that consider themselves part of the volunteer field and use the term "volunteers" to describe a portion of their workers; and
- Organizations that may not recognize their connection to the volunteer field and the volunteer nature of the work they do.

No group or organization is too specialized or too small to survey eventually. For the first wave of data collection, the Center will benefit most from selection of those agencies most likely to welcome its services.\*

The Center will want to rank all the possible settings in which volunteers work to determine the order in which the surveying will be done. Criteria for categorizing a setting as a priority might be:

- It is a United Way-funded agency; and/or
- It has a clearly established volunteer program; and/or
- It is likely to be of interest to a wide variety of potential volunteers; and/or
- It is focused on a communitywide problem or service; and/or
- It is already listed in the United Way's Information and Referral databank.

Once the priority-mailing list has been compiled, subsequent lists can be gathered for second and third waves of mailings.

The need to prioritize the survey recipients is meant neither to establish a hierarchy of agencies nor to give special attention to the larger and perhaps more traditional agencies. As a practical matter, it is logical for the Volunteer Center to start its databank with organizations that are firmly part of the volunteer world and easy to find. Later, as the Volunteer Center begins surveying smaller and more specialized groups, it will collect information of perhaps even greater importance—the Volunteer Center will begin to uncover volunteer opportunities. It is contact with the less-well-known organizations that places the Volunteer Center in such a unique role as resource finder/mobilizer.

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\*Note: The Lincoln Filene Center for Citizenship and Public Affairs of Tufts University recently undertook a study of the future need for volunteering in the Greater Boston / Eastern Massachusetts region. Copies of the results of the study, as well as the survey instrument, are available from United Way of America's Volunteer and Outreach Services Department.

## Conducting the Survey

Remember that the Volunteer Center is new to your services and agency system, and that agencies unfamiliar with the Center or its services may be reluctant to complete a lengthy survey. For that reason, you may consider a two-step process. For the first mailing, prepare a cover letter that:

1. Announces the formation of your Volunteer Center and lists the services it will offer to the community, emphasizing the services you will provide the organizations surveyed.
2. Explains the databank and how it will be used (and not used, such as not selling mailing lists without permission, etc.).
3. Introduces the Volunteer Center staff and names the Advisory Committee (and/or Planning Team).
4. Clarifies the United Way's role in organizing the Volunteer Center, particularly noting that the Center will not be limited to serving only United Way-funded agencies.

Do not be afraid to make this a two-page letter. You are, after all, introducing a service that anticipates a long-term relationship with the recipients of this letter.

If your Volunteer Center's descriptive brochure is ready, enclose it with the letter. If no brochure is available, consider printing some sort of "Let Us Introduce Ourselves" flyer that helps to explain the Volunteer Center. The design and layout of this introductory mail will create an image—a "look"—for your Center and help establish its identity.

In this first step of the process, enclose only a very brief response form to identify those organizations willing to complete the longer questionnaire. The response form should ask the respondents to:

- Verify the accuracy of the organization's name and address as shown on the mailing label; and
- List the name, title, and telephone number of the person designated to be responsible for volunteers.
- Check "yes" or "no" boxes to:
  - Note whether they currently involve volunteers in service delivery;
  - Indicate whether they anticipate seeking new or additional volunteers in the coming year; and
  - Indicate if the organization is interested in being listed in the Center's databank and is therefore willing to complete a longer questionnaire, or if the organization is not interested in being involved at the present time.

(Note: Make this the last item on the response form since you want, at a minimum, to gather the answers to the preceding questions, even if the organization concludes it does not want to be listed now.)

You will enjoy a higher rate of return if you print the response form on a postage-paid postcard.

The second step, of course, is to contact all the agencies that agree to complete the longer questionnaire. However, be prepared to do some follow-up on those organizations that do not respond to your first mailing! You may need another letter or perhaps a quick phone call to determine whether or not they wish to move to "step two."

Give careful thought to your questionnaire. Consider all the information you will need for later use. Consider, too, how you will collate and store this data: Will the material remain on the original forms and simply be filed, or will everything be entered into a computer?

**Agency Information Sheet**  
(Each agency completes one form)

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Main Office Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street)

\_\_\_\_\_ (City) \_\_\_\_\_ (State) \_\_\_\_\_ (Zip)

Telephone Number: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Area Code)

Branch Offices: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Addresses: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Area Code)

Brief Description of Agency Purpose and Services: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Client Group(s) Served: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Geographic Area(s) Served: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hours of Operation: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach descriptive brochures, if available.



(Each agency completes as many pages as necessary—you may want to request that they make copies to furnish one description for each job.)

page \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ pages

### Volunteer Position Description

(Please make more copies if necessary.)

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Placement Address (If different from main agency address):

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Street)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(City) (State) (Zip)

Telephone Number: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Area Code)

Nature of Placement: One-Time Event  Short-Term Assignment  Long-Term Assignment

Days and Times Needed:

<i>One-Time Events/Short-Term</i>		<i>Long-Term</i>
Date(s): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekdays:	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekends:
_____	Mornings _____	Mornings _____
_____	Afternoons _____	Afternoons _____
Time of Year: _____	Evenings _____	Evenings _____
_____		

Profile of Position Responsibilities (or attach a volunteer job description): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Number of openings as of \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
(today's date) (number)

Technical Skills Required (Be specific, including foreign languages): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Could this position be filled by:
- someone under 21
  - a family unit
  - a non-English speaker
  - a retired person
  - someone with a physical disability
  - short-term assignments (time of the year)

One way to collect the necessary information is to create a single-page “cover sheet” for basic facts on each agency, followed by volunteer position descriptions for each volunteer assignment available. (The agencies should make as many copies as are necessary to record each volunteer job.) The accompanying examples of both pages include information about the nature and scope of the agency and assignments, plus:

- Branch locations versus main office
- Location of the volunteer work itself
- Long-term (ongoing) assignments (desired schedule)
- One-time events (specific dates)
- Short-term assignments (time of year)
- Number of volunteers needed in each position as of the date form is completed (though this number will change, it will at least give a ballpark figure for reference)

Ask each agency to send descriptive brochures about their organization and, if available, written job descriptions for each volunteer position. This means that, even if you plan to automate the basic agency data, a file folder must be created for each responding group to hold the brochures and other materials. These folders will be used by members of the public researching volunteer options.

Be aware that, at this stage, you are doing a nonevaluative search. You will be accepting the information at face value. Later on, the Volunteer Center may begin to assess the quality of volunteer assignments listed, but the initial task is to collect the most current information on volunteer involvement.

### **“Second Wave” Surveying**

As the Volunteer Center expands its circle of contacts and begins to reach organizations that may not consider themselves part of the volunteer world, the cover letter and perhaps the questionnaire itself will have to be modified to communicate effectively. This is the stage at which you begin to offer a new perspective to the community. The Volunteer Center’s challenge is to find the common denominator of volunteer involvement among all the organizations in the community—and demonstrate the commonalities to everyone.

It is worth noting that while the Center will be doing outreach to locate volunteer opportunities. As time goes on, organizations will start to contact the Center on their own, asking to be listed. This is the situation you want to encourage.

### **Structuring Your Databank**

Whether your Volunteer Center’s databank will have manual or computer files, the same design questions apply. As always, there are choices to be made:

1. Should you file entries according to agency, and/or by the type of volunteer assignment being offered, and/or by features such as the skills required or geographic location?
2. Should you establish a system for noting how often a particular file is referenced? And the result of that reference (e.g., a referral)?
3. How often and in what way will you update the information? Obviously, the value of the databank is based on its accuracy and information on volunteer opportunities subject to change.
4. Will short-term assignments and special events be handled separately or in the same file as ongoing or long-term assignments?

5. How will the databank listing be tagged to indicate the availability of descriptive brochures in the pamphlet file—and how will the pamphlet file be organized to correspond with the databank?

The more ways databank information can be accessed, the more useful it will be. Spend time thinking through your system and how it is most likely to be used by the public and by the Center itself. Then create a system that can grow with you.

### **Advocacy for New Volunteer Opportunities**

Almost from the beginning, but certainly as time goes on, the Volunteer Center will find itself advocating for the creation of new volunteer roles. This may happen when an organization completes the survey and seems to have only one or two assignments open to volunteers. Or it may be a part of consultation provided to an agency already inquiring about starting a new volunteer program.

More often, the need for finding innovative placements will derive from a member of the public asking for help in finding something very specific to do as a volunteer—and discovering that the databank contains no option in that area. In such cases, it is wasteful of the potential volunteer's interest to attempt to divert him or her into an already-established slot. It is far more productive to seek out organizations that may never have considered accepting a volunteer, but who might in fact accept an actual candidate introduced to them. When the Volunteer Center facilitates such resource finding, it is fulfilling its mission to increase volunteer capacity by assuring a successful "match" and by uncovering yet another organization to add into the databank.

## **15: Visibility and Recruitment**

### **An Overview**

The Volunteer Center will be faced with the challenge of keeping volunteerism, and the Center, in the spotlight. Gaining and maintaining such visibility is a task that requires creativity, ingenuity, and tenacity.

To accomplish their goals, Volunteer Centers need to practice sound marketing techniques. This manual will not attempt to be a primer in how to make media contacts or how to generate publicity. For such generic subjects, the Center staff is urged to read existing books and guides, consult with the United Way's marketing staff, and recruit expert volunteers able to give practical advice on publicity and marketing.

The Volunteer Center may discover that public relations consultants and media representatives—as many of us do—share certain misinformation about volunteers and the subject of volunteerism. The Volunteer Center's public advocacy may have to begin with the people who will be spreading the message to the general public.

What can the Volunteer Center expect to encounter from the media or from marketing specialists? Stereotypes such as:

- The image of volunteering as charity and focused mainly on helping the poor;
- That volunteers give, others receive;
- The expectation that most volunteers are white, middle or upper class, female, and without a salaried job;
- The assumption that volunteering is ebbing away because so many women are now in the job market;
- The belief that high unemployment equals low volunteerism (based on the assumption that people only volunteer as a luxury); and
- The concept of volunteering as "helping out," "lending a hand"—non-skilled, amateur, supplemental, "nice" work.

While the media may agree that volunteering is “good news” that deserves some recognition, the recent political emphasis on volunteering as a solution to inadequate funding for social programs has raised media interest. Though some stereotypes remain about volunteering, it will be the Center’s challenge to present volunteerism as an element central to the American way of life.

The Volunteer Center expresses its advocacy for volunteering by constantly emphasizing images that confront or contradict stereotypes about volunteers and volunteering. So:

- Show volunteers doing work that is genuinely meaningful and challenging.
- Provide pictures and examples that establish visually that volunteers come in all sizes, colors, and ages, and in both sexes.
- Use a variety of terms for volunteering in press releases and recruitment messages. Try:
  - “Community service”
  - “Public service”
  - “Self-help”
  - “*Pro bono publico*”
  - “Voluntary action”
  - “Citizen participation”
  - “Community involvement”
- Depict volunteer experiences that are fun and exciting, and that demonstrate the benefits to the volunteers.
- Discourage discussion of volunteers as “saving money.” This falsely implies that money available was not spent because volunteers pitched in. Instead, stress that volunteers enable organizations to serve people more effectively by stretching organizations’ budgets beyond what would otherwise be possible to achieve.

### Ways to Publicize

The media are looking for “news.” Therefore, the Volunteer Center will need to show how volunteer-related items are newsworthy. Recruitment campaigns and recognition events are two major Center efforts that will generate many stories, but also be on the lookout for ways to “piggyback” mention of volunteerism onto other news items. For example, if the newspaper carries an editorial about budget cuts, try to get an “op ed” column published to respond with the volunteer perspective. On Labor Day, make sure unpaid workers—volunteers—get recognized, too. On Thanksgiving, thank volunteers. Possibilities present themselves continuously if you keep alert for angles—in public relations parlance, the news “hook.”

Promotion of volunteerism is certainly not limited to the mass media. Consider all your options:

- Neighborhood newspapers
- Corporate and not-for-profit newsletters
- Exhibits (window displays, booths, etc.)
- Banners and billboards
- Posters and flyers
- Specially-printed items such as placemats in restaurants, bookmarks in libraries, etc.
- Buttons, bumper stickers, balloons and other novelties.

A number of Volunteer Centers have worked with their local Ad Councils to create slogans that have become the theme of the Centers' recruitment and recognition campaigns. Along with a recognizable logo and consistent use of color, such a slogan has many uses. Here are a few that have been successful:

"Volunteers—The Heart of America"

Voluntary Action Center of Summit County  
Akron, Ohio.

"Volunteering Builds a Better You, Too!"

United Way of Greater St. Louis  
St. Louis, Missouri

"They Couldn't Pay Me Enough to Do This. I Volunteered"

Volunteer Involvement Program  
United Way of Central Maryland  
Baltimore, Maryland

"You Can Give Something Money Can't Buy"

Volunteer Involvement Program  
United Way of Central Maryland  
Baltimore, Maryland

### General Publicity Versus Specific Recruitment

The Volunteer Center has two different, though related, tasks: to keep volunteering in the public eye, with the suggestion "be *a* volunteer"; and to stimulate members of the public to offer their volunteer services for specific causes or organizations—in other words, to "become *this* volunteer."

There are a great number of books and articles on effective recruitment of volunteers. Also, talk to directors of volunteers in your community with a track record of successful recruitment. As an overview, here are the key steps to recruiting volunteers:

1. Be as specific as possible in describing each volunteer opportunity. Highlight particular volunteer job descriptions, using the job **title** rather than simply asking people to "help out." Keep in mind that the word "volunteer" does not describe a function. No one would answer a want ad seeking an "employee"—their first question would be: "to do what?"

Recruit prospective volunteers by asking for "tutors," "coaches," "tour guides," etc. The fact that such positions are unpaid is part of the job description, not the job.

2. Brainstorm potential sources of volunteers. Do this **BEFORE** creating any recruitment materials. You want to target your audience carefully. As a Volunteer Center, you have two ways of approaching your target audiences:

- A. Targeting by **type of assignment**. This means identifying where you might locate people with specific skills, interests, or talents. For example, if you have a number of volunteer opportunities that require driving a car, you might brainstorm such potential sources of volunteers as: drive-in windows of all types; car washes; parking lots; auto-parts stores; any place that drivers and owners of vehicles might be found.

- B. Targeting by **demographic profile**. This means aiming your campaign at specific populations: racial or ethnic minorities; various age groups; new Americans; certain geographic areas; the unemployed, etc. The strategy is much the same as just described for locating people with special skills. In fact, you can combine the two approaches by selecting a particular volunteer opportunity (e.g., tutoring), and focusing on a particular desired population (e.g., disabled people). When you have brainstormed all the places you might find people with the skills or interests to be tutors (e.g., libraries, adult-education classes, bookstores, etc.), edit the list to identify which of these sources might also have a high probability of reaching disabled persons (e.g., the branch library near an independent-living center).

3. Offer people an **opportunity**—do not ask a favor. Be sure to mention the benefits to the volunteer that come as a result of volunteering. This is not a selfish approach to volunteering. Instead, it is based on the concept that volunteering is an exchange in which each party benefits.

People benefit from volunteer experience in many ways. For example, volunteering gives people the opportunity to:

- |                                       |                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Gain satisfaction from helping others | Have fun            |
| Meet new people                       | Explore new careers |
| Make a difference                     | Test skills         |
| Learn something new                   | Use free time well  |
| Create chance                         | Support a cause     |
| Feel pride in their accomplishments   | Feel good           |
| Escape from routine                   | Repay a debt        |
| Accept a challenge                    | Assure change       |
|                                       | Gain status         |

4. Finally, select a **technique** (or techniques) to match the sources you have identified. The use of public speaking, want ads, bumper stickers, or any technique will depend upon what is most likely to work in each situation.

5. Do it. Recruitment is a process of **asking people** to volunteer. Hoping, wishing, and planning are not substitutes for making volunteering visible and accessible to the public.

Remember, the Volunteer Center cannot launch any recruitment campaigns before building its databank of volunteer opportunities. Otherwise, what is there to say? When people are asked to volunteer, they come forward to do so. It is imperative that the Volunteer Center has information on specific volunteer assignments ready to share with prospective volunteers before going public in a recruitment campaign.

### Telethons/Comprehensive Media-Based Campaigns

As previously noted in the section "Most Common Volunteer Center Services" (Chapter II: Section 7), a recent technique has been to enlist local television stations in volunteer-recruitment efforts. One example is the "Volunteer Connection"\* project. Viewers call in to the television station or Volunteer Center in response to specific requests for volunteer assistance.

There is no question that a media promotion raises public awareness of volunteerism. It also serves to acquaint the media with the scope of volunteer activities in the community and with the Volunteer Center—paving the way for continuing coverage.

As a recruitment strategy, a media promotion telethon is labor-intensive, requiring the involvement of knowledgeable people to screen calls and follow up with appropriate referrals. The other issue is that it is difficult to "target" the recruitment approach to particular segments of the audience, creating the possibility that candidates who offer their volunteer services may not be able to find appropriate opportunities. This emphasizes the need for careful matching and the challenge of giving people who have volunteered the best possible experience as volunteers. You must acknowledge the possibility—as in all recruitment efforts—that some volunteers may not be placed. The staff must be prepared to deal with any negative feelings in a supportive way.

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\*Volunteer Connection. VOLUNTEER: The National Center.

Launch a program like this only when you are confident of your ability to handle the volume of calls and of the variety of volunteer opportunities available to meet diverse people's needs. Also, because most television stations reach a wide geographic area, follow the lead of other "Volunteer Connection" projects and form collaborative agreements with Volunteer Centers throughout the viewing area.

Remember that some media recruitment projects are one-time only; other broadly based media projects can last for extended periods of time—they can range from a 2-hour "telethon" special to a year-long series of public-service announcements and special programs.\*

## **16: Interrelationships**

It is clear that the Volunteer Center does not exist in a vacuum. Throughout this manual, references have been made to other organizations that share an interest in volunteerism. If the Volunteer Center is seen as competitive with or even as simply unaware of other projects, the volunteer community will be resentful. The key is for the Volunteer Center to be seen as a place through which any and all volunteer-related groups can find support. The Center is first a convenor, coordinator, and facilitator.

The Volunteer Center represents everyone concerned with volunteerism and is an advocate for volunteers in ways that individual agencies or groups cannot be. The Volunteer Center has a communitywide focus that goes beyond any one setting in which volunteers are active.

If the results of the community assessment survey (recommended as the first step in this handbook) show your community to have very few volunteerism resources, the Volunteer Center will be trying to stimulate more—such as encouraging the formation of a DOVIA. A successful Center ends up relating to new organizations that have been established as a result of its own advocacy. If the initial survey identifies many existing volunteerism groups, the need to establish relationships is immediate.

### **Showing Support**

One way that the Volunteer Center can demonstrate its desire to help existing groups, and not duplicate efforts, is to become a member of appropriate associations. Possible groups to join would be:

- VOLUNTEER: The National Center, which would link the Volunteer Center with other Volunteer Centers across the country, as well as make sure the Center receives information on National Volunteer Week, etc.
- The Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA). Affiliation with AVA offers the opportunity to become active on the regional level as well as nationally;
- Other national groups such as the National School Volunteer Program, the National Association on Volunteers in Criminal Justice (see Appendix B: Resources) that would give the Volunteer Center access to current information for that particular field;
- The state association for volunteerism; and
- The local DOVIA (though perhaps as a non-voting member).

Membership dues would have multiple value since most of the national associations also have publications that the Center would want to receive. The publications are usually a benefit of membership, so the Center need not buy a separate subscription. Also, members may be allowed discounts on conference fees and publications.

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\*For more information about media-based recruitment, contact United Way of America or VOLUNTEER: The National Center.

If the Volunteer Center wants to demonstrate its commitment to be informed—and to keep its community informed—about the issues of volunteerism, one important way is to be part of the field's associations. This is also a service to some of the smaller agencies that cannot afford to join the groups. The Center's library (and perhaps a newsletter) would pass along new information to those who otherwise might not see it.

### **New Kid on the Block**

Your Volunteer Center will have to prove itself to the existing volunteerism organizations. While the concept of a Volunteer Center is generally accepted as valuable, most practitioners recognize the vast differences between Centers around the country. Some Centers have been excellent, but others have been less than effective. Each Volunteer Center has its own set of goals and is staffed by people with a wide range of backgrounds. Community support for your Volunteer Center will also depend on the reputation of your United Way.

If the community is involved from the beginning in the establishment of the Center (on planning committees, through surveys, and on the Advisory Council), the Volunteer Center will be met with optimistic expectations. Another very important factor is the Center staff. If the Director and other staff members have personal experience in the management of volunteers and are well-known in the community, their outreach job will be much easier.

Listening is a great first step. Being reactive and responsive must come before being proactive. The Volunteer Center cannot succeed if it is simply superimposed on existing groups, but its potential is enormous once those groups recognize the role the Center can play on their behalf.

### **Joint Projects**

Once the goodwill of the Volunteer Center has been demonstrated, there are limitless ways the Center can join forces with existing resources. Just a few are:

- Cosponsorship of workshops, courses, and conferences.

This can mean working together with volunteerism groups to run programs beyond the scope or budget of one group alone. It can also mean joining with an organization that offers all types of training to stimulate a program focused on volunteerism (such as working with a local college or local leadership training seminar).

- Sharing of mailing lists and data.

Other clearinghouses (such as cultural-arts councils, drug-abuse councils, women's networks, etc.) may be interested in an exchange of information that would give the Volunteer Center an understanding of that group's members, while also introducing those members to volunteerism.

- Access to books, periodicals, training materials, and other resources.
- Collaboration in planning and implementing major community events to make volunteering visible and/or to recognize active volunteers.
- Special targeted recruitment campaigns.

This is especially pertinent to involvement with all-volunteer membership groups, corporations, church councils, etc.

There are also opportunities for contractual arrangements, as indicated in Chapter III: Section 8, Less Common Services. For example, the county court system might contract with the Center to handle all alternative sentencing placements. Or the mayor's office might request that the Volunteer Center coordinate volunteer opportunities in municipal government departments.



## **A Word on Record Keeping**

Because the Volunteer Center will want to be able to speak authoritatively about the status of volunteerism in your community, at some point community agencies and organizations will be asked for reports on their utilization of volunteers. The experience of many Volunteer Centers has been that obtaining such data is like pulling teeth—lots of resistance and pain.

The need to compile cumulative data on volunteer activity in a community must be “sold” to the Volunteer Center’s constituents. This is a process that takes time. Some pointers are:

- Involve as many people as possible in determining what data is going to be useful and in designing the report form. In fact, it is a great project to launch jointly with a group such as the DOVIA.
- Specify how the data will be used—and how it will not be used (such as promising confidentiality). The emphasis is on cumulative data, not individual agencies.
- Decide if you want to link the reporting process to any other data-gathering, such as volunteer program award applications, so as to avoid duplication of effort. At a minimum, use the report as a way to update databank information at the same time.
- Demonstrate, even in the first year when you do not have everyone reporting, how the data can help in practical ways: incorporate it into recruitment campaigns; send a report to the mayor; hold a press conference.
- Recruit supporters willing to make phone calls to organizations that did not return the survey—demonstrate that the information is missed and is important to everyone.

The real key is clarifying that the Volunteer Center is not trying to take credit for the work of the community. The report will not be “yours,” it will be “theirs.” The Center is doing the community a service in compiling a report.

## **Widening the Boundaries**


The Volunteer Center also will be linking with other Volunteer Centers, either those in the same state or in a particular region. Such communication is important simply to exchange information, but also has the potential to develop into statewide promotional efforts, volunteer recognition events, or legislative advocacy.

Because so many communities are still without a Volunteer Center, you will undoubtedly begin receiving requests from outside your own geographic area. A Volunteer Center is committed to supporting volunteerism everywhere it occurs, and so the way such requests are handled becomes important. One way to assist people in other communities is to form linkages with groups that cover a wider geographic area than your Center. Then you can refer the caller to such groups as a starting point in his/her search for information.

## Internal Collaboration With Other United Way Services

As already discussed in the section on "placement" of a Volunteer Center, there is a clear connection between the work of the Center and other United Way services. Keep in mind:

- The United Way itself utilizes large numbers of volunteers and Volunteer Centers are developing greater expertise in finding and managing such citizen involvement. Is the United Way tapping this expertise?
- The Volunteer Center databank is a form of information and referral. Does it correspond in any way to the I&R databank? How might it?
- Volunteer management is an important aspect of overall agency administration. Does the United Way Management Assistance Project include consultation on volunteer management in its services to agencies? Does the Volunteer Center have a connection to this consultation?
- When individuals donate their time, it is called volunteering; when corporations donate products or specifically targeted support services (e.g., printing), their donation is called an in-kind gift. Where does the Volunteer Center fit in the United Way's efforts to stimulate more in-kind giving?
- Due to their commitment to the Second Century Initiative, United Ways are strengthening their efforts to become the catalyst for community needs assessment and collaborative problem solving. Since the Volunteer Center is one program in touch with nonagency resources, can the Center play a role in identifying the full scope of community resources?
- The United Way wants to increase its presence in the workplace. Doesn't the encouragement of employee volunteer programs by the Volunteer Center fit into this goal?
- Volunteers also give money. What connections are made between the fund-raising efforts of your United Way and the information about volunteers and volunteerism in your community?



### **A Final Note: What Makes a Volunteer Center Great?**

A great Volunteer Center is one that:

- Has the broadest-possible vision of volunteerism that is inclusionary rather than exclusionary, meaning that the Center attempts to mobilize any and all non-dollar community resources.
- Can articulate the scope and vision of volunteerism to every audience.
- Conveys the image of volunteering as fun with a purpose.
- Advocates for the best utilization of volunteer efforts and against the misuse of volunteers.
- Models the effective involvement of volunteers by recruiting people to work for Center projects directly.
- Does what single organizations and individuals volunteers could not do alone: makes sure that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
- Represents the broad scope of volunteerism, including the state and national perspectives, to its local community . . . and, in turn, represents its community to the larger field of volunteerism.
- Is flexible enough to react spontaneously to opportunities to stimulate volunteerism.
- Works through and with community organizations.
- Sees the forest for the trees.
- Is an advocate and consultant for volunteer involvement in United Way.

## Appendix A: Checklist for Establishing a Volunteer Center

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- Determine why the United Way wants a Volunteer Center.
- Assess existing volunteerism resources in your community.
- Decide whether the Volunteer Center should be established outside the United Way or begun and, possibly, maintained as an internal division. (Note: All of the following actions are based on the decision to make the Volunteer Center an in-house part of United Way. Many of these tasks are equally important if the Volunteer Center will be established as an independent organization, but the role of the United Way will then be different.)
- Select a planning committee representing the United Way board of directors and the community's present volunteerism resources.
- Articulate a mission for the Volunteer Center, including consideration of its constituents and competitors.
- Determine priority audiences and services. Set long-range goals. Develop criteria for inclusion and exclusion in databanks, directories, other services.
- Establish budget and identify staffing needs.
- Select initial projects. Set short-term goals and objectives.
- Decide where to "place" the Volunteer Center within the United Way structure.
- Form an Advisory Committee with representation from the United Way board of directors.
- Hire or designate the Volunteer Center director. Hire rest of staff.
- Set up the Volunteer Center office.
- Announce the formation of the Volunteer Center to the public. Seek chances to introduce the Center at as many meetings and events as possible, especially within the volunteer field.
- Join local, state, and national volunteerism associations. Attend meetings and become visible.
- Begin survey of volunteer opportunities. Continue an ongoing search.
- Design databank. Enter information as received from the survey.
- Plan publicity strategies. Launch general promotion campaign to make volunteerism visible. Plan events to generate attention, such as publicity during National Volunteer Week.
- Create a logo and slogan to represent the Volunteer Center's advocacy of volunteering. Design a brochure describing the Center's services.
- Recruit volunteers to help with the work of the Center.
- Begin offering the services planned.
- Plan general and specific volunteer recruitment campaigns targeted at different audiences. Start conducting these campaigns.
- Evaluate progress, including the quality of each service provided and an assessment of the continuing need for each service.
- Be prepared for the unexpected. Respond.

## Appendix B: Resources and Bibliography

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### I. National Volunteerism Resources

#### A. Organizations Encompassing All Fields:

**ACTION**, 806 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20525. Toll-free 1-800-424-8867. Local calls (202) 634-9424 (for VISTA, Student Service Learning) and (202) 634-9353 (for older American volunteer programs such as RSVP, Foster Grandparents).

The Federal umbrella agency for several volunteer programs: RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program); Foster Grandparents Program; Senior Companion Programs; YVA (Young Volunteers in Action); and the National Center for Service Learning. As of 1983, ACTION has limited its VISTA program and transferred the Peace Corps out of the agency. ACTION also administers the project supporting many of the state-level Offices of Voluntary Citizen Participation.

**Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA)**, P.O. Box 4584, Boulder, CO 80306. (303) 497-0238.

This is the professional association for administrators of volunteer programs in any setting. There are 12 regional divisions that hold annual conferences, but most of the communicating is done on the national level. An annual International Conference on Volunteer Administration is sponsored each October in a different city. AVA's quarterly publication is *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*.

**Association of Voluntary Action Scholars (AVAS)**, c/o Lincoln Filene Center, Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155. (617) 628-5000, Ext. 2042.

Research/academic association of those interested in studying voluntary action. Periodic conferences for the delivery of research papers are held at various sites. AVAS' quarterly publication is the *Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, formerly the *Journal of Voluntary Action Research*.

**The Center for Creative Community: An Institute for the Advanced Study of Volunteerism**, P.O. Box 2427, Santa Fe, NM 87504. (505) 984-8414.

Newly formed by Ivan Scheier in 1987, the Center will be launching several innovative programs of research, policy development, model projects, and information dissemination. Peer consultation in volunteer administration will also be offered.

**Governor's or State Offices on Volunteerism.** Approximately 30 states have a state government office to coordinate volunteerism in their state, acting as a clearinghouse of information, a communicating link, and sponsor of conferences. Most state offices operate directly out of the Governor's Office, though a few are now government departments or agencies in their own right. The actual name of the office varies from state to state; when ACTION first began offering start-up funds, they preferred the name "Office of Voluntary Citizen Participation." In a few states, the office is part of the Department of Human Resources or Welfare.

Note: Whether or not a state has an Office on Volunteerism, there may be an active **state association of volunteer administrators**. Such associations are active in sponsoring self-training conferences and in linking resources. To locate such a group, contact some of your local directors of volunteers.

There are several hundred **DOVIAs**: Directors of Volunteers in Agencies associations. These are citywide or countywide groups of leaders of volunteers who meet regularly to exchange information and ideas.

**Independent Sector**, 1828 L Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20026. (202) 223-8100.

The Independent Sector (IS) is an organization devoted to increasing the impact of the voluntary sector, supported by its membership of national-level not-for-profit agencies and foundations. The promotion and expansion of volunteering are stated focus areas of IS, and a major focus of the "Give Five" campaign. Among other projects, the organization has commissioned the Gallup Poll to conduct surveys about volunteer activity and report the data gathered in a variety of ways.

**United Way of America**, 701 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-2045. (703) 836-7100.

The National Service and Training Center for the more than 2,300 community-based United Ways throughout America. United Way of America provides liaison services with national organizations, and with labor on the national, state, or local levels; national resources for government relations; and conferences; and support to local United Ways in developing a marketing orientation, to be more inclusive in involving people in United Way activities, train volunteers, and reach new fund-raising and volunteer markets.

Publishes the *Executive Newsletter*, *Innovations*, *Community Magazine*, *United Way Resource Catalog*, *Sales Service Catalog*, and the *National Academy for Voluntarism* course catalog. The Resource Catalog includes all publications, software, services, and audiovisual materials available through United Way of America.

**VOLUNTEER: The National Center**, 1111 N. 19th Street, Suite 500, Arlington, VA 22209. (703) 276-0542.

Formed in 1979 by a merger of the National Center for Voluntary Action (NCVA) and the National Information Center on Volunteerism (NICOV), VOLUNTEER supports and encourages volunteering nationwide. It sponsors an annual National Conference on Citizen Participation in a different city each June, conducts model demonstration projects, keeps tabs on pending legislation affecting volunteers, and coordinates the President's awards program for outstanding volunteers. The **National Council on Corporate Volunteerism** is a division of VOLUNTEER: The National Center.

VOLUNTEER offers Volunteer Centers a special membership plan whereby Volunteer Centers are linked with one another and have access to consultation and training geared specifically for their unique needs. An advisory body of Volunteer Center representatives helps VOLUNTEER determine which services to offer. A recent emphasis on the computer-programming needs of Volunteer Centers has resulted in an arrangement with the Apple Computer Company and the establishment of "VOLnet," a computer bulletin board especially for Volunteer Centers.

VOLUNTEER coordinates the annual **National Volunteer Week** that is promoted in the third week of April for national recognition of volunteering.

Publications include: *Voluntary Action Leadership* and *Volunteer Readership* (a free catalog of books about volunteerism).

## **B. Organizations With Focus on Specific Fields/Services:**

**Accountants for the Public Interest (API)**, 1625 I Street, N.W., Suite 717, Washington, DC 20006. (202) 659-3797.

API encourages accountants and CPAs to provide free accounting services and other public-service work to not-for-profit organizations, small businesses, and individuals such as artists. There are affiliated groups in eight states.

**American Association for Museum Volunteers**, 1225 I Street N.W., Washington, DC 20005. (202) 289-6575.

Formerly the United States Association of Museum Volunteers, this membership organization holds its annual training conference in conjunction with the American Association of Museums.

**American Society of Directors of Volunteer Services (ASDVS) of the American Hospital Association**, 840 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611. (312) 280-6439.

This is the professional association for directors of volunteers in health care settings, staffed by the American Hospital Association. There is an affiliate society in every state, with the larger state societies also having state or regional chapters. There are numerous meetings, workshops, and conferences annually. The quarterly publication is *The Volunteer Leader*, which also encompasses issues relating to hospital auxiliaries.

**International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE)**, 615 San Lorenzo Street, Santa Monica, CA 90402.

An international membership association of individuals interested in exchange of information about volunteering across cultural boundaries. Holds an annual "LIVE" conference in September, with delegates selected to represent each country.

**National Association of Community Leadership Organizations (NACLO)**, 1454 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. 1-800-424-9245.

National organization of local community leadership groups formed to promote networking and exchange. It publishes a newsletter and handbooks, and holds training workshops and an annual conference.

**National Association on Volunteers in Criminal Justice (NAV CJ)**, c/o William F. Winter, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Criminal Justice Institute, P.O. Box 786, Milwaukee, WI 53201. (414) 963-6092.

For leaders and volunteers in all aspects of the criminal justice system, the association holds an annual Spring conference.

**National School Volunteer Program (NSVP)**, 601 Wythe Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314. (703) 836-4880.

Promotes the concept of volunteers in the public school system through consultation and training events, including a national conference. Many states have statewide school volunteerism associations as well.

**National Service Secretariat**, 5140 Sherier Place, N.W., Washington, DC 20016.

Primarily concerned with proposals for a National Youth Service plan.

**National Society for Internships and Experiential Education (NSIEE)**, 3509 Haworth Drive, Suite 207, Raleigh, NC 27609. (919) 834-7536.

While academic internships are the main focus of this group, all forms of service-learning for students are part of its activities.

**Volunteers in Prevention, Probation, Prisons, Inc. (VIP)**, 527 N. Main Street, Royal Oak, MI 48067.

Justice-related volunteerism, with emphasis on supporting direct service volunteers. Publishes *The VIP Examiner*.

### **C. Organizations to Meet Special Needs**

**First Non-Profit Risk Pooling Trust**, 111 North Canal Street, Suite 955, Chicago, IL 60606. (312) 930-9500.

**Volunteer Insurance Service (VIS), Corporate Insurance Management**, 216 South Peyton Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-2813. (703) 739-9300.

VIS offers special excess insurance coverage for volunteers in agency programs.

## II. Publishers and Other Sources of Volunteerism Books and Materials

ENERGIZE Books, 5450 Wissahickon Avenue, Lobby A, Philadelphia, PA 19144. (215) 438-8342. Principal: Susan J. Ellis.

Heritage Arts, 1807 Prairie Avenue, Downers Grove, IL 60515. Principal: Sue Vineyard.

Marlborough Publications, P.O. Box 16406, San Diego, CA 92216. Principal: Judy Rauner.

Minnesota Office on Volunteer Services, 500 Rice Street, St. Paul, MN 55155. (612) 296-4731.

The Taft Group, 5130 MacArthur Boulevard, N.W., Washington, DC 20016. (800) 424-3761.

United Way of America, Volunteer and Outreach Services Department, 701 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-2045. (703) 836-7100.

Vancouver Volunteer Centre, 1625 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6J 1T9, Canada. (604) 731-6168.

VOLUNTEER: The National Center, 1111 N. 19th Street, Suite 500, Arlington, VA 22209. (703) 276-0542.

Volunteer Management Associates, 279 So. Cedar Brook Road, Boulder, CO 80302. Principal: Marlene Wilson.

Yellowfire Press, 369 Montezuma, Suite 177, Santa Fe, NM 87501. (505) 988-7172. Principal: Ivan H. Scheier.

## III. Other Pertinent Resource Organizations

**The Society for Nonprofit Organizations**, 6314 Odana Road, Suite 1, Madison, WI 53719. Publishes *Nonprofit World* in which articles about volunteers frequently appear. Also has a resource directory and sponsors training conferences.

**World Future Society**, 4916 St. Elmo Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814-5089. Publishes *The Futurist* and sponsors conferences about the future, the content of which often have direct relevance to planning for and about volunteers.

**A Word about Consultants:** Because the field of volunteerism has undergone such expansion in the last decade, a growing number of consultants and trainers have begun to focus on the field as a full-time endeavor. Some of these consultants have specialty areas, such as board development or fund-raising events. Others are able to offer assistance with the full range of volunteer program management concerns. Most of these experts are also authors of volunteerism books and articles. Therefore, the best way to identify which person might best help you is to become familiar with the available literature. A glance at the program brochures of regional and national volunteerism conferences will also indicate the most popular trainers and speakers. Members of your local DOVIA or state association for volunteerism will also be able to identify consultants with respected bases of knowledge.



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To increase the organized capacity of people to care for one another.



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