**COSA Meeting 3-22-16**

**Using Volunteers**

**Speakers:** Renee Moss from Big Brothers Big Sisters and Pat Sicard from RSVP

**Resources:**

ACT Volunteer Center

RSVP

Mass Impact program from UMass

[www.Energize.com](http://www.Energize.com)

[www.Massvolunteers.org](http://www.Massvolunteers.org) (great tip sheets)

**Examples of roles of Volunteers in our Agencies**

BC&F - Volunteer parent aides – Data entry, family visits

ACT Volunteer – Attend meetings, coordinate

Vets Inc. – Serve lunch to vets in shelter, assistance at all of the events

Prevention Coalition- Youth social media volunteer

MT Holyoke – Send students to nonprofits

Survival Center – Distribute food, stock shelves, greet and register clients, cook

Rock Ridge – grant writing

DCF – Interns do direct case management and child & family supervision

United ARC – Food pantry coverage, office tasks

Lyme Disease Prevention – peer counseling,

WIC – interns for reaching out to communities for cultural diversity

Habitat for Humanity – Plan the silent auction

Amherst Education Foundation – grant selection committee

BBBS – mentors all volunteers, interns, staff the office, event support

What is the difference between a volunteer and an intern –

There could be specific reporting requirements for interns

There may be credit for their work as interns

The differences are not that large

**Types of Volunteers**

Episodic Volunteers

Discrete tasks to complete when needed

Regular Volunteers

Scheduled and you depend on them

Professional Volunteers

Social media, grant writing, peer counseling…

**1. PREPARING FOR YOUR VOLUNTEERS/INTERNS**

* Do not invite volunteers until you have laid the foundation
	+ Where do we need extra help?
	+ What type of help? Who can do this
	+ Have a job description for volunteers

 (It is against labor laws to use volunteers to cover paid staff roles)

* Assess your organizations culture
	+ Do we value the volunteers for their participation?
	+ What motivates them to volunteer
	+ Happy volunteers make great recruiters
	+ The organization is welcoming, friendly
	+ Build relationships to the staff to make them feel connected
* Establish a Volunteer Coordinator
	+ Someone who can give the volunteer one on one attention

Without this the tether to the agency is missing

* Make sure their tools are clear and described well (phones, copiers…)
	+ Scripts for calls

**2. RECRUITING**

* *BE PREPARED* - Do not bring them in until you are well prepared. If not, they will not be retained. Make sure you explain your agency’s mission well.
* *ASK QUESTIONS* - Find out what they enjoy doing, have done in the past, what they never want to do! Don’t assume a teacher will want to work with children.
* *THINK ABOUT THEIR GENERATION* –Based on their age they will have different needs. Folks born in the 30’s are more likely to appreciate supervision and direction. A millennial will value autonomy and independence with a different level of guidance. Volunteers >50y may find you via the newspaper and print materials. Millennial, use Facebook!
* *REFER* – If a volunteer is not a good fit for your agency, refer them to a different opportunity with another organization.
* *BE HONEST* – Make sure they know exactly what you are asking them to do and why. Make sure they are willing to engage in the task. Review in advance the reason for the task, who benefits and why you need the volunteer’s help. This is particularly true for students, which are a mainstay of volunteers in the Pioneer Valley. Inform them of the fiscal value of their help!

**3. TRAIN & SUPERVISE**

* Start with a small task
	+ Increase tasks and responsibilities as they succeed
* Get to know your volunteer so you can match the task to their skills well
* Make sure they recognize they are taking on the responsibility, which has an associated commitment. Not coming last minute will have an impact. The government values one hour of a volunteer at $27.00/hour
* Confidentiality – They must be trained about confidentiality. There should be policies in place that you can give the volunteer. They must know the importance of this issue and the consequence of not adhering to the policy. It is helpful to ***have them sign a privacy policy.***
* Make sure the supervisor values volunteers!

**4. FAIR LABOR STANDARDS**

* If the position has been volunteer and always will be – usually safe
* If it was a paid staff position at one point, and you now staff with the position with a volunteer, that is against the Fair Labor Law.
* The volunteer’s job must look different than what the paid position was. Have job descriptions for your volunteers
* Call them positions or opportunities – Not a job