

Volunteer Management Tip Sheet #3



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Click the logo or URL above for more resources in our “Tip Sheet Toolkit” or use the following links:

[Sample Volunteer Program Assessment Tool](#)

[Sample Volunteer Engagement Assessment](#)

[Basic Guide to Program Evaluation](#)

[Volunteer Program Evaluation and Assessment](#)

Using a Volunteer Program Assessment Tool

A volunteer program assessment tool measures program effectiveness, highlights positive impacts, reveals underperforming initiatives, and illuminates areas for future growth and opportunity. Assessing your volunteer program is a continuous improvement process, a roadmap to make volunteer management and the volunteer program a sustainable capacity building program for your organization.

To capture a broader understanding of your program, have various program stakeholders — including staff, volunteers, board members, and donors — complete the assessment tool. Information from the assessment can help inform discussions about the strengths and weaknesses of your volunteer program. More importantly, the assessment can be a launching pad to improve your program’s capacity to provide high quality client and community services.

Tips for Selecting, Developing and Using a Volunteer Program Assessment Tool:

- 1. Enlist the support of your supervisor and the executive director/president.** Be clear about the purpose and scope of data collection and use.
- 2. Establish an advisory board, steering committee or task force to oversee the assessment.** The committee should carry out the following tasks:
 - Clarify goals of the volunteer program
 - Identify participants in the assessment, including method for administering the tool to each group of stakeholders
 - Develop or select the assessment tool (s)
 - Identify the method and scope of sharing results
- 3. Use the Volunteer Program Assessment tool to gather both qualitative and quantitative data about your volunteer program.** Focus on areas that align with your program’s goals, by asking about key indicators in the following areas:
 - Organizational culture
 - Volunteer recruitment
 - Volunteer screening / placement
 - Volunteer orientation
 - Volunteer training
 - Volunteer supervision / quality assurance
 - Volunteer evaluation
 - Volunteer recognition
 - Volunteer retention
- 4. Engaging a consultant with expertise in program evaluation can be helpful.** Can you find a skilled volunteer (e.g. a board member, or a faculty member from a nearby college)? Your local volunteer center or RSVP program (engaging volunteers ages 55+) may also be able to help make a match.

Using a Volunteer Program Assessment Tool

Next Steps: Using Results of Your Assessment to Take Action

- 1. Gather input from your volunteers.** Before making changes to the program, share results of the assessment with existing volunteers and ask for their insights. By showing volunteers that they are valued, respected members of your team you can benefit from their good ideas and minimize resistance to change.
- 2. Decide on the area that you want to improve.** Do not try to tackle everything at once. Set realistic goals for your volunteer program, taking into account current resources. Goals for the volunteer program should also align with overall goals of the program that you support.
(For example: Does the program have a goal to expand service, or to increase funding? Is the program implementing new evidence-based strategies with implications for volunteer qualifications, training, or service delivery?)
- 3. Identify and empower a Quality Improvement (QI) team.** Identify and engage the key players you will need—including both staff and volunteers — to address the area that you have selected as the focus of improvement. Conduct a meeting, or series of meetings to develop an action plan. Design your meeting to foster creativity and shared responsibility.
If resources permit (or better, if you can identify a skilled volunteer) it may be helpful to work with a consultant with expertise in meeting design.
- 4. Develop an Action Plan** to address the area that you have identified as most important to improve (see #2 above). The action plan should state clearly your goals, the activities or action steps to be carried out for each goal, who is responsible for each, and “by when” each action step will be completed.
The action plan should also include activities to capture outcomes that demonstrate whether the desired improvement is achieved.

Additional Resources for Volunteer Program Assessment:

To help you design an assessment tool that works for your program, click below:

Sample Volunteer Program Assessment
Sample Volunteer Engagement Assessment
(and more free resources from JF Fixler group: www.jffixler.com)
[Basic Guide to Program Evaluation](#)
[Volunteer Program Evaluation and Assessment](#)
(Great, inexpensive resources available from Energizeinc.com)



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Assessments can help you identify “what you did not know that you didn’t know.”

Assessments can identify “what you thought was so—but isn’t.”

Assessments are not fixes or solutions, but they can lead to them.

Assessments offer perspectives to help you understand programs, processes, and people.