

Creating a Volunteer Job Description

Job descriptions are incredibly useful tools for recruiting and managing volunteers, and a good one will help you retain your volunteers for the long-term. Every job description should explain the assignment, and list the skills and abilities needed to complete the work that needs to be done.

What to include in a Volunteer Job Description:

Job Title

A descriptive title gives dignity to the position. Be creative here; make it sound appealing.

Purpose

Include a general statement on what the job is and how it relates to the overall goals of the organization. This helps people understand how they are contributing to the work of the organization.

Duties and Responsibilities

List specific duties using action verbs (e.g. visit clients weekly, file slides by number). If attending the training, submitting reports or maintaining confidentiality are required, list such requirements as duties.

Time Requirement

State hours required per week or month and length of commitment (expected start and end date). Be realistic and as accurate as possible, but remember, contracts can always be renewed if necessary, so balance your needs with the volunteer's need for success.

Skills and Qualifications

Be as complete as possible, but list only the skills and experiences that you absolutely need. If you can train a person to develop a skill, list it as desirable but not essential. Also list Skills Gained, which will appeal to the volunteer's motivations for wanting to volunteer.

Orientation and Training

Explain type (e.g. on the job, workshop, buddy-system), length, and date of planned orientation and training.

Supporting Policies

Specific policies or procedures must be familiar with in this job. Include any screening requirements that are necessary for placement.

Working Conditions

Establish where volunteer will be working. Provide information specific to physical condition, accessibility, physical strength, special equipment, etc.

Other

Explain benefits and related policies (e.g. reimbursement of expenses and procedures to claim these). Include an organizational chart.

Advice for creating a Volunteer Job Description

The Devil is in the Details.

Be thorough, complete, and concise! Complete information ensures that potential volunteers will have a full understanding of the activity they are signing up for. Keeping your job description focused and concise is also likely to attract more volunteers.

Edit! Edit! Edit! Have someone else review what you've written. Is your meaning clear? Check for spelling and typos!

Take the time to talk about your organization's mission, the community it serves and how long it has been doing so. The goal is to reinforce the interest of the volunteer by highlighting the legitimacy of your efforts. Volunteers want to know the potential impact of their involvement.