

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

*Training volunteers is crucial to a strong and effective volunteer program. Proper training, and continuing education, is one of the most important aspects of a volunteer coordinator's job. Proper training means fewer problems down the line, which again, is crucial for clubs that deal with groups. Training offers volunteers opportunities for personal growth and enrichment, and these experiences allow volunteers to build a base of knowledge and skills that will help them both in and outside of the club.*

**Types of Training**

There are **three** types of training for volunteers:

1. Structured training program
2. On the job training,
3. On-going training, which includes re-certifications when necessary, as well as volunteer meetings and training days.

While there may be specific volunteer positions that only require one or two of these types of training, in general, the use of all three helps guarantee a productive working relationship with volunteers.

**Tips and Tools for Training Volunteers:**

1. The orientation is important in allowing the volunteer to feel as though he/she is part of the club and ensure he/she understands the club on a larger level. An orientation should cover the club’s history, mission, activities, population served, other volunteer introductions, and volunteer basics. Include a tour of the agency and point out locations of office equipment and supplies if these are relevant to the position.
2. Volunteers have the right to be given training for the tasks required of the position. Even if the volunteer has been involved in other clubs and already has the skills necessary, she/he must still be offered clear directions and timelines for how the activities are to be completed. Volunteers must know what is expected of them, both in their results and delivery of the activities.
3. If training is required, it is helpful to create group training experiences over a full day or weekend for example a coaching course in the club. This allows the volunteers to learn together and support one another through the process. It also allows volunteers to get to know one another and make friends at the club.
4. Use as many different training techniques as possible such as: guest speakers, on-the-job demonstration, written material, etc. [Note that adults learn best when they have practical and experiential modes of learning. Ask for their input and allow them to practice and offer immediate feedback.]
5. The training should also explain the method of supervision — so that volunteers understand to whom they should turn with a question or for feedback — as well as how the supervisor will be evaluating the work. Supervision can be handled as check-in meetings, ongoing informal discussion, or written reports. It is important to set up "checkpoints" along the way.