

Creating a Statement of Philosophy on Volunteer Engagement

Consider these questions:

- What value or values do volunteers bring to our organization? Why do we involve volunteers? If we had all the money we want and need to support the organization's mission, would we still involve volunteers and WHY?
- How do volunteers help fulfill the mission of our organization? What outcomes are achieved?
- Where are/will volunteers be involved in the organization (and where are/will they NOT be involved)?
- Do volunteers have a wide range of roles and work throughout the organization and partner with all staff? I.e., Are volunteers considered partners in our work or assistants and helpers?
- What expectations should volunteers have of our organization?

Visualize an expanded corps of volunteers serving the organization, effectively and creatively, in myriad ways. Don't worry if this isn't the current reality – consider what might be possible in the future.

Now draft a philosophy statement for volunteer involvement:

Philosophy Statement Examples

Sample philosophy statement offered in *From the Top Down*:

Our agency encourages the teamwork of employees and volunteers so that we can offer our consumers the best services possible. Volunteers contribute their unique talents, skills, and knowledge of our community to provide personalized attention to clients, enable the paid staff to concentrate on the work for which they were trained, and educate the public about our organization and its cause.

Minnesota Literacy Council:

Literacy Minnesota believes volunteers are vital to the success of students and literacy programs. We believe volunteers bring optimism and enthusiasm, create positive energy, and share diverse perspectives that lead to enhanced learning outcomes for students. We strive to create learning environments where volunteers:

- Contribute in meaningful ways to student success.
- Reflect the diverse communities they serve.
- Are valued for their unique abilities.
- Are trained, mentored and supported in their work.
- Have the opportunity to develop their skills as literacy practitioners.
- Are empowered to advocate for literacy in their communities

National Multiple Sclerosis Society

Volunteers are integral partners in the fight against multiple sclerosis. Volunteers across the country contribute resources – time, knowledge, skills and leadership – that infuse the organization with energy and passion that will end the devastating effects of multiple sclerosis.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society strives to be known and respected for excellence in volunteerism among the country's voluntary health agencies. We see an organization where volunteers work as partners at all levels, and where their contributions are embraced, valued and recognized. Volunteer involvement will be expanded and enhanced through exemplary training programs and tools. Our organization will welcome the diversity that volunteers bring to our work and is committed to providing growth and development for those who chose to contribute their resources.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is enriched by a large network of volunteers who are excited by their work and empowered to achieve the mission of the organization.

Carlsbad City Library

Carlsbad City Library is best served by providing citizens fulfilling opportunities to utilize their skills to enhance the quest for knowledge and the enjoyment of reading in the community. Citizen engagement is a major part of the library.

We believe that citizen engagement:

- Improves customer service and our relationship with the community we serve
- Allows the library to expand our capacity and enhance our services
- Provides us with the community's point of view and takes back to the community word of our services

We are committed to the recruitment, training and support of citizen volunteers to ensure their continued involvement in library services and to develop this resource to its fullest.