Workshop Presentation

Topic: Innovations and Good Practices in Volunteering

Energize Your Volunteer Administration Skills with a Little P.E.P.!

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Abstract

The P.E.P. model (i.e., personal Preparation, volunteer Engagement, program Perpetuation) is an excellent tool for use by managers of volunteers in the United States, Canada, and other countries regarding fundamental competencies involved in volunteer administration. P.E.P. could serve as a unifying, holistic foundation (based upon empirical data from Association for Volunteer Administration [AVA] members internationally) for a unified, consistent basic and continuing professional education, training, and certification curriculum for all managers of volunteers. The P.E.P. model provides an easy-to-grasp overall conceptual framework for volunteer administration even for a relatively short tenured manager of volunteers to comprehend as s/he considers the fundamental aspects of the volunteer administration profession.

Introduction

For more than two centuries, volunteers have played a critical role in shaping individual communities as well as holistic societies through service that addresses the needs of local citizens, both in the United States and around the world (Ellis & Noyes, 1990; Jedlicka, 1990). Since the early years of recognized and/or formal volunteering, there have been individuals or groups who have accepted responsibility for organizing and supporting volunteers' efforts.

As a larger profession encompassing numerous discipline areas, housed in diverse community-based organizations, and addressing a myriad of social needs and issues, volunteer administration has evolved dramatically as communities and societies continue to evolve and change. This evolution, by necessity, requires the ongoing identification and application of new and modified volunteer management and leadership strategies to meet the emerging needs of people in communities around the world. As the volunteer administration profession has evolved, so have interests in ensuring that managers of volunteers have the necessary updated management and technical skills to be successful in their respective roles and responsibilities (Fisher & Cole, 1993).

While still a relatively young profession, the volunteer administrator profession has nonetheless played an important role in the evolution of volunteerism around the world. Historically, managers of volunteers have accepted responsibilities related to

the identification, selection, orientation, training, utilization, recognition, and evaluation of volunteers. These naturally occurring volunteer management components have led to a myriad of suggested models for the effective and efficient administration of volunteer programs (Boyce, 1971; Wilson, 1976; Navarre, 1989; Brudney, 1990; Stepputat, 1995; Penrod, 1991; Fisher & Cole, 1993; Safrit, Smith, & Cutler, 1994; Ellis, 1996; Culp, Deppe, Castillo, & Wells, 1998). Other authors have used these models to investigate selected volunteer administrators' competency levels with specific volunteer management competencies (Kwarteng, Smith, & Miller, 1988; Harshfield, 1995; King & Safrit, 1998; Chizari, Lindner, & Karjoyan, 1999; Hange, Seevers, & VanLeeuwen, 2002). An in depth and thorough review of previously published volunteer management approaches and models revealed similarities and disparities among the authors' ideas.

The P.E.P. Model

More recently, Safrit and Schmiesing utilized a multi-year, multi-stage mixed methodology utilizing both qualitative and quantitative components to identify competencies needed by contemporary managers of volunteers based upon both historical literature and contemporary practices of volunteer administrators (Safrit & Schmiesing, 2004; 2005; Safrit, Schmiesing, Gliem & Gliem, 2005). Their quantitative research was the first of its kind to use as the research population the 2,057 individual members of the Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA) as of July 1, 2004. The population included 1,889 AVA members from the United States; 98 from Canada; and 70 from other countries.

The resulting P.E.P. model (personal Preparation, volunteer Engagement, program Perpetuation) is illustrated in Figure 1. Seven components (organized into three holistic constructs) comprise this suggested model for contemporary volunteer administration. They include: I. Construct: Personal Preparation: Component 1) Volunteer Administrator Professional Development (16 items); II. Construct: Volunteer Engagement: Component 1) Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (18 items); Component 2) Volunteer Orientation and Training (16 items); Component 3) Volunteer Recognition (9 items); Component 4) Volunteer Program Maintenance (8 items); and III. Construct: Program Perpetuation: Component 1) Volunteer Program Advocacy (13 items); Component 2) Volunteer Program Resource Development (9 items).

Conclusions

The seven components identified in the P.E.P. model emphasize practically all of the volunteer management competencies identified during the previous 35 years by authors and professional leaders in the field. The four components of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Volunteer Orientation and Training, Volunteer Program Maintenance, and Volunteer Recognition address the large majority of volunteer management concepts that have been identified traditionally for volunteer organizations and programs holistically (Boyce, 1971; Wilson, 1976; Navarre, 1989; Brudney, 1990; Penrod, 1991; Fisher & Cole, 1993; Stepputat, 1995; Ellis, 1996; Culp et al., 1998). The seven components also parallel closely the five Core Competencies
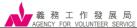
identified by AVA (1999) in its Certified Volunteer Administrator (CVA) credentialing process. The component of "Volunteer Administrator Professional Development" addresses many of the certification topics included under "Professional Principles." The components of "Volunteer Recruitment and Selection", "Volunteer Orientation and Training", and "Volunteer Recognition" provide more focused detail to the topics

Figure 1: The P.E.P. (Preparation, Engagement, and Perpetuation) model for contemporary volunteer administration

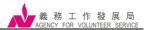| Professional Domain	Domain Topic Area(s)	Domain Topic Area Competencies
(Personal) Preparation	Professional Development	Self-assess professional knowledge, skills, and abilities: Communicate professional development needs to supervisors; Participate in local & national professional organizations & conferences; Read newsletters, list-serves, & professional journals; Seek out formal educational opportunities to enhance professional skills; Develop a personal philosophy of volunteer management & involvement; Calculate the cost-effectiveness of volunteer programs; Balance personal and professional responsibilities; Manage personal stress resulting from professional responsibilities; Develop system for processing paperwork & maintaining files; Regularly update stakeholders on the results of evaluations
(Volunteer) Engagement	Volunteer Recruitment and Selection	Assess organizational climate for readiness of new volunteers; Assess organizational needs for volunteers; Assess needed skills and abilities for specific volunteer positions; Develop selection process consistent with position responsibilities; Conduct targeted recruitment of volunteers; Match potential volunteers with positions based on skills, abilities, & interests; Assess skills/interests of potential volunteers for other positions; Re-assign volunteers when they are unsuccessful in current positions; Promote diversity in volunteer recruitment; Include other stakeholders in the volunteer selection process; Design recruiting strategies with boards & administrators; Evaluate selection process against best-practices
	Volunteer Orientation and Training	Identify objectives for orientation & training; Communicate orientation & training requirements to volunteers; Design & conduct on-going orientation & training for volunteers; Design training specific to volunteer responsibilities; Identify teaching materials for volunteer training; Document volunteer training completed; Assess & manage risks associated with volunteer positions; Evaluate training/orientation program; Develop policies to manage volunteer risks
	Volunteer Recognition	Implement on-going recognition of volunteers; Identify volunteers who should be recognized; Determine how volunteers will be recognized; Plan and implement formal volunteer recognition; Keep records of those recognized

Professional Domain	Domain Topic Area(s)	Domain Topic Area Competencies
	Program Maintenance	Resolve conflicts between volunteers & paid staff; Support paid staff when working with volunteers; Train & educate current staff to work with volunteers; Educate new paid staff on volunteer management; Recognize paid staff for participating & supporting the volunteer program; Involve paid staff in the recognition of volunteers
(Program) Perpetuation	Resource Development	Identify fundraising needs; Develop fundraising plans; Solicit funds from prospective supporters; Build positive relationships with donors; Research market for potential volunteers; Establish marketing plan & tools for volunteer recruitment; Utilize a variety of media to recruit volunteers; Implement an on-going recruitment plan
	Program Advocacy	Identify a leadership team for the volunteer program; Conduct focus groups to identify program needs; Represent volunteer interest in program development; Promote & provide additional leadership opportunities to potential volunteers; Engage volunteers to teach components of the orientation & training process; Develop on-going training needs assessment for paid staff; Train staff to select volunteers using acceptable procedures; Identify future uses of volunteer program evaluation results; Conduct performance evaluation for those assigned to supervise volunteers; Develop on-going training needs assessment for volunteers; Educate others on how to evaluate components of the volunteer program; Share progress towards goals with current volunteers

included in the certification category of "Human Resources Management." The component of "Volunteer Program Maintenance" includes topics listed under the certification category of "Management", while the component of "Volunteer Program Advocacy" combines topics listed under the certification categories of "Leadership" and "Planning."

Of the seven components identified, three (Volunteer Administrator Professional Development, Volunteer Program Advocacy, and Volunteer Program Resource Development) are relatively new foci of volunteer management and administration and are reflected in only the most current of published academic literature. However, these three components support strongly AVA's (2004) most current Certified Volunteer Administrator (CVA) credentialing Core Competencies and Content Outline. The component of "Volunteer Administrator Professional Development" and its respective competencies reinforce AVA's focus upon "Professional Development", "Leadership", and "Accountability" while also emphasizing more contemporary competencies that are becoming increasingly critical to volunteer programs, such as self-assessing professional knowledge, skills, and abilities; balancing personal and professional responsibilities; calculating the cost-effectiveness of volunteer programs; and managing personal stress. The component of "Volunteer Program Advocacy" is directly comparable to AVA's "Advocacy" focus while also emphasizing the concept

of a shared leadership team for a volunteer program; engaging volunteers to teach other volunteers and paid staff; and educating other paid and volunteer staff regarding program evaluation and its expanded usage. "Volunteer Program Resource Development" identified in this study addresses in much more detail the effective and responsible stewardship of public and private funds used in volunteer programs than is addressed in AVA's "Fund Development", "Budgetary", "Financial Resources", and "Reporting" emphasis areas distributed throughout the CVA Content Outline.

The author suggests that this revised P.E.P. model could serve as a unifying, holistic foundation (based upon empirical data from AVA members internationally) for a unified, consistent basic and continuing professional education, training, and certification curriculum for all managers of volunteers. The P.E.P. model provides an easy-to-grasp (and remember!) overall conceptual framework for volunteer administration (i.e., "Personal Preparation", "Volunteer Engagement", and "Program Perpetuation") even for a relatively short tenured manager of volunteers to comprehend as s/he considers the fundamental aspects of the volunteer administration profession. Secondly, the P.E.P. model's more narrow focus upon only seven domain topic areas allows an individual manager of volunteers of any tenure to reflect upon and self-assess their current levels of professional competence in a manageable number of critical focused aspects of our profession. Ultimately, the 62 individual and unique specific competencies comprising the seven domain topic areas provides for an extremely focused and intense personal assessment of the core knowledge, skills and attitudes that are fundamental to the effective management of volunteers and administration of volunteer programs.

While this study investigated perceptions of AVA members, further research is needed to explore the components identified in this study in greater depth with paid and volunteer mangers of volunteers working in specific targeted areas of service (e.g., health services, human services, youth programs) as well as focused contexts (e.g., other nations, identifiable ethnic groups, etc.). Such research would strengthen the P.E.P. model's content and construct validities and link the international profession of volunteer administration to its implementation in specific contexts of volunteer programs delivered by grassroots volunteers. According to Jedlicka (1990), "We as individual citizens operating in [international] development groups and organizations will largely have to create the pathway to a new world on our own. . . To make that change ourselves, we will need a newly educated citizenry that understands its place in global society and will do its duty in helping others" (p. 169).

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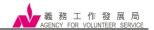
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