

QUICK TIPS: VOLUNTEER PROGRAM ASSESSMENT, RETENTION AND PROGRAM EXPANSION

This tip sheet provides specific points to consider during assessment of your current volunteer program, recruitment of potential volunteers and the development of volunteer positions that will suit your volunteers' interests and strengths in order to benefit your program. This document also identifies resources regarding volunteer recruitment and volunteer role development.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Who are your volunteers?

- What is the demographic information of your current volunteers?
 - How many of your volunteers are retired, work part-time or work full-time?
 - How does this affect your volunteer training and meetings?
 - Are your volunteers Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen Xers (Generation X) or Millennials (Generation Y)?¹
 - What does this mean for their volunteer experience and your program management approach?
- Are you experiencing high turnover?
 - When do your volunteers leave the program?
 - What is the average length of volunteer service?
- Why do volunteers leave the program?
 - Do your volunteers experience burnout or compassion fatigue?
 - Do you know how to prevent burnout, identify signs of burnout and address burnout?

Identify your volunteers' interests and strengths

- Ask potential volunteers during the initial application and interview process if they have any special interests or strengths (e.g. public speaking, training, recruiting volunteers, outreach/marketing)
- Are your volunteers members of other organizations or associations in their community and if so, are they willing to talk about the LTCOP or invite you to speak about the LTCOP.
- What motivates your volunteers?
 - What makes them feel successful?
 - How do your volunteers like to be recognized?

Ask your volunteers!

- Conduct an annual survey
 - Solicit feedback about your program
 - Ask them about their experience as a volunteer
 - Seek suggestions for training topics
 - Ask them if they have any special talents, skills or interests

¹ Elliott-Yearly, Sherri. Generational Diversity in Today's Workplace. www.generationalguru.com/generational-diversity-whitepaper.pdf

VOLUNTEER OMBUDSMAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Create short-term, special projects

- Seek volunteer assistance in compiling your LTCOP newsletter
- Identify and train volunteers with interest in speaking to community groups
- Promote the LTCOP in their community
- Assist with developing Resident and Family Councils in multiple facilities

Create leadership roles within your Volunteer Ombudsman program

- Create a mentorship program to partner experienced volunteers with new volunteers
- Train volunteers to conduct in-service trainings for facility staff
- Ask a volunteer to assist you with outreach using social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, a blog, website)

Involve volunteers in Public Policy and Advocacy

- Give volunteers the opportunity to attend public meetings on behalf of the LTCOP and ask them to take notes and give an overview of the meeting to the staff ombudsmen
- Show volunteers how to track legislative action and testify on bills
- Ask a volunteer to monitor news stories about long-term care issues
- Identify volunteers that want to write letters to the editor about long-term care issues

OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

In order to address a variety of program needs that do not need to be conducted by a Certified Ombudsman, you may want to consider creating other volunteer opportunities.

Assistance with program tasks

- Send birthday cards, get well cards and words of encouragement and recognition to other volunteers
- Help plan a volunteer recognition event
- Recruit volunteers
- Donate baked goods or snacks for volunteer trainings and meetings
- Assist with administrative tasks (as appropriate)
- Create in-service presentations and other training materials

Assistance with outreach

- Distribute LTCOP information and recruitment materials
- Public speaking engagements regarding the LTCOP
- Staff booths during health and information fairs
- Develop a media contact list and contact those outlets regarding the LTCOP

RESOURCES

Link to volunteer management resources on the NORC website:

<http://www.ltombudsman.org/ombudsman-support/volunteer-management>

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Certification Survey (2010)

Coordinated by NORC and NASOP, this survey looks at certification and initial training requirements for long-term care ombudsmen. Forty-two states participated in the survey.

<http://www.ltombudsman.org/sites/default/files/ombudsmen-support/volunteer-management/NASOP-Training-and-Certification-Survey-Report.pdf>

NORC Compendium on Recruitment, Training and Retention

The Ombudsman Compendium is designed as a comprehensive reference tool intended for individuals who are responsible for recruiting, training and retaining effective long-term care ombudsmen (both paid and volunteer).

<http://www.ltombudsman.org/library/ombudsman-compedium>

Study of the CA LTCOP Volunteer Program (2007)

Facing a decline of over 20 percent of its volunteers, the California LTC Ombudsman Program initiated a research project in order to learn ways to improve both recruitment and retention of volunteers. Based on these findings, the report recommends specific strategies for enhancing the volunteer experience and improving the program's effective.

<http://www.chcf.org/publications/2007/03/californias-long-term-care-ombudsman-program-assessing-the-volunteer-experience>

The Use of Volunteers in State Agencies on Aging and Disabilities (2011)

Engaging Volunteers in the Aging Network: A National Resource Center is a project funded by an Administration on Aging (AoA) grant to the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). In order to establish a baseline for the level of civic engagement in the Aging Network, NASUAD and n4a conducted both quantitative and qualitative assessments of current state and local programs, which rely on a volunteer workforce.

http://www.nasuad.org/documentation/nasuad_materials/The%20Use%20of%20Volunteers%20in%20State%20Agencies%20on%20Aging%20and%20Disabilities.pdf

The Use of Volunteers in State Agencies on Aging and Disabilities: State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (2011)

Engaging Volunteers in the Aging Network: A National Resource Center is a project funded by an Administration on Aging (AoA) grant to the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). In order to establish a baseline for the level of civic engagement in the Aging Network, NASUAD and n4a conducted both quantitative and qualitative assessments of current state and local programs, which rely on a volunteer workforce and this report summarizes the information gathered regarding volunteers in State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs.

http://www.nasuad.org/documentation/nasuad_materials/The%20Use%20of%20Volunteers%20in%20State%20Agencies%20on%20Aging%20and%20Disabilities%20-%20Long-Term%20Care%20Ombudsman%20Program.pdf

Volunteer Consultants: Extending the Reach of Ombudsman Programs (2003)

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has traditionally relied on volunteers to fulfill its mandated requirement to serve residents in long-term care facilities. In this paper, the term "volunteer consultant" is used to describe a professional who, without reimbursement, provides technical assistance, case consultation, advice/guidance, or advocacy support to the Ombudsman Program for the purpose of helping the program with specific tasks related to the professional's area of expertise.

<http://www.ltombudsman.org/sites/default/files/norc/Volunteer-Consultants.pdf>