**Library Volunteer Leaders - Notes**

**8-17-22 1:30 EST**

Host:  Wendy Johnson, Indianapolis Public Library, [wjohnson@indypl.org](mailto:wjohnson@indypl.org)

Meetings will be held every Wednesday at 1:30 EST for an hour until further notice. We’ll use the same Zoom link each week. Please share the link with fellow library volunteer leaders. All are welcome.

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85199850785?pwd=WHorb3h2ckgvZjhZT1BOVWxEMzhlZz09>

Meeting ID: 851 9985 0785

Access Code: Volunteer

# **Topics Discussed**

**News**

* Jennifer B. shared: Found a resource this week that I wanted to share. "Changing the Frame: Civic Engagement Through A Racial Equity Lens" (<https://irrpp.uic.edu/state-of-racial-justice/reports/#changing-the-frame-civic-engagement-through-a-racial-equity-lens>) I have not read the whole report but it seems interesting based on the executive summary.

**Volunteers who disagree with the process**

Whether it’s the volunteer onboarding process or day-to-day activities, how do you navigate the volunteer who pushes back on everything?

The situation from our group: A Reading Buddy applicant applied, during the interview the next steps were explained and a conditional offer was extended. The volunteer would need to provide proof of COVID vax, complete a background check, attend training, etc. To the volunteer leader’s surprise, the potential volunteer provided a medical exemption for proof of COVID vax. The volunteer leader provided the policy in place for medical exemptions (the same as for staff): as a representative of the library, they must wear a mask for the duration of their shift and complete a rapid COVID test each time they volunteer. The volunteer wasn’t interested in doing this and felt it was unnecessary and left a message for the HR director noting that it was an emergency and they should call them back right away. The volunteer provided a different name to the volunteer manager and the HR director which raised a red flag.

* Which name would be used for the background check
* Wouldn’t turn someone away at this point as it might appear to be discrimination. Let it run its course.
* Have a talk with the volunteer at the very start. Set parameters, and clarify all steps/policies/processes. Document the discussion. Send a follow-up email with critical points.
* Delay starting until restrictions are dropped. Provide this as an option to the volunteer.
* Disclaimer:
  + A background check may weed this person out.
  + Are there mental health issues?
  + Do staff sign a disclaimer to follow the policy for the safety of all? Could you lean on this?
  + Do you have the Reading Buddies sign off on a position description?
* Side note: HR professionals are also having this same conversation with staff.
* This volunteer may turn out to be amazing. If not you may have to let them go because of a lack to follow directions.
* I've had a few prospective volunteers challenge the need for a background check. My experience has been that they end up not being good volunteers.
* Is shadowing another volunteer already part of the process? Maybe that could give an indication of how well she'd do.
* Some did not complete the background check and thus never started. Some started but did not last long. Most of the concern is related to providing a SSN online. It's one thing to be concerned about sharing personal information and asking for an alternative and another thing to be confrontational about the need for a background check.

**Name Verification**

Do you ask for a driver’s license/state ID/Passport to confirm the person applying is the person you’re interviewing? (Most of us said, “no”.)

* You can follow the I9 guidelines
* Couldn't asking for proof of ID be considered a potential barrier for those who may have difficulty obtaining a license, state ID, etc.?

**Volunteer References**

Do you ask volunteers for them?

* All volunteers regardless of the role are asked for 1 professional and 1 personal reference. Each reference is sent an email with a form to return.
* Dropped references for summer teens this year usually use Survey Monkey to get responses – even without references we had great teens this year.
* Limited to a phone call (HRs preference as well)
* IS HR doing the calls for staff references or is it a 3rd party vendor? Could volunteer references be handled by a 3rd party as well? These frequently have more depth confirming name, SSN, and education verification.
* We request references for our patron delivery volunteers since they are not under direct supervision or in our building.
* References for under 18 only because we can’t run a background check. We’ve found that teachers are pretty honest about a youth’s skills/abilities, and strengths/weaknesses.
* We have a volunteer who does phone reference checks – they flag anything questionable. They sign a confidentiality agreement and have an extra conversation about the importance of “not sharing”.
* Confidentiality agreement is gathered for each Reading Buddy at the start of each session. It is a reminder of the importance and policy.
* Be sure you know your organization’s policy on giving out references.
* Reference Letters:

If a volunteer has asked you to be a reference or write a recommendation letter (e.g., for a job or scholarship), you may consider a few things before saying yes or no:Do you know this volunteer's work well enough to write a recommendation or be contacted as a reference?Are you able to provide the recommendation in the time that is required?Will your supervisor be able to approve the content of your recommendation?If your answer is yes to the above questions, you may consider being a reference or writing a recommendation for a volunteer.

**International Volunteer Manager Appreciation Day – November 5th**

Will you be doing anything special for your staff who lead volunteers?

* Theme: Many Backgrounds – One Profession – Stronger Together
* Resources – logo, posters, ideas, and such: <https://volunteermanagersday.org/>
* Newsletter – recognize staff volunteer leaders
* My local AVA (Association of Volunteer Administrators) wrote every member’s HR director and Executive Director a thank you for supporting the member’s professional development.
* AVA promoted the day on social media and to member organizations
* AL!VE – nominate someone for an Impact Award - <https://www.volunteeralive.org/> and here <https://www.vmpc.ca/Impact_Awards.html>

## **Training Opportunities & Resources**

* Volgistics National Peer Group – online – 2nd Tuesday of the month – free!
  + FMI contact Jessica Link, [linkj@crlibrary.org](mailto:linkj@crlibrary.org).
* Better Impact User Group – online – 1st Tuesday of every month, 2p EST/11a PST – free!
  + <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86131303138?pwd=RlBWN2U4SWpZZEdXNEhOem9uTUZJdz09>
  + Meeting ID: 861 3130 3138
  + Passcode: 240307
* Join the [GetInvolved ClearingHouse](https://getinvolvedclearinghouse.org/) listserve by emailing Carla, [at clehn@califa.org](mailto:clehn@califa.org). Fabulous resource with samples, weekly news & updates.<https://getinvolvedclearinghouse.org/>
* VolunteerMatch. Free sessions (and recordings) on many of the topics we discuss in this group: <https://learn.volunteermatch.org/>
* [Volunteer Fairfax Virginia](https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Managing-Up-for-Volunteer-Managers-and-more-topics-.html?soid=1101379181335&aid=bIR5wJiFg_E)
* [MAVA, Minnesota Alliance for Volunteer Advancement](https://www.mavanetwork.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=286912&module_id=205311)
* [Points of Light](https://www.pointsoflight.org/)

**Future Topics**

* Our leadership role, what new things are we doing? Resources to share? (encore)
* Strategic planning - 3 and 5-year plans – looking for a speaker
* Strengths Finder, DISC, and other personality evaluation tools… why they might be valuable to you. (Amber)
* Current research reports and studies

**Booklist**!

Please send Wendy J. the titles and authors for 1-2 volunteer-focused or leadership books that you have found to be of value or are on your “waiting to read” list. Send along your fun titles, too!

* The Power of Moments
* From Library Volunteer to Library Advocate: Tapping into the Power of Community Engagement by Carla Campbell Lehn
* The Complete Volunteer Management Handbook by Rob Jackson, Mike Locke, Dr Eddy Hogg, and Rick Lynch
* The (Help!) I-Don’t-Have-Enough-Time Guide to Volunteer Management
* From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Successful Volunteer Involvement by Susan J. Ellis
* Here's a link to my annotated bibliography on volunteer engagement: <https://getinvolvedclearinghouse.org/training-materials/bibliography-volunteer-engagement> (Carla)
* Volunteer Management Handbook
* Think Again by Adam Grant (currently reading – Sue)