**Library Volunteer Leaders - Notes**

**2-10-21 1:30 EST**

**Host: Wendy Johnson, Indianapolis Public Library**

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Hello, Friends –

As always, we had lots of great questions and follow-up discussion this week: Staff resistance to re-engaging volunteers, Volunteer mission & vision samples, and Diversity in staff.

The resistance conversation morphed into creating a survey of our group to help show that we’re are a wide sample of library sizes, locations, budgets, and more. The current list of questions is below. If you have questions that you’d like to have added, please send them my way.

Please, take care!

Wendy J

Meetings will be held every Wednesday at 1:30 EST for an hour until further notice. We’ll use the same meeting link each week. Please share the link with fellow library volunteer leaders…the more smart people the better.

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

Access Code: Volunteer

If you’d like add/check/update your contact information on our shared Google doc: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19blg00lShuMShHK2ab1TGeiK6kYqGfpvxz8qO9F8nnM/edit?usp=sharing>

**Topics Discussed**

**Survey of our group’s volunteer engagement activities (Rebecca)**

Rebecca is running into resistance when presenting innovative ideas. “That’s for ‘big’ libraries and untenable in our community of 32k.” To provide her, and all of us, with a sampling of our group, we developed some survey questions, with the survey tentatively scheduled to go out after our gathering next week (Feb 17).

General Information

* Number of branches
* Staff size
* System budget
* Are you a union or non-union system?
* Volunteer department budget
* Who does the manager of volunteers report to?

Volunteer Engagement

* What’s your pre-covid on-going volunteer count/week and count/month?
* What’s your volunteer count during covid per week and per month?
* What is Volunteer ROI? How was it calculated?
* What are the top 5 volunteer roles with the top # of volunteers?
* What are the top 5 volunteer roles with the top number of volunteer hours?
* What virtual opportunities did you have pre-covid?

Volunteer Leader

* Are you a Certified Volunteer Administrator (CVA)?
* How long have you been a volunteer leader in a library setting? In all settings (total)?
* How much of your role is spent on volunteerism vs. other tasks?
* Favorite volunteer management resources…webinar, website, book, etc.

Volunteer Management

* What background check tool(s) are you using?
* Does your library allow court ordered volunteers?
* What Volunteer Management Database are you using? How would you rate it: 1-5?
* How many programs does your volunteer department manage?
* Does your system have a Friends of the Library (FOL)? Do you oversee them?
* How did you communicate with volunteers pre-covid?

Covid Specific

* What stage of reopening is your system? Curbside, Curbside & computers only (no browsing), fully open
* What new volunteer roles have you developed as a result of the pandemic (in-person and/or virtual)?
* How are you as a volunteer leader engaging with volunteers at this time?
* What challenges are you facing at this time?

**Re-engagement Hurdles (Rebecca)**

Staff are reluctant to give tasks back to volunteers or don’t want them in the space. COVID is the obvious reason, but there is an underlying issue.

* We can safely bring in a few volunteers to assist if they socially distance, complete waivers and adhere to a strict schedule. I'm not talking 280 volunteers, rather 12... or so. They are resistant to that at one branch where it is happening at another. (Janice)
* One of the obstacles to having volunteers return was staff taking the time to train new volunteers. We are working on slowly introducing a volunteer leader opportunity, asking branches to recognize volunteers with leadership and organizing skills and inviting them to handle training new volunteers and help with scheduling. (Leslie)
* The only volunteers coming back are those we approach based on what they do and know how to do at the library. We are not cross training because you have to be close to each other to do that. (Janice)
* Ask: What would help you (staff) to feel okay about volunteers returning? Volunteers could provide you with work-life-balance, time for professional development; they can do the repetitive things so you can develop new services or interact with public in a meaningful way.
* Focusing on volunteers returning to youth programs and others that were already in place pre-covid – anything but material processing.
* Volunteers are great at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and you can do more public facing activities that volunteers can’t do.
* Pages train & shadow volunteers. This form a partnership/relationship. Less us & them.
* What would you like more time to do? Leverage staff time & skills to work at a higher level.

**Volunteer Mission Statement & Vision**

Resource

In Carla’s old book there are examples of library volunteer mission statements and a suggested process for developing one in Chapter 1. The book was from 1999, but this part is still relevant I think — free access to the book here: <https://getinvolvedclearinghouse.org/training-materials/volunteer-involvement-california-libraries-best-practices>

Samples

* Mission: to support a community of service (From across the city)

Vision: an integrated network of resources and opportunities to enhance community stewardship and engagement.

* The mission of the Lewiston City Library Volunteer Program is to enhance the Library’s quality services to the public by providing community members with constructive and rewarding volunteer opportunities. As volunteers further the library’s goals of lifelong learning, they also serve as a vital link between the library and public awareness. They also assist the library in developing closer ties to the community as well as increasing the effectiveness of paid staff.
* Mission: The CRPL Volunteer Program supports and enriches the Library by engaging community volunteers through meaningful volunteer opportunities.

Vision: The CRPL Volunteer Program’s vision is a collaborative environment in which community members work with Library professionals to provide an outstanding Library experience.

Values: Advocacy - Transform citizens into Library advocates through engaged service.Relationships - Foster positive working relationships between volunteers and staff.Community - Engage volunteers to build a stronger Library and a stronger community.Opportunity - Develop meaningful volunteer opportunities that excite volunteers and serve the Library's needs.

* The Pikes Peak Library District respects volunteers as integral partners and valuable contributors to library services. Volunteers promote the PPLD mission as they share their unique talents, backgrounds, and knowledge to support and complement PPLD staff.
* The Los Angeles Public Library strives to offer volunteers opportunities to use their skills and knowledge to assist staff with providing service enhancements and to strengthen the relationships between the Library and the diverse communities it serves.
* For Columbus, here is the volunteer mission: The mission of the volunteer program is to support library staff and enhance the tradition of excellence and outstanding customer service by providing the “extra hands” needed to sustain and expand the library’s operation.
* Library Volunteer Program Purpose Statement: Library volunteers help make the library enjoyable and accessible to all members of the community by providing high quality services and programs to our patrons. (North Plains Library)
* Service philosophy (Becky/Liza)

Purpose - Our why We believe volunteers are part of MCL becauseThe library is for and by the community. We are more effective when we have community engagement. Volunteers have the potential to become community ambassadors of our good work.Volunteers are reflective of our diverse community.

ValuesWhat are the shared values that will guide Volunteer Services in reaching our purposeBuilding teamwork and coordination among Volunteer Services staffCentering racial equity and access in decision-making and program deliveryCreating and cultivating opportunities that promote a sense of belonging Being adaptable and flexible to try new things and adapt our workSupporting staff and volunteers by meeting them where they are at

How & Who

* Volunteer Program Advisory Council – comprised of staff, management, board champion, and volunteers
* Ours was developed with volunteers and library director, and also didn't go through the board
* Brought samples to team of 8 staff- edits, conversations – then took it to management for more revisions
* Build on library mission & vision; everyone supports the overarching mission of the library
* Reminder that volunteers are her to supplement not supplant; relationship with staff is a collaboration

**Staff Diversity (Kate)**

Has anyone had success in hiring diverse staff? Who's doing well in this area who might talk about their experience? And, if so, any resources to help others or tips on what made a difference?

* Speed interviewing – 10 min – tried to place folks who had completed a 3 week intensive customer service training offered at unemployment office. Unfortunately, the wage offered by the library was too low for this group who need to support families.
* Wage has to be fair
* Check with military reserve base or similar organizations – tap into their existing programs.
* Partner with companies who bring families to the country – spouses may only have a visitor visa and are looking for activities for themselves.
* Universities are an excellent resource.
* Reverse discrimination is becoming a new trend – race.
* Ageism. Our library wants a certain demographic but my candidates seem to be the inverse of what they want.

**Undocumented Volunteers (Kate)**

How do libraries create a welcoming environment for all volunteers including undocumented folks and yet, deal with the background check issue?

* If someone does not have a SSN, we just run the background check without it.
* Note – if you’re using Sterling, you can still run a check without a SSN even though the system appears to require it. (Becky)
* Background checks are run through the city HR and if there is no SSN they will not be able to apply.
* We changed some volunteer roles so that criminal record checks wouldn't be required and others we ask for a reference check instead of a criminal record check. (Liza)
* When I began the job, HR wanted to take on the background checks and they would have been very limiting, but thank goodness for a great director who advocated for us to manage it ourselves.
* We have trouble recruiting volunteers in our more diverse areas so have tried to identify the barriers and address those. Barriers: Child Care, language, transportation, etc. Possibilities: Family volunteer opportunities for working/single parent families, applications in other languages, on site recruitment for local patrons. (Karen)
* Not all of our volunteer roles require background checks. We only require those that will be alone with children to get background checks.
* Most of our positions do not require background checks.
* Our background name checks on long-term volunteers are welcomed by staff. It, possibly, makes them feel more comfortable?
* No SSN, still run national predator list and county check by name.

**Resources and Training Opportunities**

* Free copy of 2021 VolunteerPro Volunteer Management Progress Report – The Covid-19 Edition from VolunteerPro. Order your copy here: [https://volpro.net/volunteer-management-progress-report/](https://volunteerpro.lt.acemlnb.com/Prod/link-tracker?redirectUrl=aHR0cHMlM0ElMkYlMkZ2b2xwcm8ubmV0JTJGdm9sdW50ZWVyLW1hbmFnZW1lbnQtcHJvZ3Jlc3MtcmVwb3J0JTJG&a=1000506578&account=volunteerpro%2Eactivehosted%2Ecom&email=kqYTq9rMKDivUJHM9eRsWcPHscJHbbOnxyOvPlnI2kE%3D&s=e54af8fa673c7c311c1b07c7b9ff2ed6&i=950A1066A1A6669)
* Association for Rural & Small Libraries: <https://www.arsl.org/>
* “2021 Texas Volunteer Management Conference, Shaping the Future of Volunteerism, 100% Virtual, May 13 & 14. $20 for Student/AmeriCorps, $35 General Admission. <https://www.texasvmc.org/>
* Texas Volunteer Management Conference 2020 Past Webinar recordings – FREE – <https://www.texasvmc.org/webinars/>
* Volgistics National Peer Group – on-line – 2nd Tuesday of the Month – free!

FMI contact Jessica Link, [linkj@crlibrary.org](mailto:linkj@crlibrary.org). Recordings are available after you sign a release.

* Join the GetInvolved list serve by emailing Carla, [clehn@califa.org](mailto:clehn@califa.org). Fabulous resource with samples, current news & updates.

**Future Topics**

* For online book sales or getting rid of books, does anyone partner with a group, person or company who does your online sales (and/or sales of valuable books) and you get 50% or more sales? It seems like all I’ve seen is the library getting 30% of the profits when they partner with others. (Kate)
* Our leadership role
* Calculating VROI – Jennifer B has done this recently
* Volunteer communication – newsletters, Facebook group, or ??
* Volunteer Coordinator Training. What’s covered?
* Circle Back for updates:
  + University of North Carolina – Charlotte (UNCC) Class Project Update – Chauna
  + Reinventing volunteer engagement in our libraries – removing barriers