

Mastering Your Volunteer Liaison Role Program Agenda

Training for association staff working with and managing volunteers



Session One: Navigating Your Volunteer Liaison Role *(virtual)*

Session Overview: This session explores strategies for fostering positive volunteer experiences as a volunteer liaison as well as confirming the importance of volunteers to associations and the connection to member engagement.

Key Takeaways:

- Understand the essential roles and skills for effectively liaising with volunteers.
- Identify common challenges in volunteer behavior (e.g., disengagement, disruption).
- Learn about the five key roles of a staff liaison.
- Receive an action worksheet to apply the session's learnings.

Agenda:

- **Understanding the Volunteer Landscape: An Overview**
 - Discussion on the importance of volunteers to associations and member engagement.
 - Discussion of the diverse forms of volunteering while acknowledging the uniqueness of each association.
 - Brief review of key findings from ASAE research on volunteerism.
 - Overview on how systems support addressing challenging volunteer behaviors.
- **The Staff Liaison's Role: Deep Dive**
 - Discussion of the staff liaison's responsibilities and influence as the "face" of the organization to volunteers.
 - Clarification on what liaisons do and don't do for committees and chairs with an emphasis on negotiation and relationship building.
 - Introduction to the five key roles of a staff liaison:
 - Valuable Resource
 - Subject Matter Expert (SME) on the Association
 - Work Navigator
 - Community Builder
 - "Ear" for the Association
 - Discussion on the importance of orientation, onboarding, and training.
 - Explanation of how the staff liaison fits within the broader organizational structure and their responsibility to staff colleagues.
- **Key Takeaways and Implementation**
 - Discussion on how participants might think differently about their role and what they might implement.

Session Two: Mastering Your Volunteer Liaison Role (*in-person workshop*)

Session Overview: This full-day workshop builds upon the introductory session, diving deeper into the practical application of effective volunteer management as a liaison. Participants will explore system-level strategies, address challenging people dynamics, and learn key communication techniques to empower both themselves and their volunteers.

Key Takeaways:

- Understand how to build robust systems to support volunteer success.
- Develop strategies for managing challenging volunteer behaviors, including disengagement and disruptive conduct.
- Master active listening and open communication techniques for effective volunteer interactions.
- Create a personalized learning plan for continued growth in volunteer management.

Agenda:

- **Welcome, Introductions, and Readiness Assessment**
 - Briefing on the readiness assessment results, including high level themes.
 - Group discussion on readiness and participant needs for the day.
- **Systems for Creating Success**
 - Review of key system elements: orientation, onboarding, training, technology, and tools.
 - Exploration on how to create empowering charges and goals for volunteer groups, including outcome-based goals and how to connect them to association strategic plans.
 - Exploration of the volunteer assessment (individual, group, meeting) and its importance for continuous improvement.
 - Tips on setting up decision-making processes and community agreements.
- **You and the Chair as Partners**
 - Overview of the Five key considerations for the staff liaison-chair relationship:
 - Managing expectations.
 - Setting a collaborative agenda.
 - Creating engaging meetings.
 - Serving as a silent facilitator.
 - Supporting the chair in difficult conversations.
- **Strategies for Working Effectively with Volunteers**
 - In-depth exploration of unengaged volunteers: identifying clues, understanding motivations, and developing handling strategies.
 - In-depth exploration of unhealthy volunteer behavior: identifying clues, understanding motivations, and developing handling strategies.
 - Scenario-based problem-solving activity for unengaged and disruptive volunteer situations.

- **Key Strategy #1: Active Listening**
 - Introduction to active listening techniques and the three levels of listening.
 - Partner activity to practice active listening skills.
 - Discussion of power questions (open-ended, clarifying, reflective, empowering, summarizing, future-focused).
- **Key Strategy #2: Open Communication**
 - Strategies for approaching 1:1 conversation with volunteers (both unengaged and exhibiting unhealthy behavior).
 - Tips on coaching chairs on using the critical conversations formula.
 - Discussion of other communication solutions (rules, regulations, codes of ethics, third-party involvement).
- **Open Forum: Your Questions**
 - Open forum for group sharing and revisiting topics raised at the beginning of the day.
- **Mapping Your Plan Forward**
 - Strategies for staff liaisons to address challenges and improve their support of volunteers.

Note: For the full-day session, we will have breaks throughout the day and lunch will be provided.