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**Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms: Planning for the Future**

**by**

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# **Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms: Planning for the Future**

**Approved by  
Supervising Committee:**

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## **Dedication**

This report is dedicated to my parents who have provided me with guidance, support and love during my studies at the University of Texas. I offer my deepest gratitude to my parents who introduced me to the excitement found in learning. They encouraged me daily to believe in myself and live my life with conviction.

## **Acknowledgements**

I am most grateful Dr. Anne Beamish for her guidance and support; with her help this work was completed. I also appreciate the constructive criticism of Dr. Richard Schott. I thank Dr. Richard Schott for encouraging me to pursue my studies and for motivating my original research. Thanks are also given to friends, colleagues and others who helped me with their comments and encouragement.

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## **Abstract**

### **Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms: Planning for the Future**

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The report explores three development alternatives that support and strengthen Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms as a sustainable nonprofit organization and valued member of the community. Each strategy promotes success through improved stability, increased revenue streams and enhanced volunteer support without depleting current resources or funding. Designed as a potential employment plans for Pioneer Farms, benefits and constraints associated with each course of action are compared and contrasted.

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## **Introduction**

The focus of this study is to formulate possible development strategies focusing on employment alternatives for Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms, a nonprofit outdoor living history museum supported by the Heritage Society of Austin. This section includes a brief background and history of Pioneer Farms with a succinct review of current funding and program availability. By offering a wide-range of programs and the facilities, Pioneer Farms carved out a niche market. The success of increasing interest in the organization from external groups such as school districts, the Biscuit Brothers (a KLRU children's program), and members of the public is forcing Pioneer Farms and its management boards to re-examine its operation and future goals.

Chapter two discusses the methodology used for this study. Information needed to formulate development alternatives came from informal conversations with the chairman of Pioneer Farms, members of the board, and a former volunteer manager. A review of the literature focused on nonprofit organizations and provided background information. Additional data came from sources such as the minutes from Pioneer Farms' Board of Governors meetings.

The third chapter is a review of literature. The literature regarding nonprofit organizations is extensive and can be divided according to general themes which include leadership, volunteerism, organizational effectiveness, and evaluation. Just as the nonprofit sector is comprised of diverse organizational groups ranging from one-person operations to large universities, accordingly the literature is also wide-ranging. It does not point to one single way to successfully govern a nonprofit. Furthermore, there is no

consensus regarding the correct manner in which to evaluate, enhance organizational effectiveness, attract volunteers, or manage the organization. A successful strategy for one organization may be the “nail in the coffin” for a different organization.

Chapter four details three potential employment plans for Pioneer Farms. The strategies are maintaining the status quo, hiring one full-time staff person, and hiring two full-time staff persons. Included in each scenario are the benefits and constraints associated with the specific course of action. The final chapter of this report provides a summary, potential funding mechanisms, and recommended next steps for the organization.

## **Chapter 1: The Beginning**

The primary focus of this report is to determine the viability and sustainability of a long-term development plan for Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms and then to develop three employment plans and strategies. Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms is an outdoor living history museum operating as an 1880's rural Texas homestead staffed solely by volunteers and supported by the Heritage Society of Austin. These plans are intended to promote success by supporting the stability of the organization, increasing revenue streams while avoiding the depletion of resources or funding. The goal is to improve service and ultimately strengthen Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms' position as a sustainable nonprofit organization.

There are several reasons to develop expansion plans for all types of organizations, whether non-profit, government or private. An organization that expands too quickly or without thought risks over-expanding, lowering success rates, and depleting resources. Exploring a variety of scenarios of potential employment plans for Pioneer Farms will help to ensure that this northeast Austin treasure has a sustainable future – allowing generations of Texans and non-Texans to enjoy it. Moreover, the assets which make up Pioneer Farms, a compound of three working farmsteads and related cultural heritage programs, are for the most part irreplaceable. If lost, they cannot be recreated.

The development of employment plans is important because Pioneer Farms contributes to the economic, social, cultural, and environmental vitality of the area. Pioneer Farms and its cultural activities add to the city's economy by benefiting local

retail business. Pioneer Farms' reputation as a vibrant living history museum is a factor in enriching community life. The compound presents a Fall Festival which highlights activities associated with the harvest, and the Candlelight Christmas Tours which illustrate how early settlers socialized and decorated their homes during the holiday season. These special events provide the community with social activities and opportunities to meet informally. Exposure to the farm can encourage individual growth seen in the power to observe, empathy for other people and cultures, and better understanding of the world. Enhancing individual capacity has a spillover public effect because it helps establish common ground between cultures and generations by strengthening social cohesion. It benefits the general public because it cultivates the type of citizens desired in a pluralistic society.

### *Historical Background*

Located in northeast Austin at 1400 Pioneer Farms Drive, the Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms is a 100-acre outdoor museum. Pioneer Farms is currently staffed solely by volunteers. Classified as a living history museum with docents, Pioneer Farms has sections of operating rural Texas homesteads from the 1880s. On the property, there are historical buildings as well as animals: horses, goats, and chickens. A living history museum is different than the usual museum experience because it allows visitors to interact with the exhibits and the overall setting of a museum. Education occurs through a variety of media including demonstration, interaction, role-play, reenactment, as well as more traditional style museum exhibits.

Originally donated to the Heritage Society of Austin in 1956 by Laura and Eugene Giles, grandchildren of Frederick and Harriet Jourdan, Pioneer Farms was operated by Austin Natural Science Association in alliance with the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department beginning in 1975. This partnership expanded when people came together to form Friends of Pioneer Farm, a volunteer group. Led by Ari Pettigrew, the former volunteer manager, Friends of Pioneer Farm aided the Heritage Society and the City of Austin by fundraising, applying for grants, paying the insurance for the farm, and securing volunteers. A major accomplishment of the Friends of Pioneer Farm was acceptance into the heirloom seed program (A.Pettigrew, personal communication, December 12, 2005). The aim of the heirloom seed program is to maintain our food's genetic heritage by ensuring that for every plant there is a variety of strains available to grow in diverse conditions. In spite of such types of success, Pioneer Farms faced serious problems. In mid-2003 the tri-lateral partnership between the City of Austin, Friends of Pioneer Farm, and the Heritage Society of Austin dissolved. By October 2003 the City of Austin cut funding reducing the staff and operations to nil. With the city's six employees gone and operating under severe budgetary constraints, the future of Pioneer Farms was unknown – members of the Heritage Society and the public believed the farm would close.

As soon as word spread that the farm was facing extinction, volunteers began to show up at the site to work. At first it was just a handful of workers but within a few days about fifty people arrived at the gate to give their support with sweat equity. Since then, with the guidance of the Heritage Society of Austin, Pioneer Farms has reestablished

itself. Currently, Pioneer Farms is open to the public two days a week and one additional day for accompanied school groups.

Today, Pioneer Farms consists of three historic farmsteads: the tenant farm, the cotton farm, and the homestead farm. The Tenant Farm features the one-room Kruger Cabin built around 1848. It represents the home of a German Immigrant family in the late 1800s. Adjacent to the cabin is a small barn, chicken yard, kitchen garden, and a covered outdoor kitchen. The second homestead is the Cotton Farm. It presents an 1858 Greek-Revival style house representing a well-to-do family of the same time period. A kitchen and spinning room are located behind the main house. The house is surrounded by gardens, pastures, a small orchard, a log smokehouse, a hog and chicken house, and an outhouse. The third is the Homestead Farm. This farmstead shows the Jourdan Cabin, which represents the home of a middle-class farming family from the 1850s. The log cabin is surrounded by a number of other structures: a cistern (water supply), root cellar, log smokehouse, chicken house, and outhouse.

Pioneer Farms is also home to the Artisan Corner which includes the 1852 Scarborough Barn, an Eclipse windmill and an 1829 corn crib/granary, which has the distinction of being the oldest structure at the farm. This section of the farm includes carpentry and blacksmith shops. Another area is Sprinkler Corner. The Tate House, accommodating administrative offices and a meeting room, is located here as well as the Aynesworth-Wright House. The latter, built in 1853 is a white wood dwelling designed to resemble the Tennessee abode of its original owners. Nearby there is the General Store and Costume House, built in 1994 for the filming of the Willa Cather novel, *A Lantern in*

*Her Hand*. Additionally at each of these six designated sites, Pioneer Farms has catering and rental facilities available to the public.

Pioneer Farms attracts visitors interested in history and preservation. Creative programming engages visitors and provides them with a memorable experience. The focus is on authenticity and quality. The site comes alive because a number of these programs are interactive experiences and engage as many of the visitor's five senses as possible. Touring the historic farmsteads, viewing authentic demonstrations of life in the 1800s, and programs such as "Daily Life on the Prairie" provides school-aged children with a hands-on lesson in Texas history. Programs reflect a thoughtful balance between the museum community's need to preserve and protect, and the visitor's need to learn and explore. This sense of balance is evident in the "History Samplers" program which is an interactive activity for school-aged children. The program provides an opportunity to dress in costume, perform chores, cook lunch, and learn about life on the Texas prairie. The museum also collaborates with other organizations. For example, it sponsors the "Pioneer Farms 4-H Club," which offers children the opportunity to participate in farm-related projects. Recently the 4-H Club has been raising chickens and collecting the eggs to sell to fund the 4-H program. At the farm, "Trailblazer Campouts" offer groups the opportunity to campout under the stars and the "Farm Hands" program is geared specifically to adults and is designed to attract new volunteers to Pioneer Farms by emphasizing choice, flexibility in scheduling, work sites and costuming. Through "Pioneer School," the farm attempts to keep Texas history alive and give all visitors a hands-on opportunity to learn about blacksmithing, metalworking, soap and candle



making, carpentry, knife crafting, and many other skills necessary to succeed in living on the Texas prairie in the 1800s. Garnering additional positive publicity in the spring of 2005, Pioneer Farms signed an agreement making the Farm the home base of The Biscuit Brothers, the nationally marketed KLRU-produced children's program.

In addition to the year-round, ongoing programs Pioneer Farms sponsors five major annual events: Family Fall Festival, Candlelight Christmas Tours, Spring Market Day, Maypole Festival, and Independence Day. Pioneer Farms' cultural heritage programs bring together diverse functions: a museum, preservation, the arts, crafts, tourism, economic development, as well as multiple stakeholders including volunteers, guests, private citizens, elected officials, and board members.

#### *Current Funding*

Although run independently, Pioneer Farms is under the umbrella of the larger Heritage Society of Austin. Its operating budget was \$99,800 for the fiscal year 2005-2006. The budget itemizes estimated revenues as well as costs and expenses the farm anticipates it will incur operating during the fiscal year. Pioneer Farms' revenues are generated from programs, donations, events, sales, grants, rentals, and interest. As shown in Table 1a, programs (all volunteer driven) and donations accounted for nearly two-thirds of the total revenue generated while grants only amounted to two percent. Total expenses for Pioneer Farms were \$86,400, which when subtracted from the revenues left a net income of \$10,400 (Table 1b. Operating Budget: Expenses).

Table 1a. Operating Budget: Revenues		
	Amount in \$	% of Total
Programs	35,000	35.1
Events	25,000	25.1
Donations	31,000	31.1
General Store and Property Sales	4,000	4.0
Grants	2,000	2.0
Rental	2,500	2.5
Interest Income	300	0.3
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>99,800</b>	<b>100</b>

source: Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms Board of Governors Meeting, November 2005

Table 1b. Operating Budget: Expenses		
	Amount in \$	% of Total
Agriculture	15,500	17.9
Operations	16,250	18.8
Marketing	5,350	6.2
Programs	2,400	2.8
Volunteers	2,700	3.1
Utilities	14,200	16.4
Maintenance	17,000	19.7
Insurance	13,000	15.0
<b>Total Operation Expenses</b>	<b>86,400</b>	<b>100</b>

source: Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms Board of Governors Meeting, November 2005

An important area of Pioneer Farms' fiscal planning is the capital budget, which was \$121,400. This budget is used to fund construction, renovation, and improvement projects as well as the acquisition of buildings, structures, or land for Pioneer Farms. Aside from an insurance settlement to pay for the repair of damaged wooden roofs on a number of the historical structures at the farm, the largest contributions to the capital budget came from grants totaling \$50,000 from the Austin Community Foundation and the Heritage Society of Austin. In addition, although two historic structures, the Tonkawa and Freedman sites, were donated to Pioneer Farms the acceptance of the gift

caused the museum to incur additional expenses. As a result of the high cost of building relocation, maintenance and repairs, after subtracting expenditures from revenues, Pioneer Farms closed the 2005-2006 year with a deficit of \$600.

Table 2a. Capital Budget: Revenues		
	Amount in \$	% of Total
Net Income	10,400	8.6
Grants	50,000	41.2
Donations	0	0.0
Capital Assets	61,000	50.2
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>121,400</b>	<b>100</b>

source: Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms Board of Governors Meeting, November 2005

Table 2b. Capital Budget: Expenses		
	Amount in \$	% of Total
Scarborough Barn	12,000	9.8
Silo	5,000	4.1
Milk Barn	3,000	2.5
Brodie Cabin	6,000	4.9
Perimeter Fencing	12,000	9.8
Utilities Relocation	5,000	4.1
Building Relocations	20,000	16.4
Restroom Rehab	15,000	12.3
Roof Claim Repairs	44,000	36.1
Freedman Site	0	0
Tonkawa Site	0	0
<b>Total Capital Expenditures</b>	<b>122,000</b>	<b>100</b>

source: Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms Board of Governors Meeting, November 2005

### *The Problem: Success*

In spite of the challenges it faces, Pioneer Farms has been a success. It offers a wide-range of programs and facilities for public enjoyment, it is well respected and the demand for its services is increasing. Michael Ward, Chairman of Pioneer Farms, reports that the organization has been approached by local school districts eager to continue and

expand what has been an extremely positive partnership (personal communication, December 11, 2005). Pioneer Farms has also tapped into the emergent pool of retired volunteers, developing a “workamper” program in which the volunteers perform duties at the farm in exchange for a RV hook-up site (Board of Governors Meeting Agenda, 2005). Most recently, Alliance Productions, an outdoor theater company, has approached Pioneer Farms to use it as a setting for a play about Texas History (Board of Governors Meeting Agenda, 2005).

Clearly excited by the success of Pioneer Farms, Mr. Ward also expressed concern. He was anxious about the difficulty inherent in supervising a rapidly expanding organization such as the farm on a volunteer basis while maintaining a professional and family life (M. Ward, personal communication, December 11, 2005). As the demand for services increases, so too does the demand for volunteers. An additional cause for concern is due to the lack of funding and steady revenue sources. Pioneer Farms operates year-to-year on severely limited budget, bartering services when necessary. Despite this difficulty, Pioneer Farms manages to just cover costs.

The issues point to the need for Pioneer Farms to consider its current and potential employment plans in order to uphold its success and manage growth in a sustainable manner. While the current volunteer staff at Pioneer Farms is committed to addressing the needs of the organization, due to the fact that this is not the volunteer’s primary occupation, the issues are not always adequately addressed. A paid staff member committed of the objectives of Pioneer Farms could more effectively aid in the

development of new techniques and solutions to accommodate the success and challenges.

## **Chapter 2: Methodology**

Having successfully carved out a niche market Pioneer Farms is growing and expanding. Increased need for support to provide services to its clients coupled with a mounting interest in the homestead are challenging the organization to reexamine its operations. The object of this report is to explore different staffing options for Pioneer Farms that ensure its celebrated hands-on experiences and its goal to continue working with volunteers remains intact in the twenty-first century. The three scenarios preserve the current use of volunteer contributions. The scenarios for Pioneer Farms are: (1) maintain the status quo, (2) hire one full-time salaried staff member, and (3) hire two full-time salaried staff members. Formulation of these scenarios was determined based on data gathered during informal interviews with the chairman of Pioneer Farms, board members of Pioneer Farms, current volunteers, and a former volunteer manager. Citizen and customer input were not solicited because this is a preliminary investigation.

Developing three different staffing alternatives presents Pioneer Farms with a variety of options with which to approach future growth and challenges. The organization can examine each plan, analyze the benefits and disadvantages, and make an informed decision selecting a plan Pioneer Farms feels best meets its needs.

Phase one of the research centered on gathering background information regarding Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms and general development strategies geared towards nonprofit organizations. Information about Pioneer Farms was collected from multiple sources. Much of the information regarding Pioneer Farms' programs, volunteer options, to "how it all began," is catalogued in journals, books, brochures, and pamphlets

as well as easily accessible via the internet. Michael Ward (Chairman of the Board) and Ari Pettigrew (former volunteer manager) provided a valuable oral history of Pioneer Farms. They discussed how the farm came into existence, participants' involvement, and their perception of the homestead's future direction. Additional volunteer opinions were solicited by speaking informally with them at several Pioneer Farms' functions. In order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the status of Pioneer Farms it became necessary to access formal reports including the minutes of the Board of Governors meetings. These reports provided relevant data regarding the finances of the farm such as revenues and expenditures in terms of capital as well as operating budgets.

During this phase, I conducted an extensive review of the literature to ensure that I would be able to effectively evaluate information, develop appropriate plans and make meaningful suggestions for Pioneer Farms. Several major themes emerged and were divided in the literature analysis according to the topics of leadership, volunteerism, organizational effectiveness, and evaluation. Due to the overlapping nature of the themes, it became obvious that each significantly has an impact on the others within a nonprofit organization. Additionally, it became clear that there was no single authoritative definition of the correct way to operate a successful nonprofit. The literature illustrated that the flexibility to manipulate programs to fit the specificities of a mission was the norm rather than the exception among nonprofits. It pointed out that elements that benefited one organization could be disadvantageous in another organization.

The next phase of the research focused on the development of potential staffing options and detailed the funding mechanisms needed to fulfill each plan. Specific attention was been paid to the benefits and costs of each proposed employment strategy. This data illustrates how employees and volunteers can have a large and pronounced impact on an organization. Locating potential grants and identifying prospective corporations willing to make donations was also included in this stage of the research. By including this information, the suggested plans move from the realm of a possible dream to an achievable reality. Because Pioneer Farms is a non-profit organization, a likely source for locating potential funding is from the larger nonprofit organizations in the Austin area, such as the Hogg Foundation and Greenlights. However locating potential donors should not be limited to nonprofit groups or the local geographical area.

In the final stage I developed specific recommendations for the future growth of Pioneer Farms. In analyzing how Pioneer Farms could proceed in its future particular attention was paid to funding and alternative forms of payment for contributions to the farm. The plans provided Pioneer Farms with three staffing options designed to cope with future growth and meet the challenges that lie ahead.



### **Chapter 3: Review of the Literature**

A review of the literature provides background information related to issues that must be understood and taken into consideration when creating development and employment strategies for a nonprofit organization. While the report focuses on a specific type of nonprofit organization, a living history museum, the literature is applicable to nonprofits in general.

An original goal in reviewing the literature is to develop a list of successful nonprofit management practices. With numerous articles and books related to nonprofit management it seems logical to assume there would be consensus regarding strategies that work and could be used by nonprofit organizations. However, this is not the case because an organization's success depends on a number of factors which are not necessarily transferable from organization to organization (Herman & Renz, 2004). The literature indicates that for every successful nonprofit organization with specific strategies, there are many agencies using the same strategies that are unsuccessful. For example, one nonprofit may benefit from increasing the scope of its programs to enhance visitor attendance, while a second nonprofit may follow the same path but is unable to achieve the same result. Various internal and external factors including funding, mission, stakeholders, and clients, to name a few, hinder building a single model of growth for nonprofits. As Light (2000) states, "Just as scholars know relatively little about creating an innovative nonprofit, they also know relatively little about creating a high-performing nonprofit. Much of the scholarly literature on nonprofit excellence recognizes this reality" (p.95).

While the literature does not delineate a particular way to build a successful and effective nonprofit organization, four common and overlapping themes surfaced including leadership, volunteerism, organizational effectiveness, and evaluation.

### *Leadership*

Leadership and governance are fundamental areas in which nonprofit organizations differ from for-profit organizations and government agencies. In a nonprofit, the board of directors is the entity responsible for defining the organization's missions and strategies. At the same time, the board serves as management and leadership providing oversight and cultivating relationships between the organization and its stakeholders (Axelrod, 2005). A function of the executive director is to assist the board in carrying out its responsibilities. This form of leadership creates a partnership known as the executive-board relationship (Herman & Heimovics, 2005). A complex relationship, it can be organized hierarchically or equilaterally. Many nonprofits choose to place the board at the highest level of governance, having final say in most or all decisions, lending to a hierarchal relationship. While many scholars believe this model should be used by all organizations, the relationship between the executive and the board is so complex it is somewhat misleading to assume ease in implementation and operation.

The "social constructionist model" perspective focuses on communication and interaction among members of an organization to arrange the organization's practices and objectives to fit participants' perceptions, needs, and interests (Herman & Heimovics, 2005). This model emphasizes a more equilateral relationship between the leadership and other members of the organization in the development of consensual goals for the

organization as leadership is viewed as a collective process and social construct. This model focuses on learning about leadership through the process, rather than focusing on individual traits and characteristics of those engaged in leadership (Ospina & Schall, 2000).

The leadership of nonprofit organizations varies from volunteer leaders who become heavily invested in the organization to hired professionals, and all the possibilities in between. Whether the staff is paid or unpaid, different characteristics of leadership qualities were identified in the literature ranging from communications and interpersonal skills, commitment, passion, trust, honesty, to decisiveness, flexibility, delegation skills, and resource acquisition talent (Light, 2002; Herman & Heimovics, 2005; Pappas, 1996). The listing is neither ordered nor prioritized and not all effective leaders possess all these traits or qualities. Arguably, the most important attribute of an effective leader is the ability to remain focused on the agenda and mission of the organization. In addition to creating order, this focus can help ensure that an organization does not try to do too much, too quickly without adequate thought. A good leader understands that he or she is not the only person involved in the functioning of the organization, but rather he or she is needed to make rational decisions while energizing other members of the organization to take on their fair share of responsibility. A successful leader is able to inspire others to become motivated and take charge when necessary (Light, 2002). When a leader is able to foster open communication among volunteers, board members, funders, and others, a level of honesty and trust is established between the varied stakeholders. Instead of viewing funders solely as the source of

money, open lines of communication support these stakeholders becoming involved in the work and success of the organization. By using his or her interpersonal and communication skills, strategic decisions can be made with consensus of the larger group if the proper “trail” has been laid out to bring everyone to the same conclusion (Herman & Heimovics, 2005). Leaders who are able to engage boards, provide solid leadership, and promote external relations are regarded as the most successful.

Chief executives are not successful if they cannot interact with board members, clients, or the community. It is their responsibility to clearly articulate the mission of the organization, provide inspiration, and work hard to achieve those goals. The leaders of nonprofit organizations have a difficult task and perhaps most challenging is to “see that decisions and actions in one realm are not only consistent with those in other realms but also mutually reinforcing” (Herman & Heimovics, 2005, p. 153). In nonprofit organizations, people in leadership positions are expected to wear multiple hats; it comes as part of the terrain in the resource-limited nonprofit sector.

### *Volunteerism*

The positive contribution of volunteers to nonprofit organizations is undeniable; without it many government and nonprofit institutions would suffer. A 2001 survey conducted by the Independent Sector, a Washington, D.C based nonprofit support organization, stated 83.9 million Americans volunteered for groups and organizations for a total value of time estimated at close to \$239 billion (Rehnborg, Fallon, & Hinerfeld, 2002). Volunteers gave an average of fifty-two hours per year, which when using an average hourly wage of \$16.05 amounts to an average of \$802.50 worth of labor

(“Volunteering,” 2005). The larger the pool of volunteers, the greater an organization’s potential for obtaining higher levels of unpaid labor. Approximately twenty-six percent of volunteers on a national level aided organizations whose mission serves education or youth; and in Texas, of the sixty-two percent who volunteered nearly nineteen percent worked with education and arts organizations (Musick, 2005). The seven percent difference between the national and state averages is noteworthy but does not negate that these statistics suggest we live in a society of engaged individuals. Additionally, these statistics coupled with research performed by Putnam (2000) asserts that Americans are a generous people since volunteering is roughly twice as prevalent among Americans as compared to other countries. Volunteers give time, energy, and money to further the mission of specific organizations and causes.

The incentive to volunteer and become involved with an organization varies from person to person (Pappas, 1996). Motivation may stem for personal reasons, for example, losing a parent to cancer and becoming involved with an organization that raises money to find a cure. Impetus may result from interest such as a person who is fascinated by historical architecture volunteers to work with a group that restores buildings. Then again, some volunteers may become engaged to “beef up” a resume while others rally to the cause to alleviate feelings of guilt or to build self-esteem. Additionally the literature indicates that engagement is affected by other factors including size of community, age, family income, employment, community life, wealth, religious affiliation, and social connections (Putnam, 2000; Musick, 2005). These factors are connected and no single variable predicts just who will or will not volunteer. However,

“well-to-do, highly educated people – those who have more personal and financial resources – are more likely to volunteer [and] donate money,” (Putnam, 2000, p.118).

Among those factors the data regarding volunteer age is intriguing; however the findings are not definitive. Some surveys indicate that seniors engage in volunteerism the most (Putnam, 2000) while others see young adults (18-24 years of age) as the largest contributing group (Musick, 2005). This data is confounded because some people choose to volunteer on a weekly basis while others volunteer for only a short period of time sporadically throughout the year. This makes it difficult to develop a clear understanding of who is truly the most engaged and involved citizen.

Organizations rely on volunteers for a variety of reasons. In the nonprofit sector, in particular, when organizations engage volunteers to help provide services they must learn to take the good with the bad. Volunteers can provide economic savings to the organization, enhance the quality and capacity of service, develop skills for the unemployed, and improve community relationships by building bridges (Rehnberg, Fallon, & Hinerfeld, 2002). Conversely, the use of volunteers has disadvantages including a significant lack of reliability and the need for supervision of volunteers (McCurley, 2005). Impediments arise not because organizations ask people to commit time and effort to a specific cause, but sometimes personal responsibilities take priority over responsibility to the organization. Furthermore, after becoming involved, volunteers develop a “psychological contract” with an organization, mentally defining what that organization will and should provide to them (Liao-Troth, 2001). If this “psychological contract” is broken volunteers may potentially voice their disapproval and resentment

within the community, articulating negative attitudes about the organization that can hurt its overall reputation.

According to Pappas (1996) it is imperative for organizations to fully understand their current and potential volunteer base, as it is an extremely important asset. Not only can volunteers give time and money, they can act as ad-hoc fundraisers and community outreach personnel. The successful retention of volunteers requires an organization to invest in sustainable volunteer programs with strong, reliable management that does not dampen the spirit and devalue the people serving the organization (McCurley, 2005). One way this can be achieved is by an organization clearly defining the degree that the work experience for volunteers are formalized (Liao-Troth, 2001). This degree of formalization varies by organization; does the organization need an extra set-of-hands or a volunteer accountant with professional training? Regardless of the volunteer's role, much of the literature suggests incorporating a plainly written job description for all volunteer positions so that everyone is clear about what the job entails, what is expected from the volunteer, and how the task fits in with the larger goals of the organization (McCurley, 2005). This process prevents volunteers from wasting time waiting to learn their tasks and its parameters. It also gives volunteers a keener awareness of responsibility and a valuable sense of inclusion in the organization.

### *Organizational Effectiveness*

A central issue for nonprofits is organizational effectiveness. What is organizational effectiveness? Some believe it is achieving the organization's mission while others feel it is achieving the goals of the organization at the least possible expense.

Others maintain it is an organization's ability to meet client needs without duplicating services (Light, 2002; Herman & Renz, 1998). These varied perspectives coupled with board members and funders increasing focus on outcomes emphasizes that organizational effectiveness is vital to long-term success. As the competition for funding among nonprofit organizations continues to grow it is necessary to show that resources are not going to waste. Communities and governments are more assertively pushing for nonprofit organizations to provide services in a challenging, resource-limited environment. Many times nonprofits are expected to do more with less as they strive to meet the needs of clients they serve. There are several models visible in the literature that have been utilized by organizations to increase effectiveness; whether or not they have been successful across the boards is a different story. As there is no clear path laid out to create a successful nonprofit, there is no obvious model to achieve greater efficacy.

Discussion among nonprofits regarding how to achieve a more effective organizational model differs. Literature documents the creation of multiple models to judge organizational effectiveness because desired results vary from institution to institution, as well among stakeholders (Herman & Renz, 1998). Faced with relentless pressure to perform well, some nonprofit organizations look at the for-profit sector for solutions and have arbitrarily adopted aspects of the "business model" (Rojas, 2000). This can be awkward because nonprofits' productivity is less tangible and more qualitative than in the for-profit sector (Rojas, 2000). To minimize the risk of inappropriate adaptation, Herman & Renz (1998) suggest a multiple constituency model. This approach acknowledges diverse stakeholders and takes into account the use of



different criteria and objectives set to evaluate organizational effectiveness. The hypothesis defines organizational effectiveness differently, and thus alternative qualities illustrate success making cross-comparisons between organizations nearly impossible.

A third model suggests organizational effectiveness is directly related to the organizational structure as defined by four major components: production, commitment, leadership, and interpersonal conflict (Rojas, 2000). This is a return driven strategy, a framework used in designing, developing, and evaluating business strategies' long-term returns to investors and other capital suppliers (Frigo, 2002). A derivative of the return driven strategy is the mission driven strategy which focuses on the mission of an organization without spotlighting the consumers, or becoming overly attached to a specific service rendered. This enables these types of organizations to better serve their communities (Frigo, 2003). This final model clearly links the organization's effectiveness to success by staying true to its mission.

The literature reveals that there is a supply of models which may or may not be successful for various nonprofit organizations. Many aspects of these models overlap making it difficult to isolate which factors are most important to achieving organizational effectiveness. The characteristics that repeatedly emerge are needs assessments, strategic planning, measures of outcomes, customer satisfaction, diverse revenues sources, and partnerships (Herman & Renz, 1998; Light, 2000). Diverse income and revenue streams, for example, ensure an organization is not overly reliant on one funding mechanism giving the organization flexibility and the potential needed to grow and evolve without exceeding its financial capacity. In other instances, partnerships are essential for some

organizations to reach a new customer base, share information, and through association gain legitimacy or public trust (Light, 2002). A needs based assessment establishes if an organization is meeting the requirements and desires of its clients, its stated mission, as well as identifying areas where programming would benefit from refinement.

Overall, the characteristics found in various organizational models show that efficacy is a set of judgments and criteria that varies immensely among organizations (Herman & Renz, 1998). This disappointing result makes it virtually impossible to find a winning model that is applicable across all types of organizations.

### *Evaluation*

Another key to understanding an organization is the concept of evaluation. Evaluation is the process of gathering past activity outcome information in an effort to make informed decisions regarding the future of those activities. It “provides a firm foundation of strong assessment, adds techniques of comparison and control necessary to address the role of specific programs in producing desired outcomes” (Thomas, 2005, p.415). The assessment and results produced from an evaluation may be affected by factors including organization size, history, and available resources.

Evaluation is linked to every facet of an organization and is undertaken to inform interested stakeholders regarding the organization’s effectiveness including its programs, services, volunteers, and salaried staff. Types of evaluation range from systematic approaches using a professionally designed instrument to gather an immense amount of data which can be readily quantified, to less formal assessments reporting impressions or perceptions of the success or lack thereof for each segment reviewed. The information

gathered from these evaluations is becoming increasingly important as funders, clients, and policy makers pressure nonprofit organizations to prove they are obtaining the desired results in an efficient and effective manner (Murray, 2005). The results are valuable; however the process can prove to be complex as well as costly in time, money, and energy spent required to undertake the endeavor.

The literature identifies evaluation as a quantifiable response to the “accountability movement,” in terms of both legal and moral responsibility. Attaining a quality evaluation is a multifaceted and complex endeavor that many organizations feel compelled to perform. The pressure felt from the drive for accountability varies according to the nature of an organization and previous factors listed above. Researchers draw attention to “the belief that nonprofits, and the people who run them, should be more ‘accountable’ to those they are created to serve and those who provide the money to operate them” (Murray, 2005, p.347).

Researchers further note evaluation works best for organizations whose goals or objectives are clearly stated and can be accurately measured (Murray, 2005). Assessment can be difficult when results and outcomes are more qualitative than quantitative in nature. Organizations have choices but regardless of the subject of evaluation, several factors such as input, activity goals, outcome goals, and subject impact to considered. According to Thomas (2005) the activity goals tend to be more measurable and easier to achieve. Nevertheless it is important to note that any one of these goals can be the deciding factor between effectiveness and inefficiency. In addition, the best evaluation systems include a “logic model” that articulates underlying assumptions and links each of

the factors under consideration to each other (Murray, 2005). The literature shows there are multiple ways of conducting an evaluation. This would indicate that there is no one correct method for a nonprofit organization to employ.

While evaluations can provide critical feedback for a nonprofit organization there are flaws. Most evaluations cannot speak to causality - they cannot determine whether changes experienced by the organization resulted directly from a specific program or other factors. Missing from the debate surrounding evaluation and outcome measurements “is any mention of waivers from traditional rules that funders impose on their grantees. Even as funders ask for more attention to outcomes, they do so without loosening the reporting requirements and financial disclosures [demands]” (Light, 2000 p.77). With tight budgets and the need to provide the best possible services to clients, it is problematic when nonprofits must also add evaluation to their “to-do” list. However there is a benefit; while the cost of evaluations is high, feedback can provide critical information as to what is and is not effective. If results from the evaluations are acted upon correctly it can foster the development of a more sustainable organization.

In summation, the available literature regarding nonprofit organizations is extensive and specific themes surfaced including leadership, volunteerism, organizational effectiveness, and evaluation. Unfortunately the literature does not indicate a specific methodology to build and manage a successful and effective nonprofit organization, nor does it point to one correct way to evaluate, enhance organizational effectiveness, attract volunteers, or govern the organization. With the great variation in organizational size, structure, and objectives this is understandable. A successful strategy for one

organization may be unsuccessful in a different organization. Where one organization may be capable of expanding to accommodate an increasing number of participants, a second organization following the same rubric could be put at risk with over-expansion jeopardizing its overall stability. Once the stability of an organization is shaken it then becomes susceptible to failure. The lack of consensus seems to be the connecting premise throughout the literature.

## Chapter 4: Three Scenarios

Carving out a niche market, Pioneer Farms' success also presents challenges for the organization. Mounting public and private interest in the organization has led to the desire for an increase in the capacity of the organization to serve more people efficiently and effectively. Pioneer Farms does not have a clear course of action planned to respond to the changes. Although the visitor count remains steady, members of the Board of Governors noted that attendance at some events was high and risked overwhelming the volunteer staff. At a December 2005 meeting, members stated that accommodating five hundred to one thousand person events was comfortable but the infrastructure was not in place to handle greater numbers (R. Leggett, personal communication, December 11, 2005).<sup>1</sup> The additional interest expressed by private entities such as Alliance Productions, an outdoor theater group, and the Biscuit Brothers emphasizes the importance in meeting these challenges. At the top of the board's priority list is securing new volunteers, but the question is how to proceed.

With growth come challenges as well as a unique management opportunity, a chance to examine different staffing options. One strategy, maintaining the status quo, follows the maxim, "why fix it if it is not broken?" Supporters of this approach believe that the best course of action for Pioneer Farms is to continue on its current path and remain an all volunteer organization. Others feel there is room for improvement and minor changes could increase organizational effectiveness. Still others see an opportunity

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<sup>1</sup> Rhonda Leggett is a member of the Board of Governors and a volunteer at Pioneer Farms.

to become a powerhouse among living history museums, but would require an organizational overhaul.

There are a number of reasons why creating a strategy focused on employment plans would help Pioneer Farms deal with its success and challenges by establishing a resource base sufficient to the opportunities at hand. It would improve the organization's ability to implement and gain the support necessary to secure resources and expertise, promote personnel skill levels, and train or hire additional qualified personnel. In addition a clear plan can assist in critical decision-making and balancing the pressures exerted by stakeholders such as governing boards, investors, creditors, and others.

The goal of a development strategy is to support and strengthen the enterprise, and though it may seem obvious, Pioneer Farms must be mindful of protecting its existing assets and resources. The challenge is to ensure that changes do not destroy the historic fabric and the community character that attracted visitors in the first place. Ideally the employment plans work not only to sustain Pioneer Farms, but also to improve the marketing of the existing services, programs, and provide the organization with realistic solutions to deal with the success while maintaining the integral role volunteers play at the farm. Creating clear guidelines and parameters delineated in a well-thought out plan can help mitigate the extent to which routine problems such as administrative and organizational inefficiencies affect the overall well-being of the organization.

To support and strengthen the enterprise three possible staffing strategies are outlined: (1) maintain the status quo, (2) hire one full-time salaried staff member, and (3)

hire two full-time salaried staff members. All three scenarios preserve the current use of volunteer contributions. While the goal of each is different, many elements repeat in the scenarios. Since this report is not attempting a comprehensive overhaul and reorganization of Pioneer Farms, the emergence of shared features among the proposals is expected.

### **Scenario 1: Maintain Status Quo - All Volunteer Staff**

*“Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless” ~ Anonymous*

The central objective of the first scenario is to maintain the status quo and have Pioneer Farms remain an organization staffed solely by volunteers. This scenario does not place a heavy emphasis on garnering additional funding, but it does advocate Pioneer Farms review its approach to recruiting, engaging, and retaining volunteers.

Repeatedly volunteers voiced their hope that Pioneer Farms remain an all volunteer organization because they feel that it gives them a voice and a degree of control (K. Johnson, personal communication, December 11, 2005).<sup>2</sup> This control could be lost if there are significant changes to the organization. As presently structured, Pioneer Farms has over three hundred and fifty volunteers whose contributions are vital to the existence of the organization. Volunteer contributions range from the highest levels of involvement such as members of the board of directors and those who showcase skills such as woodworking and metalworking in the artisans’ corner, to those who help by performing routine maintenance at the site. One volunteer noted that he became involved

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<sup>2</sup> Kalin Johnson is the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors and a volunteer at Pioneer Farms.



with Pioneer Farms to share his unique talent of blacksmithing with others (R. Swim, personal communication, December 11, 2005).<sup>3</sup> Others spoke of volunteering as an opportunity to do a good deed while they spent time with friends and family (K. Johnson, personal communication, December 11, 2005). Still others become involved because they value Texas history and want to see it preserved because the farm is a cultural treasure that speaks to a unique way of life (M. Ward, personal communication, December 11, 2005).

Because survival of Pioneer Farms is dependent on volunteers for continued support to ensure a smooth-running operation, the relationship formed between volunteers and the organization is critical. Both parties must acknowledge that each volunteer's contribution is considerable, significant, and highly valued by Pioneer Farms. Pioneer Farms benefits from the economic and physical backing people give the organization but it also costs the organization money to receive such support. Volunteers benefit from engagement because they are able to give in a meaningful way but it also costs them to contribute to a cause. Stated formally when people choose to volunteer both the individual and the organization benefit as well as incur costs, and Pioneer Farms is no exception.

#### *Benefits of an all-volunteer staff*

There are numerous benefits associated with using volunteers. First, volunteers at Pioneer Farms benefit from their experiences. As mentioned earlier in the report, Pioneer Farms successfully operates under the constraints of an extremely tight budget without

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Swim is on the Board of Governors, a blacksmith and volunteer at Pioneer Farms.

room for many additional expenses. A second benefit the all-volunteer staff provides significant economic savings to the organization, allowing the scarce funds to be diverted to other uses. A third benefit is derived from the programs that directly affect the Austin community (and arguably Central Texas) from having a well functioning, living history museum in the area.

Volunteers benefit from engagement with Pioneer Farms through several hands-on experiences. At Pioneer Farms there is the prospect of personal growth. A volunteer who performs clerical duties gains additional skills in such fields as bookkeeping, financing, and budgeting. The 4-H member who helps maintain a garden also has an opportunity to learn about plant genetics through the heirloom seed projects. In an effort to develop a 4-H Community Tree Planting Program, several volunteers are gaining experience in grant-writing as they aim to secure funding from the National 4-H Council (“Meeting Minutes”, 2005). The maintenance of the homesteads at Pioneer Farms teaches volunteers the importance of preservation of Texas history. Additionally, all the volunteers at Pioneer Farms experience the mission and functions of the organization first hand. These opportunities for skill development and increased self-esteem stem directly from the volunteer activity, its positive reception, and the appreciation extended to volunteers by Pioneer Farms. Recognition of volunteer service comes not only from the Pioneer Farms’ family, but from friends and neighbors who acknowledge the important work taking place within their community.

At Pioneer Farms volunteers have opportunities to engage with others as well as interact with the community. Volunteers enhance community relationships by acting as

conduits and bridge-builders. Connections forged and relationships formed have a positive impact on the visitor and serve as the base from which a continued relationship between the participant and the organization is built. The volunteers gain a sense of purpose as they are given a chance to give back to the community and contribute to the relationship. Additionally, volunteers increase community awareness and help develop a sense of ownership and pride in Pioneer Farms.

Substantial benefits are amassed by Pioneer Farms when using an all-volunteer staff. The organization does not have to pay the full cost of operation because time and services are gifted. As with many nonprofit organizations volunteers at Pioneer Farms staff sales desks and information booths, enhancing service capacity and quality. Pioneer Farms uses donated labor to cut and bail hay on the property to feed the livestock throughout the year, providing additional economic savings (“Meeting Minutes, 2005). Volunteers at Pioneer Farms publicize the work of the organization through a time honored and highly effective mechanism, word of mouth. When a volunteer has a positive experience he or she shares his or her experiences with others creating positive public relations for the farm. This exposure afforded to Pioneer Farms constitutes potential building blocks and occasions for the organization to network and increase partnerships. If people, volunteers and visitors alike, can see and experience what Pioneer Farms has to offer and feel that they are directly benefited by the organization, then a positive organizational image will be established. When this connection occurs with many people, a stronger bond is forged between the community and the organization, in this case between Austin and Pioneer Farms. The imperative is for the

community to recognize and acknowledge the benefit derived from of housing a cultural institution that reflects a common history and experience. Part of the value is that the opportunity to become involved exists, not whether every member of the community participates first hand.

*Costs of an all-volunteer staff*

Pioneer Farms is not the only organization to use exclusively volunteers to perform various functions. Organizations use volunteers to help lower costs through the contribution of free labor. Just as there are many benefits to an all-volunteer staff there are also many drawbacks associated with the practice. The labor is not exactly free of costs; there are expenditures that are absorbed by the Pioneer Farms and its volunteers. Because Pioneer Farms is staffed solely by volunteers, the costs affecting individual volunteers ultimately affect the organization as a whole. The most obvious cost is the inability of Pioneer Farms to meet the increasing demands for its services with its current all-volunteer composition.

For volunteers, the individual costs of participating in an all-volunteer organization are not as serious as those faced by Pioneer Farms, the organization. The time spent traveling to and from Pioneer Farms has a direct impact on the volunteer by consuming both time and money in addition to the actual time spent volunteering. When a person volunteers there is less time allotted for personal needs and family. In an effort to mitigate some of these costs, several families at Pioneer Farms have made volunteering a household, and by extension, a small group activity.

When a volunteer feels that his or her position within the organization is not vital or a necessary component to a properly functioning organization, concern about volunteer commitment is intensified. If the relationship formed between a volunteer and Pioneer Farms sours, the farm could suffer from bad press if the volunteer openly voices disapproval, creating a negative image of the organization. If volunteers do not show a specified level of commitment, strain is placed on everyone, particularly those who hold higher positions within the organization. In the case of Pioneer Farms, if a volunteer does not show up to work it is ultimately up to others, generally those at higher levels, to pick up the slack. Poorly managed volunteers can cause programs to suffer. If the functions and programs of Pioneer Farms deteriorate, the organization would not be considered an asset for the community to maintain and support. Thus an initially significant indirect action could ultimately lead to loss of revenues.

Another cost absorbed by Pioneer Farms is the expense of poor decision-making that results from having multiple people performing subsections of specific tasks. This is evident in the division of leadership at the farm where the volunteer staff's responsibilities overlap with one and others. For example, Robert Swim was assigned to determine the proper street lighting for the farm, yet it is another volunteer staff member, Wayne Bell, who makes the final decisions regarding the implementation and approval of such an action ("Meeting Minutes," 2005). While Pioneer Farms leadership is able to effectively work together, this is an issue that is crucial for Pioneer Farms to be aware of to avoid tension and conflict between volunteer staff members and other volunteers.

Building from the concerns stated above regarding individual volunteers, is the idea that volunteer staff members may not have the same incentive and level of commitment to complete the task as salaried employees, placing additional strain on Pioneer Farms. Specifically when an organization has an all-volunteer staff as many small nonprofits do, such as Pioneer Farms, volunteers are often in the position somewhat similar to Michael Ward, Chairman of the Board of Governors, and Angela Walters, the volunteer coordinator. Ward's volunteer work is a second job for this full-time journalist and family man. Ward noted that he spends at least twenty hours per week overseeing the overall operations at Pioneer Farms, responding to queries, and developing relationships that will benefit the farm (personal communication, December 11, 2005). Yet, there is an inherent tension because Ward has numerous responsibilities and limited time. Because they are primary obligations, the worry is that professional and personal responsibility will take precedence over issues related to the organization. In addition, Angela Walters, the volunteer coordinator, is put in a similar situation. Although Walters' work is exemplary and most praiseworthy, because her position at the farm is voluntary, the number of hours she contributes each week fluctuates according to her personal schedule (personal communication, December 11, 2005). This situation is witnessed not only at the highest levels of leadership in nonprofit organizations, but also among everyday volunteers who lend a hand providing more mundane services, as stated above. This lack of consistency costs the organization in missed opportunities to engage volunteers and meet the changing needs of Pioneer Farms. This is not to say that Ward and Walters are not qualified for their positions, but rather that the current situation does not allow

Pioneer Farms to adequately address its changing needs and the increasing demand for services. The demands of Pioneer Farms and its volunteers suggest the work required of the volunteer coordinator is becoming a full-time job.

### **Scenario 2: Hire One Full-time Salaried Staff Member**

The second alternative for Pioneer Farms is to hire one full-time salaried staff member. The decision to hire only a single staff member is directly related to Pioneer Farms' limited financial capability and the written goals for 2006 stated by the Board of Governors ("Meeting Minutes," 2005). While some may believe that it would be more logical to hire an executive director to oversee the overall operations of Pioneer Farms, due to the nature of the organization (all-volunteer), most in leadership positions at the farm feel that having personnel dedicated to volunteers is of utmost importance.

At the present time, the growth of the organization demands a more highly structured enterprise with qualified and professional personnel who are able to provide a sufficient amount of time and energy to meet Pioneer Farms' changing needs. The likelihood of achieving this objective is enhanced if the details and requirements of the job are explicit. In hiring a paid staff member, Pioneer Farms' options are numerous, however in this scenario I will look at only a full-time volunteer manager. Pioneer Farms' heavy reliance on volunteers and the desires expressed by the leadership of the organization makes this staffing this position an obvious first choice.

When a nonprofit organization heavily engages volunteers, a volunteer manager helps the group realize numerous goals. The duties of a volunteer manager are varied and change based on the status of the organization's volunteers and level of commitment.

The function of the volunteer manager at Pioneer Farms is to ensure that there are a sufficient number of volunteers to meet the needs of the organization. Additionally, the volunteer manager is responsible for recruiting, training, educating, and responding to the various needs of the volunteers.

This position calls for structure coupled with flexibility. The volunteer manager must create a stable work environment for volunteers who freely choose to give their time and energy to Pioneer Farms. The volunteer manager must not only ensure the use of volunteers is efficient and effective, but also espouse a management style that allows for adaptation to changing dynamics associated with supervising and working with a volunteer population. A volunteer manager must develop and encourage practices that emphasize the use of volunteerism, encouraging collaboration and trust among people in the organization. To be effective, Pioneer Farms needs to give the manager a feeling of autonomy as well as control over the process of making use of volunteers that will be recognized by other volunteer staff in the organization.

The role of volunteer manager is in the spotlight because the position is highly visible. Supervising volunteers in an organization such as Pioneer Farms requires the volunteer manager to incorporate a managerial approach similar to that used in traditional employer-employee relationships. The volunteer manager must be able to bring in new volunteers by using activities geared toward recruitment. This would increase the base of support necessary for Pioneer Farms to function.

The volunteer manager must be detail oriented. Not only must the volunteer manager be able to think creatively, he or she needs to be able to encourage volunteers to



be creative, to improvise and make modifications as needed to achieve set goals. It is essential for the manager to be a self-starter who is able to motivate, boost morale, direct helpers to where assistance is needed, and encourage volunteers to do likewise among their colleagues. This is especially important to an organization like Pioneer Farms that relies on the contributions of its volunteers.

The volunteer manager must foster greater awareness of the common goal by demonstrating that “groups function best when everyone is pulling the wagon in the same direction” (McDuff, n.d.).

Volunteer managers are expected to have certain characteristics and multiple skills that aid in successfully fulfilling their duties. At Pioneer Farms volunteers have demonstrated they are able to work collaboratively to effectively advance the mission and successfully execute program delivery. The hired volunteer manager must take these actions and reinforce feelings of support among volunteer staff, particularly with new volunteers. The volunteer manager needs to reaffirm the organization’s values, confirm the benefits gained, and restate the work it requires. To realize this objective, a starting point would be empirical research designed to learn about past volunteer experiences and the subsequent impact on the organization and staff. The incorporation of greater volunteer staff participation in developing, designing, orienting, and training of new volunteers would establish and confirm the high level of commitment Pioneer Farms has to its volunteers. Additionally, validation of volunteer contributions reminds the volunteer staff of their place in the organization and its function. The action would encourage volunteer staff to make more efficient use of all personnel, while at the same

time reassuring new volunteers their effort has both a positive impact on the organization and is deeply valued. To strengthen volunteer participation and commitment in the work environment, the volunteer manager needs to clearly show what benefits are accrued from volunteer work. As an example the manager could generate a “report” documenting the results, benefits, and advantages of working with volunteers and make it widely available to the rest of the Pioneer Farms’ community. To achieve such goals and to become more inclusive takes tenacity and dedication to Pioneer Farms.

While the current unsalaried volunteer manager does possess many of the qualities and characteristics that make a superb volunteer manager, the increasing demands placed on Pioneer Farms and its services merits staffing this position. On a part-time volunteer basis the position requires so much work, effort, and time, that no one could perform all these duties effectively solely on a volunteer basis. To realize these objectives takes profound commitment and both the worker and Pioneer Farms must make the pledge.

#### *Benefits of Salaried Staff*

Adding a salaried staff member to an existing all volunteer nonprofit such as Pioneer Farms can benefit the organization in three main ways. First, there is the potential of increasing the number of programs offered by the Pioneer Farms. Second, a salaried staff member can provide stability for the organization. Third, there is a public acknowledgement of the importance of volunteers to Pioneer Farms.

If Pioneer Farms hires a dedicated salaried worker, the potential benefit of increasing the number of available programs occurs because it would free up more volunteers to perform other tasks. Current volunteer staff members who are concerned

with increasing the volunteer base and orchestrating volunteers would be released to assist in other duties at Pioneer Farms. Hiring a paid employee has the potential of securing additional committed volunteers because it is the responsibility of that staff member. If Pioneer Farms hires only one paid staff member the organization would still be heavily reliant on the existing and future pool of volunteers. As the role and function is described in this scenario, hiring one salaried volunteer manager does not change the essential structure and modus operandi of the organization.

The salaried staff member would provide the organization with a source of stability. “The percentage of time a paid staff volunteer coordinator devotes to volunteer management is positively related to the capacity of organizations to take on additional volunteers,” (Hager & Brundy, 2004). A salaried staff member devoted to encouraging volunteerism would improve sustained involvement and commitment of volunteers to Pioneer Farms. It is expected that a full-time, formally trained volunteer manager would have access to a larger professional network when needed to address various issues associated with the work at hand. Additionally, a formally trained volunteer manager has a wealth of knowledge to address the changing needs of volunteers and Pioneer Farms due to past experiences in the field.

Closely linked to the increased stability of Pioneer Farms, the hiring of a volunteer manager would demonstrate the commitment Pioneer Farms attaches to the value and importance of volunteerism. The action would establish that there was clear agreement between the larger organization, its governing board, and its members that volunteers matter. It would reinforce the purpose and functioning of the volunteer staff

and that the work performed was important to Pioneer Farms. “The support, supervision, and attention that volunteers require, not to mention the logistical aspects of scheduling volunteer labor, are significant burdens to an organization and cannot be established casually as an ‘add on’ service” (McCurley, 2005, p.590). The primary responsibility of the employee is to establish, enhance, and create relationships with volunteers. A salaried volunteer manager is better equipped to complete these goals than an untrained part-time volunteer because it is that person’s primary responsibility and he or she has undergone formal training for the position. Hiring a paid volunteer manager helps ensure that volunteers have a clear role and defined function in the organization.

#### *Constraints of a salaried staff*

The major constraint in hiring a salaried staff member is cost. In addition to the salary, Pioneer Farms must consider additional fringe benefits that the employee is entitled to - such as healthcare, paid vacation, and a pension plan. According to the Nonprofit Times, in organizations with an annual budget of \$500,000 to \$999,000, directors of volunteers earned a mean salary of \$38,428 for 2005 (Pirtle, 2005). Obviously, organizations with larger budgets would be able to provide staff with a slightly higher salary than smaller organizations. Adding a salaried staff member to the Pioneer Farm roster would significantly affect the annual budget and necessitate the diversion of funds, the collection of a sizeable amount of money through fundraising efforts, or apply for foundational support to pay the costs of staffing the position. Pioneer Farms could consider offering a salary at the low end of the scale and adding an unusual perk such as housing. It would take a creative reworking of space, but is possible.

Another drawback associated with hiring a paid staff member is the tension that can arise between long-time volunteers and the new staff member. This tension may range from an individual's refusal to relinquish control, or share knowledge about a position with the new person, or simple personality differences. In addition, the newly-hired staff member could alienate current volunteers by altering the existing volunteer system. In an effort to prove his or her worth to the rest of the volunteers, the new staff member could make processes exceedingly complicated. Additionally volunteer staff may feel slighted that only one position or a particular position was staffed by a salaried employee. If magnified, this feeling could create an uncomfortable work environment, particularly if displeasure or disapproval is continually voiced. To avoid such a conflict, Pioneer Farms can engage members in the process, solicits input to clarify organizational needs, and helps develop a specific role with identifiable tasks for the volunteer manager.

A third constraint to hiring a paid staff member concerns candidate qualifications. Filling the position with someone who is not fully qualified or able to perform the required tasks can create a significant obstacle as well as be an impediment to overcome in discussions concerning future staff and their roles. While this is a valid concern in any organization and any position staffed, due to Pioneer Farms' financial capabilities and relatively small size, the hiring of a salaried staff member is a significant action and major financial commitment. Accordingly, to ease the concern of all involved, it is essential that the volunteer manager have a proven track record.

### **Scenario 3: Hire Two Full-time Staff Members**

This final scenario calls for Pioneer Farms to hire two full-time salaried staff members. This action would change some aspects of the governance of Pioneer Farms as well as the current volunteer staff composition. In restructuring a staff for a nonprofit organization, there are a number of vital positions and functions to consider. Each position is consequential and of significant importance to the overall successful performance of the organization. In this scenario, I will explore the benefits and constraints associated with hiring both a full-time volunteer manager and a fundraiser. As noted in the previous scenario, the need to hire a volunteer manager was listed as a higher priority for the leadership of Pioneer Farms than the need for a fundraiser due mainly to the heavily reliance the organization has on its volunteers (“Meeting Minutes,” 2005). However, once the organization feels that the needs of the volunteers have been met and the goals of the leadership have been satisfied, it would greatly benefit Pioneer Farms to hire a fundraiser to assist in securing funds to ensure that staffed positions are able to be paid.

From an economic perspective this action would not reduce the need for volunteers nor relieve current volunteers of their responsibilities at Pioneer Farms. The addition of two salaried staff persons would provide elements of stability to the organization and ultimately increase the value of volunteer participation. Each of these positions includes duties and responsibilities that improve the sustainability of Pioneer Farms over the long-term. The previous scenario outlined the basic role and duties of a salaried volunteer manager. This position is remains unchanged in this scenario. I will

now describe the second salaried position which is a full-time fundraiser and the associated benefits and constraints.

Mission may drive an organization, but it is the funding that enables a nonprofit to achieve its goals. Due to the competition for funding among nonprofit organizations, it is critical for Pioneer Farms to hire a fundraiser with grant writing expertise. It is essential for the fundraiser to think of new and creative strategies to finance the organization. Since philanthropic giving is closely related to economic conditions and donor wishes, fundraisers must create adaptive plans responsive to continually changing environments and individuals. Fundraisers must also cultivate strong healthy relationships with donors and potential donors to maximize their interest in Pioneer Farms. Additionally, fundraisers must act in an ethical manner so as not to damage the community's perception of the organization. More specifically the job description should state that the person would also be responsible for identifying and applying for grants. Those involved in fund development and grant writing must look at both public and private money available through government assistance, state grants, contracts, foundations (community, national, family and corporate) as well as individuals. Pioneer Farms is a complex organization, a living history museum, a farmstead, as well as a center for education. Accordingly there are many avenues of eligibility and the task of fundraising and securing grants becomes intricate. Discovering all of the possibilities is hard work and at the very least, extremely time consuming, as is the process of meeting requirements and making applications. A skilled, gifted fundraiser could be the key to increasing and diversifying funding streams at Pioneer Farms.

### *Benefits of salaried staff*

As stated in the previous scenario, with the addition of salaried staff, there are numerous benefits to be gained. First, a shift in responsibilities of board members who are responsible for duties associated with the work of a volunteer manager and fundraiser would occur. Second, the stability of the Pioneer Farms is enhanced as salaried staff members are dedicated to fulfillment and achievements of their assigned tasks. Third, additional funding and revenue streams are developed and existing sources are enhanced.

Paid staff would work hand-in-hand with the existing volunteer staff to accomplish the goals of Pioneer Farms. With paid staff providing supplementary human resources, namely administrative and managerial support, the board would be able to hand over some of its duties which include the oversight of several committees that are responsible for development, events, and volunteers of Pioneer Farms. Board members who had previously been in charge of these duties would be freed to assist in the fulfillment of other necessary tasks of the organization. Additionally, with this shift in responsibilities, the task of members of the board at Pioneer Farms would increase focus on the overall mission of the organization and its links to the community.

As noted previously, a new source of stability is generated as a particular salaried staff member is accountable for fund development. By successfully fulfilling his or her duties, the salaried fundraiser provides Pioneer Farms with the opportunity to increase the quality of programs and services offered as budgetary constraints are lessened.

Furthermore hiring a salaried staff member would be a visible demonstration that Pioneer Farms desires to continue to exist as a valuable member of the Austin community. Hired



staff members also bring a new level of expertise to their jobs and Pioneer Farms when they have been formally trained in their profession. Having a staff committed to achieving specific goals should yield a more productive organization which is then able to use its resources more effectively and efficiently.

Finally, with the acquisition of a professional fundraiser, Pioneer Farms could potentially increase the level and diversity of funding from private and public sources. This is likely to occur because formally trained, professional fundraisers have access to networks that are not accessible to the general public and are educated in new processes of initiating new types of fundraising efforts. One of the primary responsibilities of a fundraiser is to enhance and strengthen the relationship between donors and Pioneer Farms to maintain a healthy association with open lines of communication and trust. An organization that is accessible and desires a positive relationship with its donors develops the potential for long-term funding because the funders are given the sense that their contributions are vital and appreciated. In addition to developing new revenue sources, a formally trained fundraiser can enhance existing fundraising activities. In the case of Pioneer Farms, the fundraiser can encourage the board to sell items produced at Pioneer Farms online via its website or at local retail stores in the Austin area. This slight change in the current approach Pioneer Farms takes regarding its retail efforts as a revenue source would expand the potential number of customers and supporters. A side benefit attained by Pioneer Farms with such an action is the increased public exposure of the organization, its mission, and its products.

### *Constraints of salaried staff*

The most important barrier to the hiring of salaried staff is cost; “in the nonprofit, this figure [organization’s portion of the budget staff salary] is in the 70% - 80% range” (Pappas, 1996, p.128). According to the Association of Fundraising Professionals (2005), the median salary for a fundraiser was \$39,000 (in 2003) for organizations that raise funds of less than \$100,000 per year. Without adequate planning and preparation to secure additional funding prior to hiring, providing workers with a competitive salary and benefit package could quickly drain Pioneer Farms’ resources and thus place the entire organization in jeopardy. Moreover this scenario calls for the hiring of two-full time employees which makes it necessary for Pioneer Farms to increase its budget by a significant amount.

Second, regardless of the position within the organization, there is a high turnover rate in the nonprofit world because of simple burn out. Working for a nonprofit is known to be a strenuous job without the ameliorating compensation of a high salary and other perks. For example, in an all volunteer organization such as Pioneer Farms, it is predictable that over-stretched staffer will inevitably have to pick up the slack when volunteers fail to show or when the overall number of extra hands dwindles. If a hired staff member chooses to leave, Pioneer Farms would suffer. The loss of a formally trained salaried fundraiser could leave Pioneer Farms in an awkward position if volunteer staff members are unaware or do not possess the knowledge necessary to continue the implementation of fundraising techniques that were started. This issue is of concern specifically for a staff member working for an organization that continually must make

its case to garner funding and defend its place within the community can generate feelings of uncertainty and insecurity in the employee and in Pioneer Farms.

## **Chapter 5: Summary and Recommendations**

Pioneer Farms plays an important role in the community because there is no other living history museum in Austin. It is unique. The one hundred acre park-like complex is a living history museum, a farmstead, an educational center, a destination, and a place to socialize and volunteer. Clearly, Pioneer Farms cannot become “just another” cultural institution that is unable to adapt to change. Instead, the hope is that by adding paid staff to the existing volunteer staff, the action will strengthen, improve, and bring increased stability to Pioneer Farms.

Pioneer Farms is experiencing the effects of growth and success achieved as a result of increased community recognition and support. Under the current operating structure, the staff is all-volunteer. This is understandable for an organization that sustains itself on an annual operating budget of \$99,800 (in 2005-2006). However, in order for Pioneer Farms to respond to and successfully manage its continuing growth, the capacity of the staff must be enhanced. At Pioneer Farms, capacity-building that focuses on increasing volunteerism and management of volunteers is of utmost importance and a stated priority by the leadership of the farm (“Meeting Minutes,” 2005).

People will continue to visit the museum, see its objects, appreciate the history, and embrace the guiding principal that Austin’s Pioneer Farms is a cultural treasure to be preserved. Given that Austin is a growing capital city with an increasingly well-educated and sophisticated population, Pioneer Farms does not have the choice to stand still. Heavily reliant on the existing and future pool of volunteers, Pioneer Farms must adapt

its current practices to ensure continued success. It must seek new options and innovative alternatives, yet the challenge is how best to proceed. Should Pioneer Farms remain as it is, carefully monitoring the museum as it changes, delivering quality programs and services, and maintaining a dedicated and capable all-volunteer staff? Should the museum hire only one salaried staff member? If so, would it be a paid volunteer manager? Or, should the museum consider hiring two full time employees? In this case would it be a paid volunteer manager and a professional fundraiser with grant writing expertise.

Pioneer Farms needs to also consider the order in which to hire staff. Although the report and goals expressed by leadership at Pioneer Farms points to hiring a full-time salaried volunteer manager, I believe the organization should consider alternative paths. The current structure of the organization with its extremely limited funding makes it seem more appropriate to hire a professional fundraiser with grant writing expertise first, followed by a paid volunteer manager. Extremely limited financial resources demand the first person hired have proven fundraising ability. It would be ideal if that person could wear two hats and also function as volunteer manager until funds are allocated to hire an additional staff member. This would enable Pioneer Farms to meet its goals, increase revenues and manage volunteers more effectively.

When Pioneer Farms, or any organization, contemplates and selects a proposal on which to base its future growth and development, it lacks a crystal ball and the clairvoyant's ability to predict the future. The organization must consider a number of issues when considering altering the current all-volunteer staff composition. If the

organization changes in a significant way, such as the hiring of salaried staff to better adjust to growth and meet the demand for increased services, it is imperative that current volunteer staff understand and be able to perform tasks necessary to meet the new objectives.

A major concern is how a new strategy will relate to and integrate with the current management and staff structure at Pioneer Farms. It is critical for Pioneer Farms to take into account whether or not the current staffing (regardless of pay status) can adjust and perform the tasks required. Additionally, Pioneer Farms must assess whether or not it would be able to meet the new objectives and goals associated with hiring staff members. Is the employment strategy a manageable goal for the organization to undertake, or is it unrealistic?

To achieve these ends, first and foremost, Pioneer Farms must consider funding. The organization must precisely and realistically identify what is necessary to achieve the set objectives. The goals are to provide support, increase volunteerism and revenue streams, and offer meaningful, efficient ways to complete each task.

### *Funding*

Without being trite, as has been noted in the past and undoubtedly will be so noted in the future, money makes the world go 'round. Regardless of the course of action Pioneer Farm chooses to embark upon it must evaluate its funding sources and consider the enormous benefits associated with increased and more diversified funding streams.

Among nonprofits, Pioneer Farms holds a unique position in Austin. This is an organization whose mission crosses multiple lines. Pioneer Farms needs to showcase its

multi-faceted nature, which is advantageous when garnering support from outside agencies and institutions. Each of the proposed strategies requires a different level of funding to achieve the set objectives. Remaining an all volunteer agency would require the least amount of funds. Funding needs increase as the objectives become larger in scale as illustrated in the second and third scenarios.

In the first scenario, maintaining the status quo does not imply standing still. Pioneer Farms has a strong support base and a large number of volunteers who make daily contributions to the functioning of the organization. As most know, word of mouth is the best press. Existing volunteers must make a commitment to themselves and to Pioneer Farms to spread the word and share their positive experiences with others. Pioneer Farms needs to capitalize on its name recognition.

In this scenario, additional funding would prove useful; however, it is not essential for the smooth running of the organization. To maintain the status quo, Pioneer Farms must focus on increasing partnerships and collaborations, and consider alternative forms of payment that are not monetary based to sustain volunteer participation.

To be successful as an all-volunteer venture, Pioneer Farms would greatly benefit from increased partnerships with other Austin area organizations, both nonprofit and for-profit. Affiliation and collaboration is a source of new volunteers. Partnerships are possible because large organizations such as Dell and HEB encourage employees to engage in volunteer activities in their local communities, and could be approached to work with the farm. This would be most beneficial in the less skilled but labor intensive

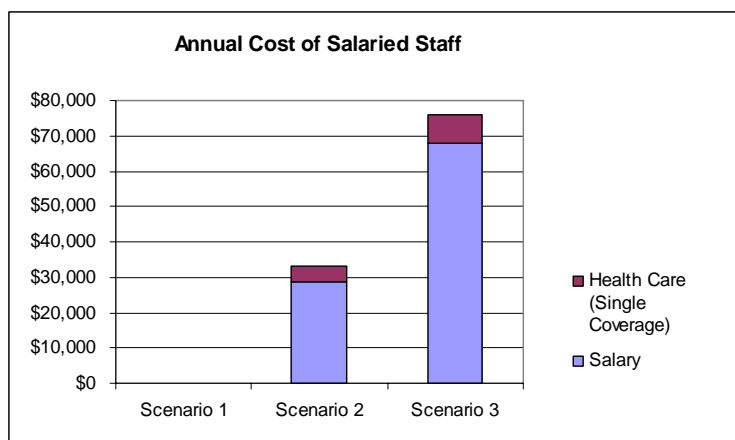
activities. Moreover, this action would lead to an increase in the available pool of volunteers.

Every avenue needs to be explored to achieve greater volunteer participation. There are several universities in the area including the immense University of Texas at Austin, the smaller St. Edwards University, and Austin Community College which have thousands of college students whose organizations could supply a number of volunteers. Building from this idea, every year more colleges participate in Alternative Spring Break, a national program which gives university students the option to spend their break performing community service in whatever capacity is needed by the sponsoring organization. A most unique partnership, and one that could be expanded, is the current involvement of several home-schooling families who use Pioneer Farms to enhance learning opportunities of the students.

Alternatively, Pioneer Farms can expand on a new volunteer program focusing on retirees initiated at the farm. Pioneer Farms recently housed two retired “workampers” from December 2005 through March 2006. In exchange for a campsite with a hookup, the “workampers” would provide basic maintenance and office services for the duration of their stay. It is a natural partnership. Many retirements are routinely beginning to stretch into two and even three decades, and many retirees want volunteering to be a significant part of their post-work life. Engaging in volunteering at Pioneer Farms is ideal. It gives volunteers opportunities to identify what inspires them through multiple levels and types of participation. Pioneer Farms benefits because with more dedicated workers the organization would not be as strapped for help.



In addition to expanding the network of volunteers, Pioneer Farms must continue to recognize volunteer contributions to ensure sustained involvement. Currently Pioneer Farms lowers the cost for volunteers to participate in programs at the farm based on the number of hours contributed. While this form of recognition is positive, volunteer work is also a lesson in community involvement and should be counted as such and recognized more. One technique designed to encourage increased sustained involvement is the creation of a certificate program for volunteers. The certificate program could take assorted forms such as a generic letter of appreciation or could be more site specific. Pioneer Farms could develop a certificate program that has an established program of study. An example would be a student volunteering for one hundred hours of service during one semester and writing a paper regarding his or her experiences. Once the work is completed, the certificate acknowledging the work is presented to the volunteer. In the future, if a program is developed, approved by the appropriate state and university educational authorities this certificate could be recognized by the city, state, and universities meriting placement in the permanent records of the student. This type of certificate should not be limited to traditional students. With modification, certificate programs could be opened to any member of the community who expressed a desire to immerse his or her self in nonprofit work. While the accreditation process is long, this idea offers a possible solution to fill the needs of Pioneer Farms.



Source: Data compiled by Cheryl Cioffari.

In the second scenario, Pioneer Farms would hire a full-time volunteer manager and make the position permanent. This objective requires additional funding to pay the staff member’s salary and benefits. To secure additional funding for this option, one potential solution would be to initiate a “fund drive,” asking people to contribute to make this dream a reality. Pioneer Farms could include the wish to hire a full time staff person in its yearly “A Letter to Santa” which is mailed to prior visitors and volunteers to encourage giving to the organization for a specific purpose. The marketing surrounding such a “fund drive” would have to convey the message regarding the benefit gained by hiring a salaried volunteer manager. Filling this position would enhance the stability and professionalism of Pioneer Farms, and boost its ability to provide the community with opportunities for high quality volunteerism.

An employee, working for fifteen dollars (\$15) an hour, forty (40) hours per week for forty-eight (48) weeks would cost Pioneer Farms \$28,800 a year. Pioneer Farms must also consider benefits that are available to employees, most notably health care. Usually a benefit package adds twenty-five percent to a salary. This addition would raise the

actual annual cost for Pioneer Farms to \$32,950. Bare-bones, this would require Pioneer Farms to raise its annual operating budget by a minimum of thirty-three percent, an extremely conservative estimate. These additional funds must be in place prior to the employment of such a staff member. It is imperative the organization be able to remain financially stable for more than one year of the paid staff member's employment.

The final scenario calls for hiring two full-time employees, a volunteer manager and a professional fundraiser with grant writing expertise. The organization and its volunteers would greatly benefit from having paid staff because each position is important in the successful functioning of the organization. The financial costs of such staffing would greatly affect the operations of Pioneer Farms. Using the calculations from the second scenario with the addition of the \$39,000 (median salary for fundraisers), the acquisition of two full-time employees would cost Pioneer Farms \$67,800 per year, plus an additional \$8,300 in health care costs. This proposal calls for an increase of seventy-six percent above the current operating budget. Though not impossible, this level of increase for an organization with a small operating budget is daunting to say the least.

### *Beyond Fundraising*

In addition to current fundraising techniques used by Pioneer Farms such as the annual fund drive, another valuable source of funding is grants. Many grants are available through organizations, institutions, and foundations at the state and national level. However, due in part to federal, state, and local government budget cuts; an increasing number of nonprofit organizations are fighting for these rapidly depleting funding sources. Additionally, as was the case recently, natural disasters such as the

Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina divert funds from other worthy but less urgent causes. There are numerous foundations and institutions that are committed to the missions of nonprofits and give generously. To be successful in acquiring these funds, Pioneer Farms must make its case to the funding source. It cannot rest on a pitch; it has to make the sale and seal the deal: Pioneer Farms' multi-faceted organization is the place to invest.

This referent is not a complete listing of all grant possibilities because searches are sometimes limited to selected memberships and associations and thus not visible to the general public; however, it is a start. Although some foundations, due to various reasons, are not as likely to fund initiatives or programs that are unsolicited or are outside of the foundations or organization's operating community, it should never be assumed that the general rule is set in stone.

Basic research revealed several bona fide, potential grant opportunities to help Pioneer Farms build organizational capacity through increased levels of volunteerism and the hiring of a salaried staff member(s). There is the OneStar Foundation of Texas which provides organizations with grant money to increase their capacity and better serve their communities. A more difficult grant to secure would be from the AmeriCorps Texas Education Award Program. AmeriCorps grants are designed to broaden the network of national service programs. Their strategies are intended to increase the number of communities seeking to use AmeriCorps to achieve its goals. In this case when applying for such a grant, Pioneer Farms would promote the educational component of its programs.

Other sources of financial help are available but sometimes it is the less direct route. The Moody Foundation of Galveston, Texas, whose current primary funding focus remains Moody Gardens and the Transitional Learning Center, has an office in Dallas to assist in grant-making/writing efforts. Moody Foundation grants help to partially fund ongoing or expansion projects primarily in the realms of education, social services, and the arts. Another Texas based funding organization is the Meadows Foundation, whose goal is to enrich the lives of the people of Texas. To achieve this end, the Foundation is committed to a broad pattern of giving and funding in all regions of the state, with specific interest in public education, mental health, and the environment.

Looking outside the state, the MetLife Foundation established in 1976 by MetLife, supports various educational, health and welfare, civic and cultural organizations. MetLife bases its grant decisions on a variety of factors regarding the organization, its structure, commitment to community, and potential for other funding sources.

Known to support community asset building, youth education, and community life in general, JPMorgan Chase gives back through funding to the communities it serves. A leading global financial services firm, JPMorgan Chase gave more than \$130 million in grants and sponsorships to nonprofit organizations in 2004. JPMorgan Chase believes thriving communities need quality of life and sees the arts, culture, and civic programs that celebrate diversity as the way to realize the objective (<http://www.jpmorganchase.com>). JPMorgan Chase realizes the goal by supporting organizations that focus upon capacity building, advocacy, technical assistance, and

financial support to the arts and cultural community. These are all attributes that describe the work of Pioneer Farms.

Smaller and less well known is The Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation. It provides grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 to nonprofit organizations and public agencies with projects that contribute to the preservation or recapturing of an authentic sense of place. Certainly this describes Pioneer Farms. The funding may be used for professional advice, conferences, workshops or educational programs.

There is an old saying among fund-raisers: never take no for an answer. While the Austin-based 3M Foundation does not accept unsolicited proposals from local organizations, this does not mean it should be discounted. 3M Foundation needs to be courted. Pioneer Farms should remain aware of its volunteers' networks and the possibilities they possess, specifically when it comes to connections to foundations and other funding entities. It is simply creatively using available resources.

For additional information regarding grant resources there are several online compilations to locate grant resources. For example, the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)* is the "bible" of government funding. Along with information regarding the 1,400 different programs, this reference work provides grant writers an easy way to collect "key words" and descriptors to access funding sources at the state and local level, and through private foundations.

### *Recommendations and Next Steps*

The success of an organization comes from its long-term sustainability. Pioneer

Farms will benefit from sustained engagement and continued community involvement. Initiating activities that engage the public after they have left the farm will ensure the public does not forget the experience and the benefits obtained by visiting. Fostering an environment that educates the public directly about Texas history and indirectly about historic preservation, volunteerism, and culture will ensure that Pioneer Farms is considered a necessary and valued member of the community. Appreciation may not always be shown in dollar amounts, but may manifest itself in increased levels of community engagement through volunteerism as well as general public support for such cultural institutions. Since the appeal of Pioneer Farms is multi-faceted (historic preservation, education and culture), the organization has a considerable advantage over other nonprofits and even for-profit associations. These features position Pioneer Farms as an ideal aspirant for growth, success and sustainability, and the model candidate for outside economic support.

The organization has an extremely limited budget and relies heavily on volunteers. To continue on its current path of success, I believe the best strategy for Pioneer Farms is the final scenario which calls for the addition of two salaried paid staff persons, a volunteer manager and professional fundraiser. Both positions are vital to the continued success and growth of Pioneer Farms. It has been documented that the employee in the role of volunteer manager has the capability to substantially influence the ability of the Pioneer Farms to be effective. Likewise, a trained fundraiser can have a similar influence because funding ensures programs and services are able to continue successfully and, if desired, grow. This increased and highly significant demand placed

on the budget necessitates a fundraiser be hired first, followed by a volunteer manager. Yet, due to the goals stated by the leadership at Pioneer Farms, this is not their objective and may be a hard sell. However, the proposal can be modified and the process segmented into several steps so the annual cost of two salaried staff members would not be over-imposing.

Creating a more efficient management volunteer program that links volunteers to appropriate tasks is an action that may set free untapped capabilities and more fully use volunteers' talents. As stated in the previous chapter, when volunteers have a clear description of the task, understand how the task fits into the larger picture, and have the ability to make choices about the position, these factors combine to make for a happier volunteer, a less stressful work environment, and expectedly more efficient organization. As is well known in the nonprofit world, a happy volunteer goes a long way. Scholarly research has recognized that a talented volunteer manager plays an invaluable role in assuring the process unfolds as designed. The benefits associated with hiring a volunteer manager such as enhanced program efficacy outweighs the cost of additional funding to support the project and the difficulty in finding a qualified candidate.

While the recommendation of hiring two salaried staff members appears to be a middle path, a positive response it is not a middle of the road action when an organization has a relatively small budget. In reality it is simply a conservative action - a logical step forward – in an all-volunteer organization. Now is the time for Pioneer Farms to set out and ensure that its future is secure. The clock is running.



## *Appendix A: Interview Questions*

1. How did you become involved in Pioneer Farms?
2. Could you describe what a typical day at Pioneer Farms is like for you?
3. Why do you think Pioneer Farms is a successful living history museum?
4. How do you think Pioneer Farms could be become more successful?
5. Why do you think Pioneer Farms came to be?
6. What do you see as the overall goals for Pioneer Farms?
7. If you were able to design a development plan, what would it look like?
8. In 50 years, what do you think Pioneer Farms will look like? Be like?

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