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Generating Members, Volunteers and Leaders in Community Organizations

Ray Tackett

University of Kentucky, atackett@uky.edu

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Facilitator's Guide

Generating Members, Volunteers and Leaders in Community Organizations

Rationale:

Successful organizations consist of members, volunteers and leaders who engage creative talents and interests to better serve the community. To effectively address community issues, the organization must assess its participant needs with specific roles and responsibilities necessary to take action.

Program Goal:

To examine organizational processes leading to successful participant recruitment and the fulfillment of mutually satisfying community service goals

Program Objectives:

- Define the differences between members, volunteers and leaders for organizational needs assessments.
- Examine the needs assessment process that directs successful recruitment of members, volunteers or leaders necessary for achieving the organization's mission.
- Develop needs based roles and responsibility position descriptions to successfully recruit and fill member, volunteer or leader organizational roles.
- Employ an effective participant recruitment plan necessary for achieving organizational goals and objectives.
- Examine individual selection and screening placement processes for best fulfilling organizational roles.

Note: Most of the examples and scenarios used to further illustrate the above program objectives will relate to the Extension Service's Master Gardener program. This program is a structured training and development system where participants, upon completing the course materials, agree to extend the service and education mission of the Extension Service by volunteering a set amount of time on approved projects in their local communities.

Pre-Program Preparation:

- Review the publication *Generating Members, Volunteers and Leaders in Community Organizations: Grow Your Group by Building Its Membership* (CLD2-4).
- Make 1 copy of each of the Learning Activity 1-Scenario 1, 2, 3 sheets.
- Secure a flip chart and markers.
- Make copies of blank volunteer position descriptions (3).
- Make copies of blank interest survey (1 copy for each participant).

Introduction:

Successful organizations consist of people who serve the community by engaging their creative talents and interests to serve the organization as well as the community. Effective organizations are composed of a variety of members, volunteers and leaders. The collective interests, skills and abilities of these individuals can be called to action in order to fulfill identified community needs and assist or serve specific clientele, audiences or populations. The questions remains: **What type of participant should your recruitment activities target?**

Introductory Activity:

The purpose of the following brief group discussion activity is to help participants think more about the different roles that may exist with community organizations. Ask them to consider different community organizations that they may belong to. Have them

This leadership curriculum was developed by Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR) agents along with University of Kentucky specialists. Therefore, the examples used in the facilitator's guides are geared toward an ANR/Horticulture audience, such as Master Gardener groups. Please feel free to modify and reproduce the facilitator's guide for any appropriate educational or training purposes with other audiences.

think more in depth about the possible roles that different people serve within the organizations. Ask the following questions:

- Do different people serve in different roles within organizations?
- Are there people who keep the group organized or lead the group?
- Are there people who actively volunteer their time and/or resources toward meeting the goals of the group?
- Does the group have a general group of members that are a part of the overall organizational scheme?
- Are there people who serve multiple roles within the group?
- Are all people suitable for all roles with an organization or group?
- Could the group function without people functioning in all of these roles?

Emphasize throughout the discussion that it takes a variety of individuals taking on many different roles to make a group function effectively and to make it successful. This activity is important for setting the stage for this topic; however, try to limit this discussion to about 5 to 8 minutes.

Objective 1: To define the differences between members, volunteers and leaders for organization need assessment

Most organizations (especially community-based organizations) are made up of a variety of members, volunteers and leaders. Each distinct group performs different roles within the organization. To be successful in meeting identified organizational and community goals, the needs, skills, motivations and availability of each distinct group should be considered.

A member can be anyone who joins an organization. A member does not necessarily actively participate. In many instances, members may not even volunteer at all. Does this mean that members are not valuable to an organization? Absolutely not! Members are valuable because almost all organizations need a membership base to even exist.

In summary...

Members defined: Anyone who joins is a member

Volunteer defined: In order to be considered a volunteer, active participation and involvement must take place.

Leader defined: A leader shares leadership skills with a group of followers.

Learning Activity 1:

The purpose of this learning activity is to explore the differences between members, volunteers and leaders. More specifically, possible scenarios within a Master Gardener organization involving members, volunteers and leaders will be discussed.

For the following discussion activity the facilitator will divide participants into three equal groups. (**Note:** If the total number of participants is less than nine the facilitator may choose to conduct the following activity with the entire group.)

Once participants have been divided into three groups, give each group a copy of one of the Learning Activity 1 scenarios and instruct them to discuss their specific scenarios.

Ask each group to select someone from their group who will be responsible for reporting main discussion points back to the overall group at the end of the activity. Allow around 10 to 15 minutes for discussion.

At the end of that time gather the group back together and have individual group representatives report on their individual discussions.

Objective 2: To examine the needs assessment process that directs successful recruitment of members, volunteers or leaders necessary for achieving the organization's mission

It is not enough to have an overall thought that you have a need for more members, additional volunteers or additional leaders (or all three). It is great that you realize that leaders, volunteers and members all serve different roles in an organization; however, simply saying that you need more of each without targeted reasons can lead to lots of problems. It is more helpful to take a structured approach toward defining organizational goals and objectives and then making specific plans to accomplish these targets.

A needs assessment process is a great place to start in helping align an organization's mission with the necessary resources needed to accomplish that mission. In other words, you are trying to make ends meet! As stated above, there are usually two specific steps in the basic needs assessment process. First, you must define what issues or topics you are going to address. To do this you will be involving others in the community to help you frame the issue at hand. This is an important step in the process, and careful consideration should be given regarding who gets a say. A good place to start is with those who are knowl-

edgeable about, have an interest in, or are affected by a specific topic or issue.

Once an organization has identified a need or specific issue, you can begin to plan for what is needed to specifically address it. This is where we begin to think more specifically about the roles that members, volunteers and leaders play in addressing specific concerns and issues.

Learning Activity 2:

The purpose of this activity is to discuss how a needs assessment process can successfully define organizational goals and objectives and then link these with a plan for member, volunteer and leader participation to address these issues.

During this group discussion activity we will be referring to the scenarios in Learning Activity 1. (**Note:** If the facilitator conducted Learning Activity 1 on another day it may be necessary to refresh the group's memory about the scenario by going back over the details or reading the script again.)

Instruct the group to recall the scenario in the first learning activity where the Extension Service was approached by a group of Master Gardeners who had an interest in starting a Master Gardener Association. Remember to point out to the group that a good place to start is to define needs or issues first. In this case the purpose of or reason for a Master Gardener Association must be defined before the possible need for members, volunteers and leaders can be addressed.

Write the following questions on the flip chart and have the group discuss each question. (Each question below is followed by desired answers.)

Defining Overall Goals and Priorities:

Objectives: What is the reason for having a Master Gardener Association?

Answer: The immediate motivation for the Extension Office to work towards establishing a Master Gardener Association came from requests from Master Gardener Alumni. However, more specific goals need to be established by those who will be directly involved in helping to establish the Association (Master Gardener Alumni).

Note: The facilitator should point out that it is not necessary for the participants to have specific knowledge about Master Gardeners. Remind participants that typically Master Gardener Associations are non-profit and typically focus on community service and working on the continuing education needs of Master Gardener alumni. Don't let the group get bogged down here with too many specifics.

Is there a gap between what currently exists and what should exist?

Answer: Yes, there is an apparent gap because several Master Gardener Alumni have pointed out the fact that there should be some type of Master Gardener Association to help facilitate communication and activity between different Master Gardener classes yet no such association exists.

Instruct the group that initial evidence exists that there might be a need for a Master Gardener Association because several approached the Extension Service about starting one!

Is there evidence that other Master Gardeners would be interested in an association being formed?

Answer: In this case enough interest probably has been directly demonstrated by members of different Master Gardener alumni to proceed. However, it is always good to understand the full extent of interest that may exist among those that have not yet come forward.

What will be the target audience?

Answer: In this case, the Master Gardeners who have approached the Extension Office have specifically targeted Master Gardeners Alumni.

The facilitator should point out that, at least in our Master Gardener example, the possible audience can be easily defined because it will most likely involve Master Gardener Alumni.

What will be the first three priorities in starting an association?

Answer: Possible answers might include: provide an effective way for alumni to communicate, establish an ongoing group that would strengthen communication between the Extension Service and Master Gardener alumni, create a means for Master Gardeners to expand their community service reach, etc.

The facilitator should emphasize that it is extremely important to set priorities in order to keep focused and on track! Also emphasize that these initial priorities will be directly linked to possible need for members, leaders and volunteers

Determining the Need for Volunteers, Members and Leaders:

How will possible members be targeted?

Answer: Again, in our example, it might be a bit easier to solicit possible members from a Master Gardener alumni list. It can be assumed that the Extension Office has an existing database of past members.

Point out that, in some cases, that it might be more difficult to identify possible members for an association depending on the purpose for the association.

Based on the priorities set above is there a need for volunteers for the Master Gardener Association?

Answer: In most cases, there will be a need for volunteers for the Master Gardener Association. For example, if the group had identified that one of the priorities of a Master Gardener Association should be to provide continuing education for alumni, there would be an opportunity for an educational activity coordinator volunteer.

List at least three possible volunteer roles.

Answer: These roles will be used in the Learning Activity 3 so encourage the group to be as specific as possible here. Possible roles might include: volunteer coordinator, educational activity coordinator, media contact, etc.

What leadership roles will be needed based on the priorities from the above section?

Answer: Most organized groups have a chair or president position. Some groups also have a vice president position. Other leadership roles might include other officer positions such as treasurer, secretary, etc. Have the group recall the differences between leaders and volunteers. In some cases organizational positions might call for both leaders and volunteers at the same time!

Objective 3: To develop needs-based roles and responsibility position descriptions to successfully recruit and fill member, volunteer or leader organizational roles

To effectively work with volunteers and leaders, it is best to provide specific expectations about necessary skills and abilities. The easiest way to do this is to develop volunteer position descriptions. Volunteer position descriptions benefit both the organization and potential volunteers/leaders because a good position description will provide a specific road map to matching needs with resources and abilities.

Volunteer position descriptions are a written description of the role and what will be needed to fulfill the requirements (skills, time commitment, length of commitment, etc.). These position descriptions act as a contract between volunteers and the organizations that they are volunteering for.

Learning Activity 3:

The purpose of the following learning activity will be to develop volunteer position descriptions for the volunteers identified in earlier activities.

For the following activity the facilitator will be dividing participants into three equal, smaller groups. (**Note:** If the total number of participants is less than nine the facilitator may choose to conduct the following activity with the entire group.)

Before the facilitator divides up the group, quickly go over a generic sample of a Master Gardener position description. Explain to the group that this is a very general position description and that they are to come up with more specific position descriptions. These position descriptions can be specific to Master Gardeners or could relate more to general organizational position descriptions (for example, Volunteer Recruiter position description).

Once participants have been divided into three groups, give each group a copy of a blank volunteer position description form. Each group will be completing a form for one of the volunteer roles identified in the earlier activity.

Instruct each group to select someone from their group who will be responsible for reporting main discussion points back to the overall group at the end of the activity.

Allow around 10 to 15 minutes for discussion. At the end of that time gather the group back together and have individual group representatives report on their individual discussions.

Objective 4: To employ an effective participant recruitment plan necessary for achieving organizational goals and objectives

Now that we have identified and prioritized the specific need for volunteers, members, and leaders and written position descriptions to match needed volunteers with these roles it is time to talk about actually going out and recruiting! The volunteer position descriptions that you have completed at this point will prove to be valuable. Again, these written position descriptions will help the recruiting organization and members, volunteers and leaders who agree to help. The documents will help communicate specific aspects such as time requirements and qualifications to ensure that volunteers know what is expected. This approach will clear up many of the mismatches that are common between volunteers and groups they are volunteering for.

We stated earlier that the development of volunteer position descriptions should be structured and clearly defined. The identification and recruitment of volunteers should also adhere to this same systematic and well thought out approach. Recruitment activities should be targeted toward filling previously identified volunteer position descriptions.

Learning Activity 4:

The purpose of the following group discussion activity is to have the group think through the process of developing a recruitment plan. The group will be developing their own recruitment plan based on previously developed volunteer position descriptions.

The facilitator should begin by reading the eleven tips included in “How to Develop Recruitment Plan,” which is included in the publication *Generating Members, Volunteers and Leaders in Community Organizations: Grow Your Group by Building Its Membership*.

Next, ask the group to discuss the following questions keeping in mind the three position descriptions that they presented in the earlier learning activity. Make notes on the board/flip chart throughout this activity.

- Who should be involved in the Master Gardener Association?
- Who would benefit from becoming a member of the Association?
- Would there be a benefit to being a leader in the Association (for example, someone needing experience on a resume that related to group leadership or horticulture experience)?
- Are there others besides direct Master Gardener alumni that should be involved and could benefit from working with the association?

Objective 5: To examine individual selection and screening placement processes for best fulfilling organizational roles

The goal of the selection and placement process of volunteers should be to match the interest and abilities of volunteers to the needs of volunteers, members and leaders identified in the position descriptions. During this process it is common to utilize volunteer application packets which include items such as

member interest surveys used to aid in finding the best person for the volunteer role. Other common screening processes may include: applications, background checks and interviews. All of these processes are designed to ensure that there is a good fit between volunteers and positions. Please note here that members of an organization typically do not go through these processes; it is more typical that a contact sheet is completed so that the member can be easily be contacted in the future.

Learning Activity 5:

The purpose of this individual activity is to give participants a better understanding of the matching process by having each participant complete a brief sample interest survey.

Hand out a copy of the blank Interest Survey to each participant. Instruct them to review the document and complete pages 2 and 3 keeping in mind that they are completing the survey as if they are applying as a volunteer to the Master Gardener Association that we have been using in the previous examples.

Allow 10 minutes for participants to complete the form. Have each participant very briefly discuss, based on the interest survey, where they think they would best fit into the newly organized Master Gardener Association.

Summary:

Generating members, volunteers and leaders is an important component of all community organizations. Without new members, volunteers and leaders, all organizations will eventually wither and die. The first step in generating members, volunteers and leaders is to conduct a needs assessment. The information gathered in the needs assessment is utilized to develop position descriptions for volunteers and leaders. Position descriptions articulate the general purpose of the role, as well as the specific responsibilities. Identifying and following a recruitment plan will ensure that your organization and its membership will remain strong, viable, healthy and active.

Developed by: Ray Tackett, Bourbon County Agriculture Agent

Learning Activity 1-*Role of Members*

A local Extension Office has just completed the Master Gardener training with a group of 20 participants. All program graduates have received approval to begin their individual community service projects. Each program participant must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community service in order to complete the overall program and be considered a Master Gardener. In total this one class will be contributing at least 800 hours of service work back into their local communities. That's a lot of service work!

Over the years a number of Master Gardener programs have been held and there are around 120 community members (program alumni) who have completed the program. There has not been any focus on providing any structured opportunities for participants to gather and meet Master Gardener alumni from the other classes. It has been customary for the Master Gardeners to complete their service hours and graduate from the program with little additional organizational contact from the Extension Service.

Recently, a small group of Master Gardener alumni from different classes approached the Extension Office and expressed that they start a Master Gardener Association. This group proposed that association membership should be made open to any Master Gardener from previous classes. Beyond that, the group said that they would be willing to work with the Extension Office in structuring the group and help get it up and running.

Discussion questions:

- Who are the potential members of the Association?
- Should other types of members be considered?
- What would some possible function of members be within the Association?
- Will members be given the opportunity to volunteer?

Learning Activity 1-*Role of Volunteers*

A local Extension Office has just completed the Master Gardener training with a group of 20 participants. All program graduates have received approval to begin their individual community service projects. Each program participant must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community service in order to complete the overall program and be considered a Master Gardener. In total this one class will be contributing at least 800 hours of service work back into their local communities. That's a lot of service work!

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Discussion questions:

- Is there an immediate need for volunteers in getting the Master Gardener Association up and going?
- If you were the Extension Professional that was approached to start an Association, how would you identify possible volunteers initially?
- If there is a need for leadership positions, would you separate possible leadership and volunteer roles?
- Would you identify volunteers to help recruit more volunteers (snowball method)?

Learning Activity 1-*Role of Leaders*

A local Extension Office has just completed the Master Gardener training with a group of 20 participants. All program graduates have received approval to begin their individual community service projects. Each program participant must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community service in order to complete the overall program and be considered a Master Gardener. In total this one class will be contributing at least 800 hours of service work back into their local communities. That's a lot of service work!

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Discussion questions:

- Is there a need to identify leaders in this situation?
- If there is a need for leaders what should be considered first: identifying possible leaders or possible volunteers?
- How do you decide how many leaders should be initially identified?
- Would the leader have different responsibilities than possible volunteers?
- How would leaders work with the sponsoring organization (Extension Service)?

Master Gardener Volunteer Position Description

Position Title: Master Gardener Volunteer

Time Required/Duration of Appointment: One year/40 hour minimum

Location: Hopkins County Extension Service

General Purpose/Mission: The mission of the Hopkins County Master Gardener Program is to train a group of volunteers who can facilitate programs of the Hopkins County Cooperative Extension Service and provide research-based information in order to protect and enhance environmental horticulture in the community.

Specific Responsibilities: Provide leadership and volunteerism to further advance horticulture in Hopkins County through the Horticulture Extension Field Day, the Hopkins County Fair (Fruits and Vegetables), the Seeds of Hope, Harvest of Pride Children's Community Garden, Environmental Day Camps, Earth Days, and Arbor Day celebrations. Provide leadership and program support to the Horticulture Extension Council and Hopkins County Extension Council.

Qualifications: Commitment to the educational and volunteerism components of Master Gardener Program. Pass Youth Protection Standards.

Benefits: Learn Kentucky-specific, science-based information on all aspects of gardening. Receive discounts at conferences and workshops. Camaraderie of other gardening and community enhancement enthusiasts. Field trips and social gatherings, local and out-of-town.

Salary: Unsalariated; Volunteer.

Mentor/Supervising Professional: Amy Fulcher, Hopkins County Extension Agent for Horticulture

Please sign below:

Signature of Volunteer _____ Date _____

Signature of Extension Professional _____ Date _____

TITLE: _____ :

VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTION: _____

POSITION TITLE: _____

TIME REQUIRED / DURATION OF APPOINTMENT: _____

LOCATION: _____

GENERAL PURPOSE: _____

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES: _____

QUALIFICATIONS: _____

BENEFITS: _____

SALARY _____ :

MENTOR / SUPERVISING PROFESSIONAL _____ :

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Signature of Volunteer _____ Date _____

Signature of Extension Professional _____ Date _____

Master Gardener Volunteer Interest Survey

As a Master Gardener there are many ways in which you can contribute to a successful Master Gardener Program. The information you provide on this form will help us find the most satisfying and appropriate volunteer opportunity for you. Thank you for completing this form.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Telephone: _____

(Home) _____

(Work) _____

E-mail _____

Best Time to contact: _____

What are you hoping to get out of the experience of training and volunteering in the Master Gardener Program? _____

What is your favorite kind of gardening? _____

In what kind of gardening do you feel you have the least experience? _____

Time available for training:

_____ Weekdays Morning Afternoon Evening

_____ Weekends Morning Afternoon Evening

Time available to volunteer:

_____ Weekdays Morning Afternoon Evening

_____ Weekends Morning Afternoon Evening

At what time of year are you likely *not* to be available to volunteer (vacation, school breaks, family obligations, work obligations, etc.):

Winter (please specify) _____

Spring (please specify) _____

Summer (please specify) _____

Fall (please specify) _____

Transportation:

- Have use of car
 Use public transportation
 Rely on others
 Other

Previous Volunteer Work: (Please list and describe.):

Interests (Please mark each item according to your level of interest.)

What I Like To Do	All the Time	Most of the Time	A Little	Not at All
Take Responsibility				
Speak to Groups				
Speak to Other Gardeners				
Meet People				
Look Up Information				
Write Letters / Instructions				
Draw and Sketch				
Surf the Internet				
Talk on the Telephone				
Guide Children				
Help the Elderly				
Assist with the Disabled				
Lead Discussion Groups				
Take Notes				
Attend Lectures				
Do Gardening				
Talk About Gardening				
Make Decisions				
Follow Instructions				
Teach				
Work Independently				
Work with One or Two Others				
Improving your Community				
Improving your Garden				
Conduct telephone interviews / surveys				

Adapted from TAXI (Taking Anybody into Expanded Involvement), a national 4-H Publication, for the Master Gardener Program.