



Unit 4: Working With Volunteers

CERT Program Manager



FEMA





Unit Objectives



- At the conclusion of this unit, the participants will be able to establish a process for working with volunteers:
 - Describe how to recruit volunteers
 - Describe how to orient volunteers
 - Explain why to track volunteers
 - Describe methods for managing volunteers
 - Identify techniques for retaining volunteers
 - Identify strategies for firing volunteers



PM 4-1



Unit Topics



- The Program Manager and the CERT Volunteer
- Recruit Volunteers
- Orient Volunteers
- Track Volunteers
- Manage Volunteers
- Retain Volunteers
- Terminate a Volunteer



PM 4-1



Program Mgr and Volunteers

- Volunteers are backbone of program
 - Provide administrative support
 - Run parts of program
 - Train CERT volunteers
 - Make up teams that serve community



PM 4-2



Working with Volunteers

- Program Manager must know how to work with volunteers
 - Skills are same as working with paid staff
 - Difference is in how you apply those skills



PM 4-2





Prepare for Volunteers #1

- Identify ways that volunteers will be used in CERT program
 - May be described in the program description
 - If they aren't in the program description, write them down
 - Documentation applies to program administration as well as to CERT activities!



PM 4-2



Uses for Volunteers



- As a CERT member
 - Disaster response
 - Special events
 - Community preparedness
- To help run the program, e.g.,
 - Data management
 - Communicating with volunteers
 - Working with funders and sponsors
 - Tracking equipment

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Prepare for Volunteers #2

- Write job descriptions
 - Team member role
 - Other volunteer positions



PM 4-6





Written Job Descriptions

- Why is it a good idea to have written job descriptions?
 - They let the volunteer know what your expectations are
 - They give you something to evaluate performance against and something to fall back on if performance is inadequate or unacceptable



PM 4-6



#1 Recruit Volunteers



PM 4-8



Gateway to CERT



- Through *CERT Basic Training*
- Helps participants identify preferred role
 - To be an active member of program
 - Just want information for personal use



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Volunteer Sources



- How do you find people to take the *CERT Basic Training* course?
 - Word of mouth is **best** way
 - Readymade groups
 - Groups with similar interests
 - Anyone or any group you speak to



PM 4-8



The Dilemma



- “Established Group” Advantage
 - Pre-existing reason(s) for working together
 - CERT can become part of their mission
- “Established Group” Disadvantage
 - Members of some groups are not geographically connected
 - But CERTs are organized geographically



PM 4-8



Recruitment Message Elements

1. Opening
2. Statement of need
3. Statement of solution
4. Statement of level of knowledge needed
5. Statement of benefits
6. Contact point



PM 4-9





Stress Expectations



- Be very clear and upfront about program's expectations
- What are you asking?
 - That they complete CERT Basic Training?
 - That they build a local team?
 - That they help coordinate the local CERT program?
 - That they participate in other non-disaster activities?



PM 4-9



Activity



Draft Program Plan:

Identify Recruitment Options



PM 4-10



#2 Orient Volunteers



- Provide information on National CERT Program
- Provide information about local CERT program
- Set standards
- Form relationship with new volunteer
- Determine volunteer assignment



PM 4-10



Set Standards



- Volunteers should know the standards from beginning of their CERT membership
 - Acceptable participation in program
 - Maintaining active status
 - Standards of behavior
 - Following the team chain of command
 - Deferring to professional responders
 - Maintaining any equipment issued



PM 4-11



Behavior is Important!

- Volunteer behavior determines how program viewed by emergency responders, public officials, and community members
 - Negative incidents can bring down program



PM 4-11



Perception of Volunteers

- Some officials concerned about volunteers working without supervision
- Team must be viewed as competent group of trained volunteers who:
 - Diligently follow directions from chain of command
 - Provide valuable support for professional response efforts





Form Relationship



- For volunteer to become official CERT volunteer
 - Volunteer completes membership application
 - Program Manager completes background check (may be optional)
 - Program Manager has CERT ID card made (if part of local program)
 - Program Manager adds volunteer's contact info to CERT member database



PM 4-12



Determine Volunteer Task

- Member of CERT, or other, or both?
- Tell volunteers during orientation about other opportunities
- Talk with volunteers; find out special strengths that might serve program
- Include question on volunteer application about skills that might be useful to program



PM 4-13



Legally Out of Bounds



- Race, national origin, or birthplace
- Marital status
- Religious affiliation
- Credit card or home ownership
- Age, height, or weight
- Pregnancy or childcare arrangements
- Arrest record (criminal background checks are permissible)
- Discharge from military service
- Length of residency in the community
- Health (with exception)



PM 4-13



Make Orientation Fun



PM 4-14



#3 Track Volunteers



PM 4-14



Keep Volunteer Information

- What information is important to maintain on a volunteer?
 - Contact information
 - Date of graduation from *CERT Basic Training*
 - Active/non-active status
 - Established role within team or program
 - Number of hours they have served
 - Training and exercises completed and dates
 - Equipment issued to them
 - Their abilities and specialties



PM 4-14



Why Track Volunteers?

- Why do you need to track this information?
 - To account for who is in program
 - To know whom to mobilize for special response
 - To know who has what skills and if current
 - To know where your equipment is and what to get back when someone leaves
 - To know how to contact family of volunteer if there is an emergency
 - To be able to justify your program



PM 4-15



Justify Your Program



- CERT members are valuable community asset
- Trained CERT members perform tasks that would otherwise need to be performed by paid employee
- CERT members can:
 - Save jurisdiction thousands of dollars
 - Enhance other programs at little or no cost



PM 4-15



#4 Manage Volunteers

- Tasks similar to managing paid staff
 - Train
 - Assign
 - Monitor
 - Evaluate
- Program Manager may share these responsibilities with team leader



PM 4-16



Maintain Program Integrity

- Why do volunteers need to be managed?
 - To make sure CERT program is accountable
 - To make sure standards are met
 - To keep strong group of volunteers



PM 4-16



Management Challenges

- Managing volunteers is different from managing staff
 - Volunteers can leave without warning
 - One or more unhappy volunteers can be quite damaging



PM 4-17





Management Challenges (cont'd)

- Program Manager tasks
 - Keep volunteers happy about being part of CERT program
 - Sustain their commitment, their skills as individuals, and their capabilities as a team
- It takes time!



PM 4-17





Activity



Managing a CERT Event



PM 4-17



#5 Retain Volunteers



- To retain volunteers you have to understand:
 - What volunteers need
 - How to meet those needs
- Volunteers are crucial to program's existence
- Keeping them involved and pleased with their participation is essential!



PM 4-19



Why Volunteer?



- Why do people volunteer?
 - To serve
 - To help
 - To learn
 - To belong



PM 4-19



What Do Volunteers Need?

- What needs do volunteers have once they are with CERT? Might be emotional, physical, or intellectual
 - To be respected
 - To feel capable
 - To feel needed
 - To not be asked to do more than they can
 - To feel attended to
 - To be appreciated



PM 4-20



To Keep Volunteers



- Provide training and exercises
- Ask them to help
- Recognize volunteers



PM 4-20



To Keep Volunteers (cont'd)

- Match assignment to abilities and interests
- Provide resources that volunteers need to do their assigned tasks
- Pass on feedback that program receives about impact of volunteers' work
- Have fun!



PM 4-22



Activity



Volunteer Recognition



PM 4-22



Meetings

- Use volunteer meetings
 - Training
 - Recognition
 - Socializing



PM 4-24



Activity



Draft Program Plan: Capture Retention Ideas



PM 4-25



Terminating a Volunteer

1. When all other measures have failed
2. For gross misconduct:
 - Theft
 - Abuse
 - Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol



PM 4-25



Guidelines



- Document your concerns and your actions
- Make sure comments are fair
- Focus on work, not on individual
- Follow program protocols for disciplinary procedures



PM 4-25



Unit Summary



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