Human Resources

3

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources (HR) is the function that deals with managing an organization's most important asset—the people who do its work. Ideally, HR policies and rules are designed to level the playing field; to help guide and protect staff and volunteers so they can contribute to the best of their abilities. Effective HR policies and procedures also help attract and retain the right people for each job and support the team who will accomplish the organization's goals.

Although some HR policies must follow local law as well as donor requirements, most should reflect an NGO's own mission, vision and values. This section introduces fundamental HR concepts and highlights some of the policies that USAID-funded organizations must follow. It also also explores practical ways to motivate staff, as well as to recruit and manage volunteers.

Topics:

3.1

Overview of Human Resources (HR) Policies

Q What HR policies do we need to have in place?

A People are your organization's most valuable asset. Establishing a set of human resources policies does not restrict your staff and volunteers—rather, it helps guide and protect them, so they may contribute to the best of their abilities.

Some HR policies are required by local law, U.S. law or USAID, while others are practical or necessary rules for managing an effective organization. Regardless of the source, establishing clear, well-developed HR policies will not only enhance communication between managers and employees, clarify expectations, and ensure that all staff are treated equitably, but they can also protect your organization against grievances and lawsuits if they arise.

Although a number of U.S. Government (USG) regulations touch on HR-related issues (for example, under procurement you will find policies on conflict of interest, gratuities and disciplinary actions) only a few HR-specific USG regulations apply to all recipients of USAID funding. The following focuses mainly on those.

Policy Essentials

Local Labor Laws and Regulations—Organizations must comply with local labor laws where they employ staff. For example, there may be regulations to prevent hiring discrimination or to require certain benefits. It is also important for both the organization and the employees to be clear from the beginning about the rights of the employee and employer, the grounds for discipline/termination and the processes for discipline and termination.

Standards of Conduct—Standards of conduct are established to address the behaviors and professional conduct that affect the employee's ability to perform his/her job and represent the organization. They may include reporting to work on time, performing assigned duties, supporting a safe and healthy work environment and common workplace standards, such as prohibiting sexual harassment or discrimination.

Timesheet Tracking—Timesheets are required for your annual audit and for all personnel who are paid with USAID funds, including contractors and part-time staff. In addition, it is helpful to have volunteers fill out simplified timesheets, so you can track their hours and count their contribution toward your cost-share contribution (if you have one).

Due Diligence in Hiring Decisions—You are required to have a summary of a candidate's academic and work history (a Curriculum Vitae or CV) for every employee hired under your award to verify his or her employment and salary history. While your Cooperative Agreement may *not* require the use of the SF-1420—the *Contractor Employee Biographical Data Sheet* (form AID-1420-17, http://www.usaid.gov/forms/AID1420-17.doc), the standard form used to document the salary history of employees and contractors, the SF-1420 bio data sheet is often

DEFINITIONS

HR Policies—A set of rules, values or guiding principles that define how an organization addresses human resources-related matters. Human resources policies should reflect sound practice, be written down, be communicated across the organization and be reviewed and modified periodically to reflect changing circumstances.

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES

Apply to: All recipients of USG funds

Required for: Annual Audit (particularly time tracking)

Verified by: Annual Audit

Governed by: Your Cooperative Agreement and funding agency regulations and in-country laws

The laws of the country in which you are registered as an organization and in which you work take precedence over U.S. Government policy.

used during the hiring process, because it is an easy way to capture the relevant information. It is also used by USAID to help justify salaries.

Faith-Based Organization Hiring Protections—Under U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity laws, a faith-based organization implementing a USAID program has the right to hire people who share the organization's faith. If you choose to do this, make sure your HR policies are clear. You may wish to have a lawyer or HR expert review your policies before implementing them. (See *Program Management 4.8.*)

Drug-Free Workplace Policy—Your Cooperative Agreement requires you, and any of your organization's subrecipients, to establish a drug-free workplace policy. This policy statement must be signed by every staff member in your organization. A good way to address the signature requirement for this policy is to include it in two documents: first in the personnel manual and second as a separate one-page policy document that is signed by each employee and filed in personnel files.

According to USG Mandatory Standard Provisions, the Drug-Free Workplace Policy statement must include:

- a declaration that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace;
- specific actions your organization will take against employees who violate that prohibition; and
- conditions of employment under any award, which state that an employee must abide by the terms of the statement, and must notify you in writing if he or she is convicted of violating a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after the conviction.

In addition, your organization is required to establish an ongoing drug-free awareness program to inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace; your drug-free workplace policy; any available drug counseling, rehabilitation and employee assistance programs; and the penalties you may enforce for drug-abuse violations in the workplace.

The policy statement and program must be in place no later than 30 days after the effective date of your award.

If an employee is convicted of a drug violation in the workplace, you are required to notify USAID, in writing, within 10 calendar days after conviction. The notification must identify the employee's position title and the number of each award on which the employee worked.

Within 30 days of an employee's conviction, you must either:

- take appropriate action against the employee, up to and including termination (as appropriate with your organization's HR policies and applicable labor laws), or
- require the employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug-abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved by a national, state or local health, law enforcement or other appropriate agency.

In the event that local laws prevent you from following the mandates of the USG drug-free workplace policy in full, notify your AO or AOR and seek their guidance. (See *Program Management 4.2.*)

HIV/AIDS Policy—An HIV/AIDS policy defines an organization's stance on the employment of persons living with HIV or AIDS and the expected treatment in the workplace of persons living with HIV or AIDS. Although an HIV/AIDS policy is not required by USG funding agencies, it is considered best practice for any organization, particularly those working within the field of HIV/AIDS. An HIV/AIDS policy formalizes the organization's commitment to addressing HIV/AIDS and supporting staff living with HIV or AIDS, including benefits for care or treatment, adjustments in working assignments where possible and job security. The development of a comprehensive HIV/AIDS policy can enable the organization to keep and benefit from talented staff.

Ensure your organization is in compliance with national and local labor laws regarding the employment of persons living with HIV/AIDS. In some cases, your organizational policies may exceed what is legally required, particularly in countries with no laws regarding the employment of persons living with HIV.

Creating an Employee Handbook

Once you have developed and reviewed your organization's HR policies, print and assemble them in an employee handbook to share with your staff. Ensure that staff sign a statement that they have received, reviewed and understand their obligation to adhere to your organizational policies, and include a personnel policy review in your orientation process. (See *Human Resources 3.2.*)

REFERENCES

Mandatory Standard Provisions:
U.S.-based Organizations
http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303maa.pdf

Non-U.S.-based Organizations
http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303mab.pdf

3.2

Putting Human Resources Policies into Practice

DEFINITIONS

Human Resources (HR)—The people who staff and operate an organization. The term is also used to describe the function within an organization responsible for implementing policies related to the management of employees.

HR Policies—A set of rules, values or guiding principles that define how an organization addresses human resources-related matters.

HR Procedures—Specific steps needed to implement an HR policy.

HR Practices—How policies and procedures are actually designed and implemented.

Employee Handbook (also called an employee manual, HR handbook, HR manual or personnel policy manual)—A written guide outlining an employer's policies, procedures, working conditions and behavior expectations governing employee conduct in the workplace. It may also contain information on the organization's history, its goals and its commitments to beneficiaries and the community.

Q **Why develop an employee handbook?**

A The employee handbook is one of the most important communication links between your organization and your employees. Although organizations have policies and procedures for managing employees, they are not always written down and understood by everyone. By documenting the rules and policies of your organization in a handbook, you are communicating what the organization expects from its employees and what they can expect from the organization in turn. This helps to eliminate any confusion and makes it easier to enforce the policies, if necessary.

A previous article (3.1) focused on human resources (HR)-specific U.S. Government (USG) regulations that all USAID grantees are required to follow. This issue provides a broader view of additional types of policies and procedures that should be captured in your employee handbook.

Key Elements of an Employee Handbook

No two employee handbooks are exactly alike. Each organization needs to develop policies that are relevant to its particular operations. However, there are some key policies that belong in every handbook. These include the following:

1. **Introduction**
   Every employee handbook should start with an explanation of its purpose and how to use it. It may be helpful to define common terms and include an organizational chart or organogram.

2. **Policies include:**
   - ***Recruitment Policies and Procedures***. The rules surrounding hiring, including how job descriptions are developed, positions advertised, candidates vetted and offers made and what the organization's policy is on hiring relatives.
   - ***Employment Categories***. The types of employment supported by the organization, such as regular fulltime, regular parttime, parttime, consultant, temporary or other, and whether these categories are entitled to full, partial or no benefits. You may need to check on national labor laws as "full time" can be defined by differing numbers of hours.
   - ***Employment Conditions***. The conditions the organization adheres to in employing staff, including employment at will and equal employment opportunity. Employment conditions may also include policies on outside employment, disability accommodation, overtime, conflicts of interest and termination, among others.
   - ***Other Employment Policies***. Additional conditions of employment including, but not limited to, introductory/probationary period, personnel data and management of personnel files.

3. **Compensation and Benefits**
   Organizations should clearly define policies on employee compensation and benefits. This does not mean that the organization should include its salary scale in the employee manual, but it should state what employees are entitled to in terms of compensation and benefits and how promotions are managed. Examples of compensation and benefits policies include:

   - ***Salary Administration***. Information on salary scale or the rationale for determining salaries and conditions for pay increases.
   - ***Timekeeping and Payroll***. Time-keeping requirements and pay days.
   - ***Leave Benefits***. The benefits surrounding paid or unpaid time off, including vacation, holiday, sick leave, bereavement leave, leave without pay, maternity and paternity leave, home leave, time off to vote and jury duty. National labor laws are usually very explicit on leave, so make sure your policies comply with local law. If your organization has offices in different countries, you may have to establish different leave policies in each country to ensure compliance with national laws.
   - ***Other Benefits***. Additional kinds of compensation that an organization can offer, such as health insurance or medical compensation, workers compensation insurance, death benefits, pension/retirement plans, professional development benefits, termination pay and bonuses, among others.

4. **Work Conditions and Hours**
   Policies on work conditions and hours set standards for the work schedule/office hours, flextime, overtime, as well as use of office equipment and Internet, safety, transportation, telecommuting, business meals or entertaining clients, among others.

5. **Employee Conduct and Disciplinary Action**
   Policies related to employee conduct and disciplinary action cover a wide range of topics from how employees are expected to dress for work to the organization's policy toward whistle blowers. This is also the section where organizations would include a drug-free workplace policy, HIV/AIDS policy or child protection policy. Other important policies that can be included in this section are sexual harassment, bribes or payoffs, attendance and punctuality, problem resolution, and disciplinary action procedures.

Putting Policy into Practice

How policies are put into practice is also important. HR policy design and practice should strive to find the balance between what is good and sustainable for the organization and what is good for employees. Having a trained HR manager who understands his or her responsibilities is critical.

Even if your organization cannot afford a full-time HR manager, make sure your staff have the training they need to effectively manage your human resources policies and procedures.

Six Steps to Effectively Implementing HR Policies

1. **Involve.** Involve staff and give them a voice in the development of HR policies by getting their input or feedback.
2. **Disseminate.** Print the employee handbook and distribute to all staff; have copies available in a central place in the office, and/or post it on computer(s) that are readily accessible to staff.
3. **Notify.** Notify staff, in writing, of key policy changes; post updates on a central notice board.

KEEP IT PRACTICAL
Having more policies and procedures is not always better. Develop a manual that is comprehensive enough to serve your needs, safeguard your organization, and guide and protect your staff, but is not so extensive that it is unusable or so mired in detailed procedure that it places excessive demands on staff, making them feel they are not trusted by the organization to do the right thing.

REFERENCES

HR Toolkit
HR Council for the Voluntary and Nonprofit sector http://hrcouncil.ca

The Essential NGO Guide to Managing Your USAID Award
http://www.ngoconnect.net/resources/ngoguide

Examples of HR Policy Documents
http://www.ngoconnect.net/humanresources

4. **Orient.** Integrate an overview of HR policies and procedures into employee orientation processes and continue to inform staff with refreshers.
5. **Require Signature Statements.** Require staff to sign a statement verifying that they have received and reviewed the employee handbook and had an opportunity to ask questions about personnel policies and procedures.
6. **Be Open to Change.** Sometimes policies seem good when they are designed but do not work in practice; sometimes the policy is good, but its implementation is not. Assess your policies, procedures and practices periodically to determine if they are followed and useful. Listen to staff complaints and take them seriously. Do not be afraid to change or adjust a policy, procedure or practice if it is not working.

3.3

Supportive Supervision: A Strategy to Strengthen Organizations and Individuals

Q **Why is supportive supervision important, and how do we do it?**

A Beyond simply overseeing employees' responsibilities and tasks, managers can play a key role in making their employees feel supported and motivated and, as a result, more productive. Making employees feel valued and supported is essential, particularly in challenging environments where resources are scarce and the needs of the community are vast.

Supportive supervision is a key way to achieve this. By employing supportive supervision, managers can not only create a healthy work environment, but can improve and sustain the performance and satisfaction of their most valuable asset: the people in their organization. Using a few key skills and tools—and with a little practice—managers can create a dynamic relationship with staff and subrecipients to help them grow as individuals and organizations.

Guidelines for Supervising Staff

To effectively provide supportive supervision and help staff accomplish their goals, managers should consider the following guidelines:

1. **Set clear expectations from the beginning.** Supportive supervision can begin as soon as a person is recruited to work for your organization. The first step is providing your new employee with a *clear job description.* This ensures that both the manager and the employee have a common understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of the position. As time goes on, the manager and employee should work together to periodically review and revise the job description to develop "*SMARTER" goals* that align the employee's work with the organizational mission. (See *Performance Appraisals 3.4*.)

SMARTER Goals are:

Specific and clear about what needs to happen and who needs to be involved
Measurable, with clear targets against which progress can be measured
Aligned with the organization's mission and vision
Realistic and can be accomplished
Time bound so that there is an appropriate sense of urgency
Evaluated periodically and, if necessary, adjusted
Rewarded when accomplished

DEFINITIONS

Active Listening—A communication technique that requires the listener to focus on *understanding*, *interpreting* and *reflecting upon* what the other person is saying.

Social Intelligence—The capacity to understand social and interpersonal relationships and situations. Having high social intelligence helps you work with groups of people to develop and pursue a common goal, such as building a workforce committed to activities that support an organization's mission.

Supervision—The process of fostering and reviewing staff performance according to the defined standards of the organization.

Supportive Supervision—A process that uses dialogue and constructive feedback to help staff, volunteers or entire organizations improve their performance in pursuit of the organization's mission, while also setting goals for personal growth and development.

A related tool regularly used in supportive supervision is a *tailored checklist* outlining exactly what will be assessed and what is required for employees to get a positive assessment. The checklist should be made available to staff ahead of their actual supervision session. This ensures that people see that they are being treated fairly and assessed objectively.

2. **Provide regular feedback.** Supportive supervision is not a once-a-year performance review; it involves *continuous performance assessment*. This means making time and space for the supervisor and employee to regularly communicate about job performance. Managers should employ active listening skills and provide feedback in an open and respectful manner to facilitate a dialogue about improving behavior and job performance over time.

Managers can play a key role in making their employees feel supported and motivated and, as a result, more productive.

Active Listening Skills

- *Eliminate distractions* (such as phone calls) and avoid having physical barriers (sit in comfortable chairs rather than having a desk between the two of you).
- *Listen carefully* to the main ideas, and let the speaker finish his or her thoughts without interruption.
- *Ask open-ended questions* that show that you are interested in the speaker's ideas and interpretations (for example, "What are your suggestions about how we should address this problem?")
- *Do not judge, critique or get defensive* while the speaker is talking; instead, focus on understanding his or her experience and perspective. Verify your understanding by repeating key points back (for example, "If I understand you correctly, you are saying…").

Remember: You have two ears and two eyes… but only one mouth. So let your ears and eyes do twice as much work!

During supportive supervision sessions, both the manager and employee should have time to describe achievements in the period under review as well as challenges and areas for improvement. These discussions should be documented by the manager and shared with the employee to ensure that both agree on the outcomes of the discussions, and the employee's progress is tracked in the event of a change in management.

3. **Provide opportunities to discuss challenges and suggestions.** Supportive supervision should be *two-way communication*. Your staff members are the ones doing the work on a day-to-day basis, so they have first-hand knowledge of what is and is not working. Often they also have ideas about how to address challenges or gaps; other times they will need advice and suggestions for problem solving.

4. **Ensure staff get the tools, skills and resources necessary.** A key part of supportive supervision is following up on any issues or challenges that are identified during discussions. If, for example, a staff member describes having a hard time completing his or her monthly site visits due to lack of transport, you may need to work with the finance manager to determine how the organization can allocate additional funds for fuel, or work with the program director to coordinate sharing the organization's vehicle.

Likewise, supportive supervision provides opportunities to discuss—and sometimes even provide—the additional skills and training that will enhance your staff's ability to do their work. Identifying training needs is important, as is following up after trainings to ensure that staff members have opportunities to apply the skills in their work and to share with colleagues.

5. **Reward high performance through recognition, incentives and opportunities for advancement.** Most people working in health and development are motivated by values and ideals to help people in need and strengthen communities. But intrinsic motivation alone may not be enough to sustain performance for everyone over the long term. External recognition for excellent work will help your employees maintain their energy and commitment. Rewards can include public recognition (such as commendation during community events or write-ups in widely distributed publications) and incentives (such as small gifts or invitations to special events). Another critically important part of rewarding staff is ensuring that they have opportunities for advancement (such as trainings to enhance their knowledge and skills).

Strategies for Supervising

Supportive supervision strategies also work well in relationships with partner organizations and subgrantees. Similar to what is needed with employees, support supervision for a non-governmental organization, community-based organization or other partner entails:

- Ensuring that the organization's leaders and stakeholders understand what they are expected to do (including reporting);
- Providing regular and constructive feedback on performance;
- Creating regular opportunities for them to provide feedback to you on their challenges and get assistance with solving problems;
- Supplying adequate resources and skills, so they can conduct their programs effectively; and
- Recognizing and rewarding good performance.

Culture of Supportive Supervision

Integrating supportive supervision throughout your organization's structure will result in a stronger organization, with more efficient and satisfied people working to achieve your organization's mission. Creating a *culture of supportive supervision* will help your staff, volunteers and the organization flourish.

REFERENCES

Initiative's Training and Supervision
http://initiativesinc.com/resources/publications/techExpertise/training.htm

Supportive Supervision to Improve Integrated Primary Health Care
http://www.msh.org/Documents/OccasionalPapers/upload/Supportive-Supervision-to-Improve-Primary-Health-Care.pdf

Guidelines for Implementing Supportive Supervision:
A Step-by-Step Guide with Tools to Support Immunization
http://www.path.org/publications/detail.php?i=1212

3.4

Performance Appraisals

3

HUMAN RESOURCES

DEFINITIONS

Performance Appraisal (PA)—A structured process to review and discuss an employee's performance of assigned duties, achievement of goals and fulfillment of responsibilities over a specific time period.

360° Review—A type of performance appraisal that incorporates feedback from management, subordinates, peers, clients and others into the review process.

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)—A structured, measurable plan to help an underperforming employee improve to the expected level of performance for his/her position.

Q **Why and how should our organization conduct performance appraisals of our employees?**

A The performance appraisal (PA) process strengthens organizations and fosters improved individual performance by enhancing and reinforcing the link between individual and organizational performance. The performance appraisal process can help:

- ***Align staff responsibilities and goals with organizational or program objectives.*** PAs often include reviewing an employee's job description and goals to ensure that responsibilities and goals are consistent with those of the organization or program.
- ***Align staff attitudes and performance to organization's values.*** When planning performance goals, identify the values the organization wants to see reflected in an employee's performance beyond the execution of tasks related to job duties.
- ***Recognize and reinforce good performance.*** The PA process provides an opportunity for recognizing and reinforcing good performance. When employees feel valued, they are more likely to engage in their work and, as a result, be more productive.
- ***Identify and formally address issues.*** PAs reinforce ongoing communication by providing a forum for employees and supervisors to discuss problems or challenges and document the issues discussed.
- ***Identify training and professional development needs.*** When developing performance goals, the employee and the supervisor can plan for any training required to help the employee meet performance goals.

How to Establish a Performance Appraisal Process

To set up your PA process, use the following steps as a guide.

1. Outline the purpose and objectives of the PA process.
Defining the purpose and objectives helps staff and the organization to understand and monitor the process.

Step 1: Sample

Purpose

- To strengthen the organization by fostering improved performance and linking individual performance to organizational success.

Objectives

- Review and update job descriptions.
- Open a dialogue between the employee and supervisor.
- Identify professional development needs and desires.
- Establish and agree upon performance goals.

2. Map out the PA process for your organization.
With input from staff at different levels, tailor the process to the needs of your organization and decide on the following:

- What type of performance appraisal system do you want? One-on-one, 360° review—a type of performance appraisal that incorporates feedback from management, subordinates, peers, clients and others into the review process—or a combination?
- How often should appraisals occur? Annually, annually with a six-month review or as part of a probationary period?
- Will appraisals be customized for different staff—management, general staff and volunteers?
- Who will conduct the appraisals and for whom?
- How will the information gathered in the appraisal be documented and used?
- How will the PA process be linked to other organizational processes, such as pay period, supervision or quality assurance?

3. Develop PA materials.
When developing PA forms and tools, consider fairness, consistency and functionality. Keep tools simple and user-friendly, and test them prior to implementation. The following table outlines some useful PA tools.

TOOL	USE	PROCESS ELEMENTS
Employee Performance Plan	Developed at the start of employment. Updated periodically after the supervisor's assessment and the employee's self-evaluation have been jointly reviewed and discussed.	• Attach revised final job description. • Set and document performance goals for the upcoming year. • List professional development activities (fulfillment of activities are based on organizational priorities and available funding).
Employee Self-Evaluation	Completed by employee first and given to the supervisor to incorporate into his/her evaluation.	• Review job description. • List achievements and constraints in meeting goals set in the Employee Performance Plan. • Rate performance according to key criteria. • List performance objectives for coming period. • List desired professional development. • Give feedback on supervision and support received.
Supervisor's Evaluation of Employee	Completed by supervisor after receiving the employee's self-evaluation.	• Review job description. • Assess achievement of performance goals set for the period under review. • Summarize findings from 360° review (if appropriate). • Include comments on overall performance.

ITEMS TO CONSIDER

An effective PA process is:

- **Participatory**—Both the supervisor and employee should provide input. Feedback from peers and other managers can also be included.
- **Transparent**—All staff should understand the PA process and criteria used for performance assessment.
- **Applied consistently**—Regardless of whether the individual employee appraisals are conducted in phases or simultaneously, they should be done uniformly *with all staff* to ensure fairness and consistency.
- **Reviewed regularly**—PAs should be checked regularly to ensure relevance, accuracy and consistency with organizational needs.

TOOL	USE	PROCESS ELEMENTS
360° Performance Evaluation	Used to assess the employee's performance by supervisor, peers, subordinates. The results may be provided to the employee and/or incorporated into the supervisor's evaluation to provide a more diversified assessment.	• Assess performance indicators, such as job skills, dependability, communication, teamwork and professionalism. • Comment on employee's areas of strength and areas for improvement.
Performance Improvement Plan	Used when an employee's performance does not meet the expectations of the position.	• Identify the job duties or responsibilities that are not being performed at the expected level. • Outline specific, work-related examples of performance (poor, acceptable). • Indicate acceptable work performance standards and expectations that must be completed on a consistent basis. • Specify clear timeline for follow-up. • Identify the measurements to evaluate progress.

4. Establish a plan for PA implementation and monitoring.
Develop a clear timeline of activities and list of participants in the process:

- ***Establish indicators*** to measure the effectiveness of key milestones during the PA process (for example, deadlines for developing, testing and revising PA forms, dates for finishing a pilot process and number of performance reviews completed in a specified time period).
- ***Pilot the approach with a small group of staff*** to observe how the process flows, determine how easy it is to use and make adjustments as needed.
- ***Launch*** the process (in stages if needed) throughout the organization.
- ***Assess and address lessons learned*** to improve the process, make it easier for supervisors and employees to use and increase overall effectiveness.

5. Train staff and supervisors on the PA process.
Performance appraisal is not intuitive. Supervisors and staff need training in how to complete the forms, communicate with one another and set goals. Supervisor training should include: explaining the purpose and objectives of the PA, facilitating the performance appraisal, giving feedback to employees and setting performance goals.

Employees will require training to understand the purpose and objectives of the PA process, what to expect during a PA meeting, how to handle feedback, communicate with supervisors and set performance goals.

REFERENCES

Funds for NGOs – Human Resources Management for NGOs
http://www.fundsforngos.org/human-resource-management-2/human-resource-management-ngos

360 Degree Feedback
http://www.businessballs.com/performanceappraisals.htm#360 degree feedback 360 degree feedback

Free Management Library – Employee Performance Reviews/Appraisals
http://managementhelp.org/emp_perf/perf_rvw/perf_rvw.htm

3.3

Key Personnel

Q **What do we do if someone designated as *Key Personnel* leaves the project?**

A Your Cooperative Agreement names as "Key Personnel" specific individuals on your project team that were approved at the time the award was made; it states that any changes must be approved by the Agreement Officer (AO). But what does this mean?

Key Personnel are individuals identified in your Agreement who are in positions essential to the successful implementation of the award or personnel directly responsible for the management of the contract.

Although everyone on your team plays an important role, only a small number of people will be designated in the Agreement as Key Personnel. The number of key personnel designated for any award must not be more than five individuals or five percent of your employees working under the award, whichever is greater.

Any changes to Key Personnel require USAID approval. If a change is necessary, you will want to follow these steps:

1. Notify your Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) as soon as a possible change is brought to your attention (for example, if an individual designated as Key Personnel gives his or her resignation). In the case of a termination, be sure you have followed your organization's human resources (HR) procedures.
2. Following your organization's procedures, conduct a fair and open competition to recruit a replacement. Document the process and your decision. Based on the position's requirements, select the best candidate to be put forward to your funding agency, as only one candidate can be proposed per key personnel position.
3. When you have selected a candidate, if your HR policy allows, you may extend a conditional job offer that states that the candidate's selection must be approved by the AO. Do not offer a job or sign an employment agreement without this condition.

Note: If you are considering hiring someone from another project or the host country government, please discuss this with your AOR early, before even a conditional offer is extended. The issue of concern is "poaching": hiring someone away from another USG-funded project or the host country government.

DEFINITIONS

Key Personnel—Personnel directly responsible for management of the contract, or those personnel whose professional/technical skills are certified by the AOR as being essential for successful implementation of the program.

IN YOUR AGREEMENT

The *Key Personnel* clause may be found in the *Substantial Involvement* section of the *Schedule* of your Agreement. The clause contains both the terms of the requirement and the list of Key Personnel named in your Agreement.

ITEMS TO CONSIDER

Does your organization have human resources policies in place that address recruitment, resignation and termination?

REFERENCES

USAID ADS Chapter 303 – Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations
http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf

Results-Oriented Assistance: A USAID Sourcebook
http://wwww.usaid.gov/olicy/index.html

- Submit a request for approval of the new candidate in writing to your AO, including his or her CV and a brief explanation of why the individual is being proposed (for example, strengths, expertise and so on).

Tip: Always make sure you have approval documented in an email or formal letter. If you discuss a change with your AO on the telephone, follow up the conversation with an email confirming a verbal approval.

Barring any concerns, the AO will communicate back to you an approval, after which you can move forward to hire the individual you have selected.

Finally, the AO will submit a request to modify your agreement to formally document the change in Key Personnel. This formal modification may come at a later date. Sometimes the AO will wait to make several modifications together to cut down on paperwork, but this will not delay your ability to hire your new Key Personnel.

3.3

Collaborating with Volunteers to Strengthen Your Organization

Q **How can volunteers support our organization?**

A Volunteers can be a major asset to an organization. By contributing time, energy and talents, volunteers can generate enthusiasm, provide new skills, increase community engagement, serve as bridges to target populations, augment fundraising efforts and complement the work of paid staff. They can be an especially vital resource for organizations straining to meet the needs of beneficiaries with limited staff and budgets.

To make the most of volunteers and ensure they have a positive volunteer experience, it is important to manage them effectively. The following addresses how to recruit, select, train, supervise and appreciate volunteers.

Getting Started: Key Questions to Ask

The value of your volunteers will be determined by the degree to which they meet your organization's needs. To assess this, carefully consider where you need help, what resources you have in place and whether volunteers are the right solution. Here are some key questions to ask to determine whether you *should* and *can* engage volunteers:

- Do we have activities or tasks that are appropriate for non-staff to do?
- What kind of skills or knowledge does a person need to perform them?
- Are the activities or tasks specific and short-term? Or are they ongoing ones, which require a longer term commitment?
- Will we need to train volunteers to ensure they are able to perform their duties and maintain the quality standards of our organization?
- Do we have enough paid staff to train and support volunteers?
- Do we have the supplies that volunteers need for their activities?
- How will we supervise and evaluate the work of volunteers?
- Once we have invested in training volunteers, how will we keep them committed to our program?
- How will we document time contributed by volunteers, either to meet our cost-share requirement and/or to demonstrate the community's support for our activities? (See *Financial Management 2.4*)

Recruit by Reaching Out to the Community

Once you determine that volunteers are right for your organization, and you know what you want them to do and what resources you need to support them, the next step is finding them. In general, people become volunteers at an organization by 1) contacting an organization to offer their help, or 2) responding to recruitment efforts.

DEFINITIONS

Volunteer—A person who performs a service or task willingly and without pay.

Volunteer Management—The process of recruiting, selecting, training, supervising and supporting volunteers to enhance an organization's performance and results.

FIVE COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

1. Volunteers are free.
   In fact, volunteers require investments of time and money to be effectively utilized.
2. Anyone can manage volunteers.
   Volunteer management is as much a skill as staff management.
3. You do not need much time to manage volunteers.
   Volunteers need both supervision and support—as you know, this takes time!
4. You do not need staff to manage volunteers (volunteers manage themselves, volunteers will just show up).
   To maintain the quality of your programs, you must assign staff to oversee the work of your volunteers.
5. Volunteer management is a luxury we cannot afford.
   Not true! Managing volunteers helps you make them an asset.

Adapted from Idealist.org, a website devoted to linking volunteers, job-seekers and nonprofit organizations

Recognizing the work, time and energy of volunteers… not only thanks people for their service, but it highlights the importance of their contributions and encourages them to continue their work.

For recruitment, think about the kinds of people you are hoping to attract to serve as volunteers, keeping in mind that people from within the local community are often the most invested and dedicated volunteers, because they have a personal interest in the work. Also consider finding volunteers from different gender, age and ethnic groups (if appropriate) to create a diverse team. Then develop a recruitment plan. This might include:

- *Enlisting staff, Board members and other personal contacts:* Many volunteers start doing community work because they are asked by a friend, family member or neighbor. People often respond positively if someone they know extends a personal invitation to them.
- *Going where the people are:* Instead of trying to get people to come to you, try going to them. To recruit volunteers, attend meetings of other groups and go to places and events where potential volunteers gather.
- *Getting the word out:* It is important to inform people that your NGO exists and welcomes volunteers. Post information at markets, schools and community centers, on websites, and in newsletters and other places potential volunteers might look.

Match the Volunteer to the Task or Activity

It is helpful to create an application for potential volunteers to fill out, so you can gather contact information, background, education level, skills, time available and any additional information that may be relevant.

Upon receiving applications, review applicants' qualifications and consider if their skills and abilities match the tasks and responsibilities you need them to do. You may want to invite selected applicants to your office for an interview, solicit and check references and verify any important background information.

If you have lots of volunteers at one time, create a chart that includes the potential volunteers' names, contact information, available days and hours, special skills and what they are willing and not willing to do. This will help you keep track and match volunteers to positions in which they will be interested.

You should clearly outline for applicants the roles and responsibilities of potential volunteers for your organization. This can take the form of a simple discussion or a written agreement. Items you may want to address are: time commitment required (short term, long term or ongoing), specific tasks to be performed, reporting, location and any training and supervision you will provide. By clarifying everyone's roles from the very beginning, you ensure that both the volunteers and your organization have a shared understanding of what you can expect of them and what they can expect of you. This will help to prevent confusion or disagreements in the future.

Orient Volunteers to Your Organization

Just like staff members, volunteers need someone to orient, train and manage them. You want to make new people feel welcome and explain your work, why you do it and why their help is important. Many people function better when they see the "big picture."

Delegate a staff member to provide volunteers with a comprehensive orientation, introducing them to your organization, its staff, vision and mission, offices, activities and structures. Not only will this orientation help them understand and perform their duties, but it will also provide them with valuable information to share with friends, family and acquaintances. Remember that, by virtue of their work with you, volunteers become ambassadors of your organization within the community.

Training Volunteers Is Crucial to Success—Yours and Theirs

Often volunteers are ready and willing to work, but may not be technically skilled or understand your organization's systems and procedures. Do not assume that new people will just "figure things out." Consider creating a training binder that contains general information about your NGO and information specific to what the volunteer will be doing. Also, develop a volunteer manual with relevant policies and procedures that can be given to each volunteer at the beginning of his or her service.

If you have a large cohort of volunteers, you may want to do formal training sessions; if there are just a few volunteers doing different tasks across your organization, you may find it more efficient to use individualized mentorship and coaching to train volunteers.

Supervise as You Would Paid Staff

Overseeing the work of volunteers is just as vital as overseeing the performance of staff. Here are a few essentials:

Use peoples' time wisely: Keep time demands reasonable and clear. People like to know in advance what time commitment is needed.

Supervise volunteers: Every volunteer should be supervised by a specific staff member, either a central volunteer coordinator or another staff member with whom they work closely. The volunteer and supervisor should check in regularly to address any questions or concerns each may have. Frequent and open communication between supervisors and volunteers helps to improve performance, ensure volunteers feel supported and address any problems that may arise.

Monitor and evaluate volunteers: Even though they are unpaid, volunteers represent your organization, and their work can affect your reputation in the community and among donors. You may want to develop some performance measures to track attendance and punctuality, participation in project activities and achievement of results.

Recognize Good Work and Reward It

Recognizing the work, time and energy of volunteers is a crucial part of effectively managing and maintaining them. It not only thanks people for their service, but it highlights the importance of their contributions and encourages them to continue their work. Some ways to demonstrate your appreciation include:

- certificates of service;
- volunteer profiles in reports and other publications;
- volunteer appreciation events;
- small gifts, such as t-shirts, hats or bags;
- public acknowledgment during community events;
- opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge through training and conferences; and
- leadership opportunities among the cohort of volunteers.

Remember that, by virtue of their work with you, volunteers become ambassadors of your organization within the community.

REFERENCES

Ashoka – How to Recruit and Train Volunteers
http://www.genv.net/en-us/grow_it/sustainability/volunteers

Idealist Volunteer Management Resource Center
http://www.idealist.org/info/VolunteerMgmt

Making the Most of Volunteers
http://volunteer.org.in/MakingMostVolunteers.php