

# Top 10 Questions Volunteers Bring to Orientation

Orientation is a PROCESS, not an EVENT.

## **SAFETY**

- What are my volunteer rights and how can I expect to be treated?
- What is my level of autonomy and authority to make decisions?
- What risks are inherent in the job, and does the organization protect me from them?

## **AFFILIATION**

- Who is my contact person/supervisor? With whom will I be working?
- What does this organization value? What is its mission? Who does it benefit?

## **PURPOSE**

- How does what I do make a difference? Why do it? How will it help?
- Will there be opportunity for growth or new assignments?

## **PERFORMANCE**

- What exactly will I be doing, and how do I get started?
- Logistics of job: when, where, how long, how often? What policies and procedures do I follow?
- What tools and resources do I need (training, equipment, manuals, etc.) and will you provide them?

*Tips and Ideas for Orientation*

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- **TIMING IS IMPORTANT.** Schedule the orientation at different times to accommodate different schedules. Build in extra time to address questions and concerns.
- **PRIORITIZE THE MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION.** Determine what volunteers need to know most. This can be done by surveying existing volunteers, or by asking new volunteers to fill out brief needs assessment checklist prior to the orientation.
- **RESPECT HOW PEOPLE LEARN.** Adults like to be involved in their learning, and have a chance to interact and to apply what they are learning.
- **CREATE A COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT.** Arrange chairs in circles, encourage questions, take breaks, thank people for attending, offer refreshments, do personal introductions.
- **WRITTEN MATERIALS** are important because we remember very little of what we hear. Never read the entire handout aloud unless it is very brief.
- **MAKE SURE KEY STAFF ARE KEPT UP TO DATE** on the information that is presented at the orientation, and to have an opportunity to make suggestions. Invite staff to sit on orientation sessions.
- **EVALUATION.** Always provide an opportunity for participants to give you feedback about the orientation. Not only will they know you value their opinion, but you will gather good ideas about what to include in the future.