



## Volunteer Managers Matter for Cities

When starting a city volunteer program, a common concern is how to staff it. The Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) advises hiring a professional, experienced Volunteer Manager/Community Resources Manager. Cities who have done so have found skilled staff can develop a successful volunteer program that reflects well on the city.

- Volunteer Managers provide easy access to volunteerism within the city. They can offer a central entry point for prospective volunteers. They are able to build a relationship with volunteers, keep them aware of new position development, help them to change their position within the city's volunteer program, and maintain recognition for their role in helping the city or county to grow while offering new and better services.
- Volunteer managers work with staff to develop a positive image of what volunteers can do and understand why residents want to engage in the work of their community. They can provide new employee orientation, along with training to staff and city leaders on understanding volunteerism and working with volunteers.
- Volunteer managers can build and maintain partnerships with community individuals and groups, engage civic organizations, school groups, faith communities, employees, and others who want to become resources to their cities and counties.
- Volunteer managers can work with prospective volunteers to match them with an appropriate volunteer position. They bring in the resources of highly skilled individuals willing to serve, and negotiate a proper placement for them with staff.

Volunteer managers can serve one city on a full or part time basis, or they can share time with a neighboring city. They can serve on a county wide basis, representing several communities. They are community engagement specialists who bring ordinary residents into new partnership with their community and gain understanding about the issues and growth opportunities of that community.

Volunteer managers do their best work when they have program budgets for recognition, supplies, data base management and funds for continuing education. The position may report to Administration, HR or the City Manager or City Clerk. It works well for them to cultivate volunteer involvement across city departments. They can define the return on investment of volunteer engagement and build new friends for their community.

Volunteer managers can participate in the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) as members to grow their skills, learn about new initiatives and network with leaders to gain new ideas and new solutions to problems. MAVA's biannual conference allows them to meet and network with managers across the state and even outside Minnesota, growing their skills and their awareness of trends that will impact the future of volunteerism.