

USTA Volunteer Initiative Program

Expectations for USTA Leaders

The chair/leader of every group throughout the United States Tennis Association has the responsibility to create an environment whereby each volunteer and staff member's participation matters, as follows:

1. clarify the charge as it relates to the mission of the USTA
2. establish a climate of trust
3. provide meaningful tasks with specific timelines
4. provide the necessary resources, education, and training
5. involve everyone in the decision making process
6. provide ongoing support, feedback, and evaluation
7. demonstrate appreciation and recognition

1. clarify the charge as it relates to the mission of the USTA

- discuss and gain consensus on meaning of the committee charge
- review word by word to ensure understanding
- have each person give individual interpretations
- ensure repetitive visibility of and referral to the charge
 - t-shirts with charge
 - large banner posted at all committee meetings
 - develop acronym and logo
 - include charge in committee materials (emails, reports, memos)
 - begin each meeting with verbal restatement of charge
- develop relationships between charge and expected results
- relate charge to actual programs that fulfill it

2. establish a climate of trust

- guiding/governing principles established and agreed upon by whole group
- chair adheres to USTA-accepted core values
 - demonstrate commitment
 - conduct yourself in ethical and honorable manner
 - no hidden agendas
 - recognize the contributions of all involved
 - leadership is obtaining results through people (get the job done)
 - treat each other in a courteous and respectful fashion
- open and honest input and feedback of all persons are welcomed and encouraged
- meetings are well organized, start and end on time, and completed the agenda
- committee members are given the authority to do the job assigned to do

3. provide meaningful tasks with specific timelines

- create an appropriate team structure
 - review profiles of committee members
 - mentor new members
 - identify sub-team leaders
 - structure reporting and communication channels
- identify the tasks of the committee
 - ensure committee buy-in to task
 - project reasonable timelines
- research
 - check in with Council Chair
 - seek outside expertise
 - avoid duplication with other committees
 - determine previous and current status of committee work
 - perform a needs assessment
- determine action plan
- check for meeting success
 - participatory
 - chance for new ideas to be heard
 - information gathered and shared
 - material presented in variety of ways
 - group is fully attentive

4. provide the necessary resources, education, and training

- be knowledgeable about the USTA
- share own knowledge with committee
- maintain a database of programs, resource materials, and training opportunities
- encourage committee members to participate in training sessions
- reward participation in training
- assign mentors (new and returning) within committee
- give financial support for attending events and trainings
- research and share best practices
- bring one new idea to each meeting
- include time on agenda for educational development
- look to sources outside the USTA
- bring in guest speakers
- share articles and books
- initiate a point system to reward sharing and participating

5. involve everyone in the decision making process

- establish ground rules
 - agree upon team behavior
 - time limits for speaking
 - one person speaks, all listen
 - decide decision making style (consensus versus ballot)
 - no token discussion
- clarify authority
 - can the committee make a decision or a recommendation
 - who does it involve

- tools
 - parking lot for items not yet discussed
 - brainstorming guidelines
- information gathering and sharing
- follow-up communication

6. provide ongoing support, feedback, and evaluation

- regular assessment of volunteer experience
 - periodic “check-ins” with each committee member, by phone, email, or in person to discuss performance and satisfaction
 - standard assessment form for volunteers, reviewed by both committee member and chair
- comparison of pre- and post-committee assessment to determine changes in attitudes and performance
- share standards of evaluation from beginning of committee service
 - how much time is expected
 - how volunteers will be evaluated (finished product, contribution to committee, attendance, etc.)
 - allow volunteer input on how he or she will be judged
- evaluation should review the past, analyze the present, and plan the future for the volunteer’s committee service
- chair should share both praise and suggestions for improvement
- volunteer should be given opportunity to review self and offer ways to make experience more positive
- use of job description and committee charge are good places to start with evaluation

7. demonstrate appreciation and recognition

- learn about and know members in depth
 - use volunteer profile form to obtain information
 - use icebreakers and name games to learn about members
 - give nicknames to help remember and have fun
- greet and recognize members as they arrive at meetings
 - call people by name
 - stand at door of meeting room to welcome
- utilize diverse ways to recognize volunteers and committee members
 - handwritten thank you notes
 - public recognition ceremonies
 - award certificates of recognition
 - have letters of recognition sent from president of USTA
 - include recognition in newsletters and mailings
 - small gifts as token of appreciation
 - memento at end of term of service
- celebrate members accomplishments beyond committee responsibilities
 - other professional milestones or recognition
 - personal events in peoples’ lives
- share the glory in all directions
 - pass on compliments to all committee members
 - refer to committee members when receiving compliments