

Tips for Completing a Department Request Form

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you complete your Department Request for Volunteer:

- SEIU requires that VIP obtain a separate **Department Request** for **EACH** distinct volunteer position (even if these positions are within the same department).
- If your **Department Request** is descriptive and complete, it will be much easier to recruit, place, orient and retain appropriate volunteers for your department. At a minimum, your **Department Request** should answer the following questions:
 1. **Purpose of project or volunteer:**
 - a. What is the purpose of this position?
 - b. What will the volunteer learn from this position?
 - c. What will the volunteer help the city accomplish through this position?
 - d. Are there any specific benefits for the volunteer? (training, events etc.?)
 2. **Volunteer duties:**
 - a. What are the typical tasks to be performed?
 - b. How will these tasks be accomplished? (part of a team, independently)
 - c. What past experience is helpful, or necessary?
 3. **Difference between volunteer and staff positions:**
 - a. Is this a special project?
 - b. Is this a new or expanded service or activity?
 - c. Is this a one-time activity (converting information to a new system, designing a flyer, updating a manual?)?
 4. **Skills and abilities needed:**
 - a. What skills and abilities will the volunteer need?
 - b. What tools or equipment must the volunteer operate? (10 line phone system, copier, must know PageMaker, etc.)
 - c. Who provides the required training?
 - d. Does the training include or require:
 - i. Attending a workshop or presentation?
 - ii. On the job coaching?
 - iii. Self motivated research and learning?
 - iv. A minimal time commitment from the volunteer?

Whenever there is a tight budget there is an appropriate desire to maintain services without overwhelming staff. Volunteers can be part of the solution, but please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. **Break job into tasks and identify which tasks can be handed off to a volunteer.**
 - a. Be sure to have clear and specific volunteer “turf”
 - b. Have the tasks clearly defined
2. **Think about the motivations of volunteers.**
 - a. What would you be interested in doing as a volunteer?
 - b. What type of volunteer are you looking for?
 - c. The number one motivation for volunteers is achievement, number two is *recognition* for achievement. (“Doing good work”/charity doesn’t even make the list)
3. **Remember the limitations of volunteers.**
 - a. Finding someone interested in doing that particular task
 - b. There is no guarantee your position will always be filled
 - c. Volunteers need initial training
 - d. Commitment is different than paid staff – Flexibility is key
4. **Write up a job description.**
 - a. This will help the volunteer program coordinator recruit a great volunteer.

Volunteer Limitations

With regard to Insurance: **Volunteers CANNOT...**

- Climb any apparatus like a ladder
- Use any power equipment
- Issue citations (ask Jackie Hart)

With regard to Bargaining Units/SEIU: **Volunteers CANNOT...**

- Substitute paid staff members