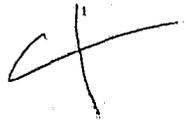


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EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW  
ABOUT VOLUNTEERS IN PROBATION

A Guide For Staff

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I. PHILOSOPHY

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF VIP?

Volunteers in Probation augment traditional probation services. Volunteers add new dimensions in services and reinforce the total correctional program:

Services are diversified. Potentially any skill in the community can be used. Special skills enlarge the range of treatment strategies available to the probation officer. For example, because of VIP, the San Diego County Probation Department now has available lawyers, dentists, personnel directors, school teachers, businessmen, computer operators, artists, writers, nurses, etc. These various skills are available for specialized service to clients.

Services are amplified. The probation officer supervises the volunteer and, in turn, the volunteer supervises his caseload of one. For every hour the staff member spends supervising the volunteer, the volunteer spends on the average of ten to twenty hours with the client. The "amplification factor" is between ten to twenty volunteer hours for each staff hour.

Services are humanized. Each client has one person with whom he can maintain close personal contact. He is treated as an individual rather than lost in a large caseload.

Volunteers can free staff time for professional counseling. As volunteers become experienced in their assignments, they can free staff for professional tasks, which only professionals can perform. If the probation officer does not have to accompany a client to an employment interview or take him to school, the probation officer can use his time and skills in counseling clients.

Volunteers are a vital link to the community. Through VIP, citizen understanding, acceptance and support of correctional needs expands.

CAN VOLUNTEERS BE EFFECTIVE?

Let us cite an example: A shoe repairman went to court one day and asked permission to supervise a drunkard pending his sentencing three weeks off. At the end of three weeks, the man's accomplishment with the client were so noticeable that the judge did not incarcerate the client. From that time on, the shoe repairman devoted himself to probation work. He was convinced that many offenders required no more than the sincere interest of another human being. He worked with alcoholics, thieves, felons and prostitutes. The shoe repairman, John Augustus, took his first case in 1841. He is commonly regarded as the father of probation in the United States--a volunteer.

In succeeding years, many changes occurred. The volunteer disappeared from the court system.

In 1960, a resurgence of volunteers in court settings began. Judge Keith Leerhouts developed "Project Misdemeanant" in which volunteers supervised misdemeanor offenders. Thorough research proved that volunteers were effective.

In 1960, the Juvenile Court Judge in Boulder, Colorado asked college students to tutor delinquent youngsters who were educationally handicapped. Not only did the delinquents' grades improve, but their social adjustment improved as well. As a result of this significant improvement, the program was expanded and volunteers were asked to perform many new roles. Research proved that volunteers could be extremely effective with Juvenile Court offenders.

Now there are 100,000 United States citizens who volunteer their services to 2,000 court systems throughout the United States devoting 10,000,000 hours of service per year.

#### HOW DOES THE COURT FEEL ABOUT VOLUNTEERS IN PROBATION?

In the spring of 1970, both the Municipal and Superior Courts of the County of San Diego endorsed the Volunteers in Probation program. In addition to supporting the program, some Judges ordered that volunteers become involved in specific cases.

### II. STAFF-VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIPS

#### WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS OF VOLUNTEERS?

A volunteer wants to know who is in charge of him and what the person wants to accomplish. He wants someone to answer questions and someone to ask for advice. He wants a challenging assignment that utilizes his skills and capabilities. He wants to feel a part of the Probation Department treatment team and receive some recognition for his services.

#### WHAT DO VOLUNTEERS EXPECT OF STAFF?

Basically, volunteers want a well-defined meaningful assignment. Each volunteer looks to the probation officer for direction, leadership and supervision.

#### DO VOLUNTEERS CHANGE THE ROLE OF THE PROBATION OFFICER?

The role of the probation officer is altered. This new professional role is like that of a "supervisor". In effect, he is the supervisor and resource person for the volunteer. In a way, the probation officer's role is more difficult than that of the supervisor because his volunteers are part time, unpaid and often talented but naive. A probation officer who can supervise volunteers effectively has skills that will help him when he is promoted to supervisor.

The probation officer's expertise in public relations becomes significant in working with volunteers. The entire Probation Department is being judged by the way the volunteer is treated by the probation officer.

In working with volunteers, the probation officer becomes the professional consultant. The volunteer looks to the probation officer for expertise in diagnosis and in the development of treatment plans. In the new role, the probation

officer is still a caseworker, but instead of working directly and continuously with clients, he will also be a supervisor, professional consultant, instructor and community relations man.

#### DO VOLUNTEERS MEAN MORE WORK FOR THE PROBATION OFFICER?

In the initial stages of the assignment, the volunteer means "more work". The DPO must consult with the client, submit a request, confer with the VIP and supervise the VIP on the job. This means an expenditure of time; yet as the volunteer becomes experienced, the caseworker may notice that the volunteer does not require so much supervision, nor are there as many problems developing with the client. The initial expenditure of time has a long-range payoff.

It is important to remember that the purpose of the VIP program is to augment probation services. VIP is another casework tool available to the probation officer. Just as referrals to other agencies or services take time, so does referral and use of VIP.

#### WHO SUPERVISES THE VIP?

The staff member requesting service supervises the volunteer. The probation officer defines the role of the volunteer, sets guidelines and limits for the volunteer, recommends frequency of contact, defines casework goals, sets standards for reporting, defines situations to be reported and provides other guidance as needed. In effect, the DPO becomes the supervisor. The citizen volunteer who receives proper guidance and leadership from staff can aid the client and, in addition, become a positive force to support the needs and programs of the San Diego County Probation Department. Conversely, if staff fails to provide proper supervision, a lack of confidence can develop.

#### WHAT ARE THE PITFALLS IN WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS?

Since volunteers are unpaid, they must receive other satisfaction from their work: a sense of accomplishment, the feeling they are wanted and needed, that their talents are properly utilized and that they are a part of the professional treatment team.

Unless volunteers receive clear instructions and concerned leadership, interest will dwindle and the volunteer will drop out. Research shows that if the volunteer stays involved over three months, the chance of dropouts are greatly diminished. Staff requesting volunteer service should be prepared to exert considerable leadership, particularly in the initial months of the assignment. The initial investment of time pays off. Once the three months barrier is passed, volunteers can reduce the time a PO must spend with the client.

Many volunteers become discouraged and drop out when clients fail to keep appointments. Staff can help by asking the client if he wants a VIP before a request is made. No volunteer can be effective unless he is wanted by the client, the probation officer, and (if the client is a minor) the parent. In the case of minor children, the child's parents may be an obstacle to the effectiveness of the VIP. Some parents feel threatened and become difficult when their child begins to identify with the volunteer. Professional staff can usually resolve this problem with casework.

Volunteers who quit constitute the most serious problem in VIP. Other problems are surprisingly few.

#### HOW DO I KNOW THAT VOLUNTEERS ARE TRUSTWORTHY?

Volunteers in Probation are unpaid county employees who are screened and trained. Each volunteer has a folder containing clearances, interview reports, references, etc. The probation officer is encouraged to read the volunteer's file prior to the initial contact with the volunteer.

Former probationers are accepted into VIP if they seem sufficiently rehabilitated. Undoubtedly, the probation officer will be cautious in structuring the role of a former offender.

There is a certain amount of risk in involving volunteers in the work of the Probation Department, yet experience proves this fear is largely unfounded. Volunteers make mistakes, but not very often. If the probation officer is properly supervising a volunteer and maintaining regular contacts, the risk is greatly diminished.

#### HOW CAN A PROBATION OFFICER GIVE RECOGNITION TO A VOLUNTEER?

The probation officer can:

1. Impart the knowledge that he knows the volunteer is doing a good job.
2. Make him feel like part of the treatment team.
3. Give him opportunities to grow and progress to more challenging assignments.
4. Keep him informed.
5. Treat him as an equal co-worker.
6. Say "thank you".

### III. VOLUNTEER STATUS AND PROCEDURES

#### WHAT IS THE STATUS OF VOLUNTEERS?

Volunteers are unpaid county employees. Volunteer positions are authorized by the Board of Supervisors in the Salary Ordinance. Unpaid members of the staff are covered by liability insurance. A volunteer is a staff member who works without compensation.

#### MAY A VIP READ A PROBATION DEPARTMENT CASE?

Since VIPs are employees, albeit unpaid, they may have access to confidential material. Throughout the VIP orientation, volunteers are instructed and

reminded of regulations regarding confidentiality. As a safety precaution, staff should remind the volunteer of the confidentiality of case material.

#### MAY A VIP DRIVE A COUNTY VEHICLE?

If you, as a paid staff member supervising an approved volunteer, feel the use of a county vehicle is warranted, simply notify the car clerk responsible for distributing keys. Your decision should take into consideration the availability of cars.

#### WHAT MAY VIPS DO?

You may request any reasonable service from VIP. Specify the job requirements and the VIP staff will attempt to select an appropriate VIP.

Most VIPs work one-to-one with dependent children, wards and adult probationers. The majority of volunteers perform supportive services to individual clients. Others tutor, provide employment counseling, visit children in institutions, teach skills, give alcoholic counseling, babysit, transport clients, or assist the probation officer in supervising the client.

Volunteers may be assigned to casework units. Volunteers on unit assignments perform whatever duties are needed to support the work of the unit.

Some volunteers work with groups. They may provide group counseling, recreational activities or teach special skills.

#### ARE THERE ANY PARTICULAR KINDS OF CASES IN WHICH VOLUNTEERS ARE MOST EFFECTIVE?

The insecure, anxious client with a poor self-concept is a good candidate for VIP services. The culturally deprived person can benefit immensely from the new vistas opened to him by volunteers. The alienated person that has no close relationships can benefit from the friendship of a volunteer. Clients who are overwhelmed by "the system" respond to the friendly volunteer. Volunteers serve as role models for clients with identification problems.

Volunteers should not be assigned clients with severe emotional problems. Character disorders, psychotics and violent clients require more specialized attention than the usual volunteer can supply.

#### HOW MUCH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CASEWORK CAN BE GIVEN TO THE VOLUNTEER?

This depends upon the skill of the VIP and the willingness of the DPO to delegate responsibility. As the volunteer becomes experienced, you may feel that you can delegate some casework responsibility. Discuss the matter with the unit supervisor and determine if the classification can be reduced as a result of the volunteer involvement.

#### IS THE DPO RESPONSIBLE FOR ERRORS MADE BY THE VOLUNTEER?

The DPO is not responsible for the errors made by volunteers if the volunteer has been fully informed of his duties and properly supervised. If the volun-

teer staff member communicates regularly, it is unlikely that the volunteer will make errors.

Volunteers are sometimes guilty of poor judgment; this in no way reflects on the probation officer. When this occurs, it should be reported to the VIP staff for appropriate action.

#### DOES THE VIP GO TO COURT?

The volunteer may go to court in a juvenile matter if the probation officer, unit supervisor and the judge agree that it is advisable. In the case of adult court hearings, the VIP may attend court hearings without prior consent.

#### MAY VOLUNTEERS WORK WITH NON-CLIENTS?

Yes. Frequently the volunteer and client will remain in contact after probation ends. Also, volunteers may engage in delinquency prevention activities. For example, an intake investigation officer may wish to counsel and close a juvenile case, yet he feels the need for additional service. If the client agrees, a VIP may be assigned. A ruling from the San Diego County Counsel states that VIPs may assume responsibility for informal supervision cases.

Volunteers sometimes work with siblings of wards and the children of adult probationers. These are regarded as delinquency prevention activities of the VIP program.

#### WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE TO OBTAIN AND USE THE SERVICES OF THE VOLUNTEER?

First, the probation officer should discuss the possibility of a volunteer with his unit supervisor. If the supervisor concurs, the probation officer consults the client. If the client is a minor, it is necessary to have the parent(s) sign a consent form. It is extremely important that the client want the services of the volunteer. Without the client's commitment, the volunteer stands very little chance of success.

A request for volunteer service is then submitted to the VIP office. Requests for other services, such as unit assignments, group recreational activities, etc., are also submitted to the VIP staff. The brief request forms are stocked in supply cabinets.

Once an appropriate volunteer is available, the probation officer or unit supervisor is notified. The DPO should check the volunteer file in the VIP office before he meets the volunteer.

The VIP is also notified of his assignment. Both the probation officer and VIP are encouraged to try to contact each other. Communication between staff members and volunteers is sometimes very difficult because volunteers go to school, work, etc. Once contact is made, an appointment is scheduled. This first face-to-face meeting between the PO and the VIP is exceedingly important. It is during this interview that the VIP learns what his role will be and the relationship between the VIP and PO is established.

The first meeting should include:

1. Unless the VIP-client relationship is to be superficial, the VIP reads the case. The probation officer reviews casework goals and is familiarized with conditions of probation.
2. Discuss the role of the volunteer. The DPO, VIP and client should understand interrelationship. The DPO should tell the VIP exactly what he is to do, how often he is to do it and in what locations. Without specific instruction by the DPO, the VIP will not know how to operate effectively.
3. The DPO should specify reporting methods including frequency of contact, method of reporting and suggested specific times for reporting. The volunteer also needs to know what kinds of special situations the probation officer wants reported immediately. The DPO has a great deal of latitude in structuring the role of the volunteer. The DPO may ask the VIP to report weekly, monthly, and see the client weekly, monthly, etc. The most important thing is that the VIP knows exactly what he is to do. The DPO should assume that the VIP is well motivated but has only limited knowledge of the Probation Department, has no knowledge of the client and is slightly apprehensive about his ability to perform well in this new and awesome volunteer responsibility. It is clear that the volunteer needs very definite and specific instructions if he is to perform comfortably and well.

#### WHO SUPERVISES THE VOLUNTEER IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PROBATION OFFICER?

The DPO should make arrangements with his supervisor to assume responsibility in his absence. No DPO is expected to operate without supervision, nor should a VIP.

#### WHAT IF A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION DEVELOPS BETWEEN THE VIP AND PO?

It is very important that the VIP know the Probation Department casework goals from the very beginning of their assignment. If a volunteer knows and understands the goals, a difference is unlikely to develop. Should a conflict develop, the volunteer should either be terminated from the program or reassigned. Matters of this nature should be immediately referred to VIP staff.

#### WHAT IF A SERIOUS PROBLEM DEVELOPS?

The staff member should report the situation to the unit supervisor and the VIP Coordinator immediately. It is important that immediate action be taken.

#### WHAT IF A CLIENT AND VOLUNTEER APPEAR MISMATCHED?

If the DPO feels a change is advisable, he reports the fact to the VIP coordinator. The volunteer is reassigned. It is important that staff be alert to signs of a mismatch so that reassignment can be made as soon as possible.

#### MAY THE PO HAVE MORE THAN ONE VIP FOR A CLIENT OR FAMILY?

Probation Department clients may have more than one volunteer. For example, a parent may be getting assistance with employment counseling, the child has a tutor, the sibling a big brother and the mother may have someone teaching her homemaking skills. The only limitation is the availability of volunteers.

#### SHOULD A VIP BE FINANCIALLY INVOLVED WITH A CLIENT?

Volunteers are discouraged from having any financial dealings with clients. However, volunteers expect to take clients places, occasionally treat them to meals, refreshments, etc. In some instances, volunteers hire clients. Volunteers who loan money do so at their own risk.

#### IS A VOLUNTEER PERMITTED TO TAKE A CLIENT OUTSIDE SAN DIEGO COUNTY?

If you feel that the request is appropriate, obtain the proper consent from the Court.

#### MAY VIPS VISIT CLIENTS IN INSTITUTIONS?

Volunteers may visit clients in Juvenile Hall, Las Colinas, Rancho del Campo and Hillcrest Receiving Home with prior authorization of the probation officer. Volunteers carry identification cards which are checked by institution staff prior to admission. Volunteers may visit clients in jails during normal visiting hours. At other times, volunteers must be accompanied by the probation officer.

### IV. ADMINISTRATION

#### HOW IS VIP ADMINISTERED?

The VIP staff provides administrative services. Volunteers assist in recruitment, selection, training and project development.

General meetings of volunteers are held monthly. The meetings are divided into two parts. A relevant talk or program is presented, followed by small group discussions. Each discussion group is led by a volunteer "team advisor". The small groups of ten to twenty volunteers are organized just as units within the Probation Department.

Probation officers or staff are urged to attend VIP meetings. Compensatory time off is given for VIP activities. The volunteers respect professional staff and welcome the opportunity to consult with probation officers.

#### HOW ARE VOLUNTEERS RECRUITED?

During 1970, 330 volunteers were recruited from: school 28.2%, news media

13.5%, service clubs 13.5%, friends of probation staff 13.2%, and friends of volunteers 12.3%. The best source for volunteers is friends of professional staff and friends of volunteers. If you know of someone who would make a good volunteer, refer him to the VIP staff.

#### WHAT TYPE OF TRAINING DO VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE?

Volunteers are trained under the auspices of Grossmont Community College. The training series includes philosophy and organization of the Probation Department, counseling techniques, group discussions with probation officers and legal aspects of probation.

Once volunteers complete the initial training, they are asked to attend the monthly in-service training sessions.

#### HOW ARE VOLUNTEERS SCREENED?

Every effort is made to select mature, stable, reliable persons to serve in VIP. Each applicant must complete training, submit an application and submit to an interview. Police, sheriff and probation records are checked.

An arrest record does not obviate membership. VIP includes former offenders who contribute much to the program. The applicant's attitude, not his record, is the final determining factor. Three references are obtained for each applicant.

In special projects, some aspects of this screening are waived. In these projects, either the volunteer is closely supervised or the project coordinator is responsible for his selection.

#### CAN STAFF GET OVERTIME FOR VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES?

DPOs may receive CTO for conferring with volunteers and/or attending VIP meetings.

#### IS VOLUNTEER PERFORMANCE EVALUATED?

Staff are urged to report performance to the VIP staff. Unless the probation officer takes this initiative, the VIP staff has no way of knowing or evaluating volunteer performance. Staff may report verbally, or a brief form is available for this purpose.

#### WHAT KINDS OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH VIP?

Practically every kind of professional service can be obtained through VIP resources. Doctors, lawyers, dentists, physicians and psychiatrists donate services to VIP when other community resources are not available to the client.

#### WHAT OTHER RESOURCES DOES VIP HAVE AVAILABLE?

Volunteers in Probation has tickets to sporting and entertainment events. Information on how to obtain these tickets can be obtained from the VIP office. It is noted that clients must be accompanied by a probation officer or volunteer.

WHAT IS VOLUNTEERS IN PROBATION, INCORPORATED  
"CRISIS AND REHABILITATION FUND"?

Volunteers in Probation is incorporated as a tax exempt charitable organization. The organization administers a crisis and rehabilitation fund. Funds solicited from various sources are used to meet special or emergency needs of clients which cannot be met through existing resources. The expenditure must, in some way, contribute to the growth and/or rehabilitation of the client.

The Crisis and Rehabilitation Fund is dependent upon contributions. Staff are urged to personally contribute or support VIP fund raising activities.

To obtain money from the VIP fund, the probation officers must first be sure that no other funds are available to meet the need. He must be sure that there are neither public nor private resources available. Once he is certain of this, a request form is completed, co-signed by the supervisor and routed to the Chief Assistant Probation Officer for final approval. A warrant for the amount is prepared by the Accounting Division. It is the responsibility of the probation officer to see that funds are properly spent and that receipts are submitted to the accounting office.

**END**