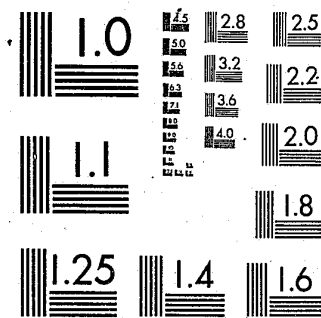


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AN OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUNTEER SERVICES PROGRAM
OF THE LUCAS COUNTY ADULT PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Observe
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The Volunteer Program as it operates in the Lucas County Adult Probation Department is consistent with the following departmental philosophy.

That philosophy is:

"The Adult Probation Department as part of the rehabilitative agent of the Lucas County Court of Common Pleas realizes that its mission cannot be fully accomplished with only the use of paid staff. The service that is needed can be expanded and intensified by using individuals from the community as unpaid staff. The type of service provided by unpaid staff may vary depending on the individual's interests, knowledge, skills and talents.

Unpaid staff can also be effectively utilized in sharing in administrative responsibilities, community organization tasks, and program development."

Thus, volunteers work in a number of roles to supplement and complement the client services provided by the Lucas County Adult Probation Department. The purpose of incorporating volunteers into the court system is two-fold. First, recognizing that the needs of probationers often exceed the reality of the time available to the probation officer and given the heavy caseloads and the often excessive demands of the probation officer role, volunteers are asked to intensify and provide services in addition to the efforts of the probation officer. Secondly, volunteers are involved in the court system for purposes of education and exposure of the system to the wider community. It has been noted too often that the criminal justice system is closed to the broader community and too little is known about what actually takes place with clients and the court system.

Volunteers will be involved in a systematized manner throughout the Adult Probation Department. This is done through a departmental organiza-

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tional structure which looks like the following. (SEE ATTACHMENT)

VOLUNTEER DIRECTOR:

The Volunteer Director is responsible for all activities and programs involving volunteers in the Lucas County Adult Probation Department. The Volunteer Director is placed at a supervisory level in terms of position in the agency structure and functions as part of an administrative team with the other supervisors in the department. The Volunteer Director plans programs with the other supervisors and probation officers that involve volunteers in a meaningful capacity with clients of the Lucas County Court of Common Pleas. After planning the programs with staff input, the Volunteer Director is responsible for recruiting and training groups of volunteers in each of the program areas. When volunteers have been integrated into the service delivery system they are actually supervised by the probation officer and his/her supervisor rather than the Volunteer Director. However, the Volunteer Director is continuously involved with all of the programs and volunteers in both a training or evaluation capacity.

RECRUITMENT:

Attempts are made to recruit volunteers who represent the entire community and come from a variety of different experiences and backgrounds. One of the common ways of recruiting volunteers has been to use the "Help Wanted" column in the Toledo Blade. Volunteers are recruited generally for specific roles and thus come into the agency to be screened and trained into other outlined group tasks and activities. Specific recruitment efforts may be directed at identifiable community groups or persons with particular characteristics or experiences that are relevant to the role in which they will be placed. Volunteers initially fill out a four page application which is reviewed by the Volunteer Director before initiating a screening interview. If the application meets the general criteria outlined for the role in question at that time, the volunteers are asked to come in for a screening

interview which lasts from one to two hours. During the screening interview the Volunteer Director assesses the volunteer's ability to work with and relate to clients in this department. Such things are ability to handle authority, self-awareness, problem solving style, motivation, sensitivity to needs and wishes of others, willingness to accept new and different ideas, dependability, and self-confidence are among the characteristics of individuals screened to work in one of the volunteer roles. If a volunteer is assessed to be capable of performing in the role at the time of the screening interview, he/she is then brought into the training processes. On the other hand, if the volunteer is assessed to be inappropriate for this role, he/she may be referred to another human service delivery agency which could benefit from his/her talents. If not accepted they will be given specific reasons as to why this decision is being made and how they are seen by the Volunteer Director.

TRAINING AND ORIENTATION:

Specific training and orientation is outlined for each of the roles in which volunteers function in the Adult Probation Department. Training is coordinated by the Volunteer Director working with probation officers and volunteers to assure that the content is relevant to the role in which the volunteer will function. Training itself is carried out by the Volunteer Director and Probation Officers. The length and content of the training varies with each of the programs. However, it is mandatory that volunteers attend orientation and training sessions before they are assigned to work in any of the volunteer roles. In-service training is coordinated by the Volunteer Director with his purpose being the assessment of training needs and then the facilitation of appropriate training modules. This facilitation will respond to the departmental philosophy that good skills and training capacity exists among the probation staff and that, in conjunction with the Volunteer Director, most, if not all, the training can be accomplished

using probation staff. However, consultants or specialists from other parts of the community are asked to come into training sessions to lend expertise in areas where the staff does not consider themselves knowledgeable.

VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIP WITH PROBATION OFFICERS:

Volunteers and probation officers operate in a team relationship in their work with clients. This team concept means essentially that the skills and efforts of each party are recognized and respected in the overall effort to deliver services. It does not mean that the volunteers are the same as or able to take over the probation officer's job functions, but that each brings unique experiences and skills to the working relationship. The probation officer brings his/her experience, knowledge, and skills in working in the court system. The volunteer brings his/her fresh perspective, time, personal experience and energy to contribute to their work with clients. Probation Officers directly supervise the volunteers work; providing the assignments, consultation on cases and evaluation of the volunteers performance. This will be done in a supervisory meeting at least once a month where both will have a chance to review and develop the volunteer's progress. Should conflict arise, the probation officer and the volunteer initially address the issues together and bring in the probation officer's supervisor if they cannot resolve conflicts at that level. If the supervisor decides it is necessary, he/she then brings in the Volunteer Director also to bring the conflict to final resolution. Termination of the volunteer is always handled through the Volunteer Director's office. Volunteers will be terminated for unsatisfactory performance.

VOLUNTEER ROLES:

Volunteer Probation Officer, Volunteer Case Manager and Administrative Volunteer have been defined by the Adult Probation Department as the first three roles citizens will play in the department. The following is a description of these roles.

VOLUNTEER PROBATION OFFICER: The volunteer probation officer (VPO) works with the probation officer and other volunteers as a group addressing the needs of the medium risk probationers. Each probation officer working with VPO's has four to ten volunteers meeting monthly for the purpose of assignment, consultation and exchange of ideas regarding cases. The volunteer makes a commitment of one year, provides his client or clients at least one significant contact a week, and meets monthly with the probation officer and the rest of the group of VPO's, as well as fills out any paper work seen as necessary. The VPO will engage in a variety of tasks with their clients ranging from one-to-one supervision, monitoring restitution payments, helping clients to secure employment or education, assisting the probation officer in the update of a presentence investigation, or generally using his/her energies or talents as they apply to the needs of the probation officer and the clients at the particular point of assignment. Training consists of three or four orientation sessions. The recruitment emphasis of this particular group of volunteers is on prior experience with relationship and ability to be flexible in a number of different capacities with clients.

Case Manager: Case Managers work with low-risk probationers whose main contact with this office is on a paper reporting basis. Initially Case Managers meet with the probationer after sentencing for one or two sessions to assess the individual's capacities and limitations to function on probation. After this initial counseling, the probationer is expected to report to this office by means of a written form on a quarterly basis. The Case Manager monitors the progress of each of these clients and commonly is involved in approximately forty to fifty cases. Case Manager's tasks may include initial interviewing, tracking lost cases, monitoring and tabulating results of quarterly reports, crisis intervention, and providing recommendation for extensions or terminations of probation. Case Managers are supervised by one probation officer who also provides backup supervision for

the cases when the volunteers are not available or working in the office. Volunteers make a two year commitment to work twelve to fifteen hours per week. Training for Case Managers consists of an orientation period on the job with probation officer as well as three formal training sessions.

ADMINISTRATIVE VOLUNTEERS:

Administrative Volunteers work with members of the Adult Probation Administrative team. The volunteers will engage in numerous administrative tasks ranging from specialized research to general administrative assistance. These tasks are initially defined by an administrative team member within a volunteer request form. This form is then used by the Volunteer Director to recruit and screen appropriate volunteers.

Administrative volunteers make a minimum commitment of six months for three hours per week. Training for Administrative Volunteers consist of an orientation which will be conducted by the volunteer's supervisor.

CONCLUSION:

Efforts will be made to include volunteers at all levels of service in the division and to incorporate them with staff on a formal and informal basis. Thus, attempts are made to apprise volunteers of additional in-service training opportunities that are open to paid staff and to include them in social gatherings, along with paid staff. Special events such as an Annual Volunteer Recognition Event will be held for VPO's and Case Managers to give credit for outstanding service contributed by these volunteers.

Overall, the most important feature of the volunteer program is the probation officers and volunteers capacity to work in a team relationship maximizing the contributions of both members of the team.

END