

Open Air Library Plaza Volunteer Plan

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I. Executive Summary

The SOSNA library would benefit from a core group of volunteers drawn from the geographic area covered by SOSNA itself (from South Street south to Washington Avenue, and from Broad Street west to the Schuylkill River). SOSNA could target this group with a “*it’s your community – volunteer at your library*” campaign. Volunteers drawn from the library’s surrounding community would provide the likeliest source of long-term service. Such volunteers have the greatest personal investment in the library, which they or their families or friends may use regularly, and their close proximity to the library may alleviate some factors, which may discourage volunteering, such as problems with transportation.

SOSNA would also benefit from targeting volunteers in the greater Philadelphia area. Although some of these volunteers may provide long-term service, they are more likely to provide supplemental or short-term assistance since they are out-of-area.

According to the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania Volunteer Center, recruitment should be one of the last steps in planning a volunteer program. Other factors (e.g., facilities, policies, detailed position descriptions, etc.) need to be in place before recruitment begins. Otherwise, a volunteer’s interest may dwindle if there is a long waiting period, or a volunteer may have a negative experience which may seriously impact future recruitment. Since the SOSNA library will be run solely by volunteers, recruitment will need to be done in stages: first recruiting volunteer coordinators (preferably volunteers with library training, such as a retired/non-working librarians), who will in turn recruit additional volunteers, whether short- or long-term.

To successfully run the library with an all-volunteer staff, there must be a strong recruitment and retention effort to attract, and retain the best, most motivated volunteers. Such volunteers must be provided with clear position descriptions and appropriate tasks right from the beginning in order to sustain interest and develop involvement with the vision of the project. Because of the nature of volunteerism, the library should expect three levels of service from its volunteers. Each of these levels of commitment must be valued and recognized by the organization. It is important to think of the volunteers not as employees but as customers. They give their time in exchange for the “volunteer experience.” Their experience volunteering for the library will greatly effect the caliber of volunteers to follow and the community perception of the project in general. A program of recognition as well as methods of rewards should be examined and put in place.

The training of library volunteers helps assure that volunteers serve patrons properly. The quality of volunteer training is also inherently linked to the retention of volunteers; volunteers who have not been properly instructed how to best perform their duties will be more likely to feel frustrated and leave the library. The need for training volunteers is just as important as it would be with paid employees. In order to best capitalize on volunteer resources, effort must be spent to educate volunteers about the policies and procedures related to their job duties. Well-trained volunteers are informed and motivated to perform well, and realize the importance of their responsibilities.

The SOSNA library project will be exclusively run by volunteers. Smooth and reliable day-to-day operation of library services should figure prominently in the way the volunteer workforce will be organized. We recommend a distinction between three levels of volunteers. A small team of volunteer coordinators will be the first tier of volunteers. This team will be responsible for recruiting all other levels of volunteers as well as for developing all the necessary policies and procedures. The next tier will be long-term volunteers. It will be very important to attract a fair number of volunteers who are willing to commit to the library for an extended period of time. Job descriptions for this type of volunteer have to emphasize the importance of reliability and long-term commitment. Most of the long-term volunteers will be involved in the day-to-day operation of the library. It will be up to the volunteer coordinators to decide on how to organize and schedule their responsibilities and work time, but once they have been trained they should be able to work fairly independent. For lack of a better term, all other volunteers will be called short-term volunteers. Many of these volunteers will only commit for a short time span, but some of them may very well end up as long-term volunteers. For many community members this may be the only way in which they can contribute to the library and it will be the library's and SOSNA's interest to attract a large number of community volunteers. The management of the volunteer workforce will require some sort of physical office space, which of course the library cannot be used for this purpose due to its open air nature.

The utilization of human resources in any venture requires significant planning and foresight. Many issues that face an employer and its workforce are reduced and handled properly through careful thought and adherence to legal requirements. This sensitivity to the law is just as true for volunteer organizations. It is imperative that guidelines in accordance with local and state government employment/labor law be adopted. Full understanding and implementations of these regulations will be to the benefit of all concerned parties.

Although financial matters may not be readily apparent, they are nonetheless important to consider. Volunteers may not outwardly take a salary and benefits package, however there are costs to implementing and running a volunteer-based pool of workers. Savings from non-salaried employees should be balanced with the costs of obtaining insurance for the protection of all parties who enjoy the SOSNA library. The purchasing of adequate and appropriate insurance is paramount to SOSNA's successful operations. In the pursuit of obtaining insurance, it is recommended that SOSNA be satisfied that it has sufficiently met its obligations prior to purchasing said insurance. It is recommended that any insurance purchased is meeting the needs of the organization and that it covers all anticipated problems and difficulties.

II. Vision Statement

Vision

- A volunteer program that supports SOSNA's library without walls
- The volunteers who will guarantee the ongoing success of the library
- The project cannot succeed without human commitment, but has to succeed without paid employees
- Recruitment, recognition and rewarding of volunteer service develops a strong commitment to service within the neighborhood

Objectives

- Identify the volunteer market within the surrounding community
- Recruit and retain the volunteers
- Ongoing training of volunteers
- Feasible long term functioning of volunteer model
- Financial structure to support the volunteer structure

How does the Volunteer Plan fit into the Established Goals of the Project?

- Furthers the outdoor library as a viable functioning work of public art
- Success encourages future investors to support SOSNA initiatives
- Establishes the neighborhood as a point of interest to those outside of the community

Summary

The volunteer model will help to establish a space within the neighborhood that will, as Angela Richardson of the SOSNA Board said, "Nourish the body, nourish the mind and nourish the soul."

III. Volunteerism in Philadelphia

Target Market of Volunteers

The SOSNA library would benefit from a core group of volunteers drawn from the geographic area covered by SOSNA itself (from South Street south to Washington Avenue, and from Broad Street west to the Schuylkill River). SOSNA could target this group with a “*it’s your community – volunteer at your library*” campaign. Volunteers drawn from the library’s surrounding community would provide the likeliest source of long-term service. Such volunteers have the greatest personal investment in the library (which they or their families or friends may use regularly), and their close proximity to the library may alleviate some factors which may discourage volunteering (such as problems with transportation).

SOSNA would also benefit from targeting volunteers in the greater Philadelphia area. Although some of these volunteers may provide long-term service, they are more likely to provide supplemental or short-term assistance.

Drexel University’s School of Information Science and Technology (IST) would be an excellent source of supplemental volunteers. Although Drexel cannot provide an ongoing commitment to the library, especially as its eleven-week quarter system would present serious continuity problems in staffing, its students could furnish expertise on a limited basis. SOSNA could advertise through the volunteer postings at the college’s placement office, and should consider offering an unpaid internship opportunity to IST students.

Demographics of the Volunteer Pool

One method of determining the demographics of the current volunteer pool is to hold a series of focus groups of potential volunteers from the SOSNA community. These focus groups could help SOSNA determine the interests of potential volunteers, their perceptions of volunteer programs, and factors that may make them either reluctant or eager to volunteer. As the demographics of the volunteer pool may change before the library opens, these focus groups could provide a means of staying in touch with potential volunteers.

Networking

SOSNA may wish to contact other library-related organizations which use volunteers (e.g., the Free Library of Philadelphia, the Greater Philadelphia Book Bank, etc.) for advice on running volunteer programs. SOSNA may also wish to investigate local competitors who use volunteers, such as Graduate Hospital, for ideas on recruitment strategies.

IV. Policy Development

The use of volunteers in libraries has a long, rich history and one would be hard pressed to find a modern public library that does not use a fair number of these committed workers. Although unpaid, they give valuable time, expertise and varied talents to “their” libraries, enhancing many programs, public services and technical processes. Volunteers also provide the library with positive community exposure and unparalleled public relations benefits. Often working for little more than the acknowledgment of a job well done, library volunteers contribute vital services in often outstanding ways.

The SOSNA Library presents some very special challenges to its volunteers. From top management down, all its employees will be on a volunteer basis, making its structure unique among libraries. In turn this will require creativity, commitment and vision to successfully implement and sustain the volunteer workforce that will operate this community library.

Policies and their implementation are crucial to ensure the smooth operation of the library and its mission. A good volunteer policy:

- Is a framework for acceptable behavior
- Outlines specific rights and responsibilities of all parties
- Is the organization’s code of conduct
- Is flexible and open to evaluation, critical review, and interpretation

In other words, policies are not rules set in stone, but are working documents guiding and empowering both the employees and management. A well developed set of policies drawn up and agreed upon, prior to hiring the first volunteer, will be invaluable to the SOSNA Library in getting it through its first ‘growing pains’ of operation. Not only will personnel policies provide a roadmap for all to follow but they will also provide the volunteers with a number of benefits including but not limited to:

- A sense of security from clearly written rights and responsibilities
- Equal treatment for all and the right to fair grievance procedures
- Enhanced communication opportunities
- Clear goals and objectives and the guidance to achieve them

Because the SOSNA library presents such a unique concept in library management, there are few blueprints to follow. It is vital that the volunteer committee develops policies that will ensure the smooth integration of volunteers from hiring to training to entering the library workforce. Additionally, policies that address the following concepts will be necessary:

- Employee conduct
- Hiring/firing of employees
- Conflict resolution

Policy Manual

It is suggested that all volunteer policies be compiled into a manual for distribution to the volunteers. This does not have to be a fancy publication, but should provide not only the policies as written but also the rationale behind them, and possibly, the steps of implementation. A brief justification for each policy is all that is required, just enough to place it within the context of the volunteer's employment. If the latter are not included in the volunteer manual then they must be made available to all volunteers in some other document. Personnel policies must be backed up by reasonable strategies of implementation. It does no good to have, for example, a policy outlining why a volunteer may be dismissed but have no workable plan to conduct the dismissal. The policy itself is not the procedure, but the reason why the procedure exists. The policy manual may include a form which each volunteer signs to indicate they have read and understood the contents. This may reinforce the perception that the policies are important and will be enforced.

The actual writing of the library personnel manual will require a detailed outline of the library's long term goals, as well as the day-to-day activities of its volunteers. Every aspect of the employee's rights and responsibilities must be considered carefully and rationally in order to draft a document of appropriate depth and comprehension. Some important points:

- Keep tone positive, encouraging
- Key points and terms should be simple, direct, brief
- Avoid condescension
- Encourage input and discussion; be realistic and fair

Before drafting a final copy, it would behoove the volunteer committee to do a final review and editing to make sure all are in agreement with the stated objectives. Review by legal Counsel would be advisable at this time as well. It should be noted that using a model policy statement as a guide would result in a usable end-product in a shorter amount of time. There are a number of books and online documents available that give sample policy outlines (see Appendix H).

Employee Conduct

The policies that deal with employee conduct reflect behaviors and attitudes essential to the library's mission. It is vital to take into account the fact that volunteers will be bringing with them personal beliefs, values and commitments. Diversity is a key element of the neighborhood and a concept that should be celebrated and respected. Volunteers must be provided boundaries, however, for the expression of their beliefs, by detailed policies on what is acceptable behavior and what is not acceptable. If a dress code is desired here is where it should be presented. The right to privacy for both patrons and staff is another important concept that could be addressed in the policy manual. Professional librarians are expected to uphold strict privacy guidelines concerning patron records, and the SOSNA volunteers should be encouraged to do the same.

Conflict Resolution

Unfortunately, there will be times when conflict or disputes will occur, and it is important that the library develop a comprehensive plan to deal with such situations as they arise. Again, having both policy and strategy in place prior to an incident will be invaluable in assuring a prompt and fair resolution. Both the volunteers and SOSNA should have the right to an official process in which to air their complaints and concerns. Above all, this process must be recognized as being nondiscriminatory and, when initiated, result in fair and equal treatment for all.

Volunteers should be encouraged to discuss their concerns in an atmosphere of open communication and respect. Perhaps regular staff meetings could have time devoted to such discussions. A 'suggestion-comment' box is another way to allow staff, anonymously or not, to voice their concerns. Either way, it should be clear to everyone that there will be no unjust recrimination for airing a complaint.

The more volunteers are encouraged to participate and communicate within the organization, the less likely it will be for conflicts to fester and grow before they are resolved. A grievance policy may help keep volunteer staff morale high, as it is concrete evidence that their concerns are important and will be acknowledged.

Hiring and Firing

A policy outlining the hiring and firing procedures is worthwhile for any organization. Although they work without pay, volunteers must realize that accepting a position with the library constitutes an agreement to uphold certain responsibilities. These should include such conditions that the SOSNA Board feels are necessary to allow a volunteer to remain in employment. Abiding by the organization's rules and regulations, and adhering to written policy, are included within that agreement.

Dealing with a volunteer's dismissal is a very serious matter, and it is important that the decision not be made lightly, nor until other disciplinary action has proven to be ineffective. However, there may be some very specific infractions that automatically result in dismissal. These should be agreed upon and put in writing - failure to do so will bring complications to an already unpleasant situation. Such offenses should include stealing, threatening bodily harm, and illegal drug use on the premises. Otherwise dismissal should be deemed appropriate only when the grievance policy procedures have been completed without mutual satisfaction.

Evaluation

Every policy statement should provide the opportunity for evaluation and refinement. As the organization and outside circumstances change, the library's policies should reflect those changes. Both policies and procedures should be updated on a regular basis, perhaps through a board sponsored year-end review, or through solicited suggestions from staff. By providing a forum for policy review and critical assessment, the SOSNA Library will continue to grow and develop as a valuable resource in a changing, dynamic community.

V. Recruitment of Volunteers

This section expands upon the list of volunteer sources and mediums originally suggested to SOSNA, providing contact information and profiles when possible, and discusses schedules and strategy.

Timing

According to the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania Volunteer Center, recruitment should be one of the last steps in planning a volunteer program. Other factors (e.g., facilities, policies, detailed position descriptions, etc.) need to be in place before recruitment begins. Otherwise, a volunteer's interest may dwindle if there is a long waiting period, or a volunteer may have a negative experience which may seriously impact future recruitment. Many of the advertising mediums listed below require a mission statement, contact person, position description (including skills required), and estimates of the number of volunteers needed and the time commitment involved. Since the SOSNA library will be run solely by volunteers, recruitment will need to be done in stages: first recruiting volunteer coordinators (preferably volunteers with library training, such as a retired/non-working librarians), who will in turn recruit additional volunteers, whether short- or long-term.

Since building the SOSNA library and establishing policies, etc. may take considerable time, we recommend that SOSNA reevaluate sources of volunteers and available advertising mediums before beginning actual recruitment. One valuable resource for timely advice is the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania Volunteer Center, which provides training workshops for organizations on how to design volunteer programs (please see appendix for details). In addition, the TENET Center at the University of Texas at Austin has a web site directory devoted to community engagement and volunteerism (<http://www.tenet.edu/volunteer/general.html>) that has been updated frequently.

Strategy

Typically, determining position descriptions (what types of skills are required and what duties volunteers will perform) will help determine the type of volunteer to target, which will in turn help determine where to recruit.

In advertising positions, other factors to consider are whether the task is:

- One-shot or repetitive (i.e., time commitment required)
- On- or off-site
- Performed alone or in a group (i.e., manpower required)

A successful recruitment strategy will predict and rebut possible objections to volunteering. Although the focus groups will help clarify resistance factors specific to this volunteer pool, possible objections may include:

- Other demands on volunteers' time (family, jobs, schoolwork)

- Weather
- Transportation
- Security

Recruiting volunteers for the SOSNA library has a double focus: recruiting a core group of volunteers from SOSNA's own geographic area, and recruiting additional volunteers from the greater Philadelphia area. In some cases, considerable overlap may occur; an agency such as Philadelphia Cares, for example, may be a source for both local and greater Philadelphia area volunteers. Please note that extended profiles on some of these sources are available in the appendix.

Possible Sources of SOSNA-Area Volunteers

Service Clubs

- Girl and Boy Scout troops
- Rotary clubs
- Jaycees

Schools

- High schools (e.g., High School of the Performing Arts)
- Community colleges
- Colleges or universities

Religious Organizations

- Places of worship
- Organizations, such as the Knights of Columbus

Other Local Organizations

- SOSNA members
- Graduate Hospital employees/visitors
- Local businesses

Possible Sources of Philadelphia Area Volunteers

Volunteer Placement Agencies

- Philadelphia Cares
- United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania Volunteer Center
- Placement Office, College of Information Science and Technology, Drexel University

In particular, organizations which may be particularly good sources of retired/non-working librarians include:

- SOSNA (via its membership roster)
- Library-related organizations such as:
 - American Library Association (ALA)
<http://www.ala.org/> or (800) 545-2433
 - Drexel University's College of Information Science and Technology Alumni Association (ISTA)
<http://www.cis.drexel.edu/alum/> or email current President Samuel Stormont at stormont@astro.ocis.temple.edu
 - Rutgers University School of Communication, Information and Library Studies Alumni Assn
<http://info.rutgers.edu/University/alumni/assoc/colleges/scils.html> or contact Gene Armstead at (732) 932-7474 or armstead@winants.rutgers.edu
 - National Retired Teachers Association (NARTA)
<http://www.aarp.org/nrta/> or (800) 424-3410
- Senior Citizens' Organizations such as:
 - American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
<http://www.aarp.org/> or (800) 424-3410
 - Philadelphia West Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
contact William Tangradi at (215) 854-7058

Service Clubs, Schools, Religious Organizations

- SOSNA may wish to target organizations similar to those it targeted in its immediate area on a broader geographic scale. For example, it may wish to advertise at local universities such as Drexel University and the University of Pennsylvania.

Advertising Mediums

Using a variety of advertising mediums increases the chances of reaching a broad range of volunteers (e.g., both literate and illiterate).

Internet

- Volunteer Matching Services
Numerous web sites offer free, nationwide databases which link volunteers with volunteer opportunities posted by nonprofit and public sector organizations. Libraries such as the Free Library of Philadelphia are already advertising on such sites. Examples include:
 - Idealist (<http://www.idealists.org/>) [profile in Appendix A]
 - SERVENet (<http://www.servenet.org/>) [profile in Appendix A]
 - VolunteerMatch (<http://www.volunteermatch.org/>) [profile in Appendix A]
- "Virtual" Volunteers
Virtual volunteers complete all or part of their volunteer tasks via the Internet and a

computer at home or work. SOSNA may wish to use such a volunteer to create a SOSNA web site which could in turn be used as a recruiting device. Due to web site maintenance issues, however, it would be useful to have a SOSNA staff member involved as well. For example:

- Virtual Volunteering Project, Volunteerism and Community Engagement Initiatives at the Charles A. Dana Center, University of Texas at Austin (<http://www.serviceleader.org/vv/>)

This site not only provides a matching service for organizations and volunteers who volunteer online, but contains resources for agencies on setting up and managing a virtual volunteering program, details on how such projects benefit the agency, and an index of online resources for volunteer managers.

Printed Materials

- Brochures
Consider distributing a brochure describing the history of the library and volunteer contact information to local businesses, schools, etc., as well as distributing them at the library itself.
- Newsletters
Consider advertising in the newsletters, bulletins or newspapers of the service clubs, schools, religious organizations, and other local organizations listed above under sources of SOSNA-area volunteers, as well as in the SOSNA newsletter and the library's advisory committee newsletter.
- Posters
Consider placing posters on the bulletin boards of the service clubs, schools, religious organizations, and other local organizations listed above under sources of SOSNA-area volunteers. Other local or community bulletin boards, such as those at a local grocery or liquor stores, are also possibilities.
- Newspapers
Consider placing an advertisement in local papers or city-wide papers such as the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Audio-Visual Materials

- Radio Announcements (public service announcements are often free)
- Television (local and cable) announcements

VI. Retention of Volunteers

Volunteers as Customers: The Volunteer Experience

To successfully run the library with an all-volunteer staff, there must be a strong recruitment effort to attract the best, most motivated volunteers. Such volunteers must be provided with clear position descriptions and appropriate tasks right from the beginning in order to sustain interest and develop involvement with the vision of the project. Because of the nature of volunteerism, the library should expect three levels of service from its volunteers. Each of these levels of commitment must be valued and recognized by the organization. It is important to think of the volunteers not as employees but as customers. They give their time in exchange for the “volunteer experience.” Their experience volunteering for the library will greatly effect the caliber of volunteers to follow and the community perception of the project in general. The sections below describe the crucial aspects of keeping these volunteers interested and active.

Short-Term Volunteers

The first level is that of the one-time or brief period of commitment. Such volunteers will be the direct result of ongoing recruitment efforts and will be individuals who have indicated that they are only able to commit to single events or short planning periods such as a month. Examples of such volunteers would include a storyteller for read aloud event, or individuals to help sort and move the library “collection” upon opening.

- The tasks and final goals assigned to these volunteers need to be clearly defined *before* they are recruited.
- They should be given tasks which they can see to completion.
- They should not be expected to participate in any planning.
- High praise and creative rewards should be bestowed on these volunteers in a public way and at the time of their service (see Appendix D).

Long-Term Volunteers

The second level of commitment to be expected is a long-term commitment. This may be eight months to a year of solid, scheduled commitment. These volunteers should have not only clearly defined tasks but a fully articulated position in the daily operation of the library. These volunteers require significant training on the job and will figure most prominently in the routine operations of the library, such as staffing the “desk” and working with the “collection.” Because they will be the primary contact with the public, they will be an invaluable source for feedback on how the project is met by the community.

- An important factor in retention of these term volunteers will be the readiness with which the organization responds to their physical and environmental needs and comforts. This means providing amenities and perks such as free coffee, bountiful office supplies, and a ready and responsive ear for any complaints.

- Scheduling for these volunteers must be flexible.
- Their interest and participation must be supported and sustained by strong communication with the Volunteer Librarians and SOSNA. Their reports and ideas must be taken seriously and their suggestions acted upon.
- Appreciation must be a daily communication and reward should come in the form of formalized community recognition, such as an article in the local paper.
- The organization should make every effort to develop the work future of these volunteers, including writing letters of praise or recommendation to current or future employers (see Appendix D).
- These positions should be designed to develop important job skills that the volunteers can take on to other work. This should be reinforced by ongoing training and growth in their responsibilities.

Volunteer Coordinators

The highest level of commitment will come from the volunteer coordinators. These volunteers, chosen for their commitment to community service and librarianship, will be the planners and overseers of the library operations. The sustainability of their participation is dependent on the amount of control they are given over the operations of the library. The service ideals and creative impulses of these volunteers must be encouraged and supported by seeing their ideas realized. They must not find barriers put up by the organization as they do their job for the organization. For highly motivated volunteers such as these, the highest reward will be greater involvement and recognition in their community and a feeling of accomplishment from the successful realization of their plans for the library.

- These individuals should be free to plan and develop the library project according to their best knowledge and creativity.
- They should be treated as full members of the community organization and invited to participate openly in the long range planning of all matters effecting the program.
- Their needs, ideas, and requests must be met with timely, considerate, and programmatically supportive responses.
- Ongoing professional development opportunities should be provided, including participation in conferences and seminars.
- Recognition for these volunteers should develop them as individual personalities in the community. This should include features on local television and radio programs, community web sites, and honors at community events (see Appendix D).

VII. Training of Volunteers

This section presents recommendations for how to best train volunteers for the outdoor library project.

The training of library volunteers helps assure that volunteers serve patrons properly. The quality of volunteer training is also inherently linked to the retention of volunteers; volunteers who have not been properly instructed how to best perform their duties will be more likely to feel frustrated and leave the library. The need for training volunteers is just as important as it would be with paid employees. In order to best capitalize on volunteer resources, effort must be spent to educate volunteers about the policies and procedures related to their job duties. Well-trained volunteers are informed and motivated to perform well, and realize the importance of their responsibilities.

One goal of training is to ensure that different volunteers enforce a defined set of rules consistently. Inconsistent volunteer behavior causes problems for the library because it can contradict patrons' expectations or be misinterpreted as discrimination. It is therefore important to construct a detailed employee manual that volunteers can refer to during training and work. The more procedures and contingency plans are available in a volunteer manual, the less likely problems are to occur due to improper actions by volunteers. The appendixes of this plan offer a framework from which to build the volunteer manual.

Volunteer training begins during the application process. Volunteers should be given written job descriptions. The job descriptions should list the desired qualifications and required skills of the position. Giving volunteer applicants job descriptions and a brief skills assessment will help to screen out potential volunteers who would have problems with the volunteer duties. During the volunteer interview, applicants further come to understand what duties they are expected to perform. The interviewer should convey detailed aspects of the duties involved in the sought position.

The amount and type of training required for each applicant will vary according to their background. Deciding what training hired volunteers require will be based on information obtained during the interview and application process. A basic orientation of the library operations, focusing on an explanation of the role of volunteers within the library, should be given to all hired volunteers. During orientation a volunteer should receive:

- Personal introductions to other volunteers
- An overview of the outdoor library's project history
- A description of how the volunteer program works
- A tour of the outdoor library
- An overview of the library's operations and organizational structure
- A further understanding of their role within the library

After volunteers have been oriented within the library, they are trained in the specific skills needed to do their jobs. This can be done in a group setting, but should be followed-up with one-on-one communication between the volunteers and their trainer for best results. Potential

problems can be avoided by discussing any training difficulties that volunteers may be experiencing. By the end of training, volunteers should know:

- Their job duties and responsibilities, including what they are and are not allowed to do
- How and when to report to their supervisor
- What conduct is expected of them
- How to schedule and change volunteer shifts
- Procedures for opening and closing the library
- Rules and procedures for circulating books
- Emergency and contingency procedures

Once a volunteer completes training, they are ready to schedule their work shifts and begin working. The training of each volunteer then remains a continual process with feedback from the ongoing supervision and evaluation of volunteers. As training progresses, volunteers can be given increased responsibilities and more advanced duties.

VIII. Service Features

Smooth and reliable day-to-day operation of library services should figure prominently in the way the volunteer workforce will be organized. We recommend a distinction between three levels of volunteers:

- Volunteer Coordinators
- Long-Term volunteers
- Short-Term volunteers

Volunteer Coordinators

The SOSNA library project will be exclusively run by volunteers. We recommend to recruit volunteer coordinators well before the library is scheduled to open, possibly as much as three months ahead of time. A small team of volunteer coordinators will be the first tiers of volunteers. This team will be responsible for recruiting all other levels of volunteers as well as for developing all the necessary policies and procedures.

We propose to consider only highly motivated and skilled individuals for these positions, since so much of the success of the library will depend on them. Retired librarians, library clerks and students of Drexel's IST program would all be likely candidates, who could contribute the necessary library expertise to the project. The SOSNA library will stand or fall with the commitment, expertise, and motivation of these volunteers.

We recommend a team of no less than three volunteer coordinators because of the overall workload and the wide range of responsibilities that the management of this project encompasses:

- All aspects of volunteer recruiting, interviewing, training, and evaluation
- Documentation: Developing all the necessary policies and procedures, such as a collection policy, a volunteer policy, emergency procedures, and daily procedures. Documentation of policies and procedures is of utmost importance, because written policies and procedures will very often be all a volunteer has to refer back to if nobody else is at hand.
- Coordination and supervision of daily operations, such as scheduling and programming
- All aspects of collection management
- Managing the budget and reporting to SOSNA's library committee

Some of these responsibilities can and may be delegated to the next two tiers of volunteers.

Having a team of volunteer coordinators will enable SOSNA to recruit individuals with different and ideally complimentary skills. Such a level of expertise would probably be very hard to come by in a single volunteer. However, the team concept requires that compatibility of personalities, not just skills, should be a primary consideration when interviewing for these positions. Potential candidates should be matched with each other as well as with SOSNA's library committee. To achieve this goal we recommend:

- Detailed job descriptions
- Advertising these positions in the right target markets, such as ALA and Drexel (see Section V)
- Rigorous and extensive interviewing

Long-Term Volunteers

One of the very first responsibilities of the first tiers of volunteers will be to recruit the next two tiers of volunteers, among them the long-term volunteers. It will be very important to attract a fair number of volunteers who are willing to commit to the library for an extended period of time. Job descriptions for this type of volunteer have to emphasize the importance of reliability and long-term commitment.

Most of the long-term volunteers will be involved in the day-to-day operation of the library. It will be up to the management team to decide on how to organize and schedule their responsibilities and work time, but once they have been trained they should be able to work fairly independent. Long-term volunteers will be able to work in the following areas:

- Staffing the library
- Collection maintenance
- Organizing and/or assisting in special programs sponsored by the library
- Training of new volunteers
- Housekeeping

Long-term volunteers will have a considerable amount of responsibility. The responsibilities and rights of volunteers as well as some rules of conduct should be laid down in a mutual contract agreement between SOSNA and its volunteers. These contracts should specify that volunteers are expected to attend regular staff meetings and that they will have to report to a designated volunteer coordinator. Such an approach will be necessary to facilitate internal communication. In turn, some of the long-term volunteers may supervise projects that involve short-term volunteers. Long-term volunteers will be the core of the library's staff. They will be the face the library shows to the community. It will be important to constantly motivate and reward them.

Short-Term Volunteers

For lack of a better term, all other volunteers will be called short-term volunteers. Many of these volunteers will only commit for a short time span, but some of them may very well end up as long-term volunteers. However, the type of work they contribute to the library will be of a more short-term nature:

- Special programs (story time, literacy classes, community events, etc.)
- Fundraising campaigns
- Volunteer recruiting campaigns
- Solicitation of book donations

Depending on their tasks, their direct supervisors may be volunteer coordinators or long-term volunteers.

This group of volunteers may very well consist of highly motivated individuals. However, in general, they will have less time to contribute on an ongoing basis. The library can nevertheless profit immensely from attracting this type of volunteer. The more short-term volunteers the library has, the more extra-curricular activities it can offer to the community. To look at it from the point of view of the volunteer, short-term volunteering requires less commitment in time and allows for more flexibility in scheduling. For many community members this may very well be the only way in which they can contribute to the library and it will be in the library's own interest to attract a large number of community volunteers.

Workspace Requirements

The team management approach requires some sort of physical office space. Because of its open air nature, the library itself cannot serve for this purpose. Management-level volunteers will need a place to:

- Conduct interviews and hold staff meetings
- Make necessary phone calls (volunteer recruiting, scheduling, etc.)
- Store office supplies, money, and duplicates of policies and procedures, contracts, etc.
- Do all necessary paperwork

IX. Legal Issues

The utilization of human resources in any venture requires significant planning and foresight. Many issues that face an employer and its workforce are reduced and handled properly through careful thought and adherence to legal requirements. This sensitivity to the law is just as true for volunteer organizations. It is imperative that guidelines in accordance with local and state government employment/labor law be adopted. Full understanding and implementations of these regulations will be to the benefit of all concerned parties. Significant points to consider and explore are:

- Establishing contractual relationships between SOSNA and the members of the volunteer pool
- Binding responsibilities on SOSNA to provide a safe workplace and environment for both the volunteers and patrons
- Guidelines for disciplinary actions should SOSNA be faced with a troublesome volunteer
- Requirements for SOSNA to carry liability insurance
- Consultation with Counsel in order to reduce opportunities for litigation.

Since attorney's fees are based largely on hourly rates, it is imperative that SOSNA be as prepared as possible prior to consulting with Counsel. An ad-hoc committee of SOSNA could be developed and appointed the responsibility of collecting the questions regarding legal ramifications of a volunteer workforce. The committee, or its appointed person(s), could be charged with: preliminary legal research; establishing points to be covered in any written contracts between SOSNA and the volunteer; and developing the questions that would be submitted to the retained Counsel. Should the costs of retaining Counsel be prohibitive, it is recommended that SOSNA attempt to locate an attorney within its organization or neighborhood who would be willing to provide Counsel for a reduced fee, or perhaps for free.

Whatever route SOSNA pursues in this matter, it is imperative that it understands the necessity of such an undertaking, that many issues and concerns between SOSNA and its volunteers be anticipated, and sensible guidelines be in place to handle said matters.

X. Financial Analysis

Although financial matters may not be readily apparent in this volunteer system, they are nonetheless important to consider. Volunteers may not outwardly take a salary and benefits package, however there are costs to implementing and running a volunteer-based pool of workers.

Current Salaries

Based on area surveys of public, academic, and specialized libraries the average salary for a clerical/technical person in a library ranges from \$6.00 per hour to \$11.00 per hour, depending on skills and background. These positions are charged with clerical and circulation functions primarily related to tracking materials as they come in and out of the library, shelving materials, and maintaining all files related to circulation operations. Provision of library services, such as reference, by a professional librarian greatly escalates the per hour rate, however it is understood that these services would not be available at the SOSNA library. Figuring salary rates is further complicated when factors such as withholding Social Security, State and local taxes, etc. are considered.

Benefits of Volunteers

From a simple vantage point, there are great savings when volunteers comprise the employee base. No payroll; no benefits packages; no tax situations to consider; all of these and other matters of salaried employees make a volunteer-based organization appealing. SOSNA may also consider the benefits of providing individuals with meaningful experiences related to the SOSNA project. Intangible benefits such as a rewarding experience; the positive impact on the community; personal involvement with other like-minded individuals, etc. all combine to demonstrate that having volunteers does more than save the organization money.

Additional Considerations (Insurance)

As we have stated, volunteers provide the organization the benefit of work without pay. However, it is imperative that in the planning and developing phases of this venture that legal Counsel be retained for the purpose of investigating the need for insurance. Salaried employees benefit from workers compensation in the event of an accident or incident. Although volunteers do not receive workers compensation, they are at the same risk level for accidents or any event that could cause them harm or injury. Additionally, patrons are at risk of injury as well. Savings from non-salaried employees should be balanced with the costs of obtaining insurance for the protection of all parties who enjoy the SOSNA library. The purchasing of adequate and appropriate insurance is paramount to SOSNA's successful operations. In the pursuit of obtaining insurance, it is recommended that SOSNA be satisfied that it has sufficiently met its obligations prior to purchasing said insurance. It is recommended that any insurance purchased is meeting the needs of the organization and that it cover all anticipated problems and difficulties.

Appendix A. Philadelphia Volunteer Organizations

Philadelphia Cares

100 South Broad Street, Suite 620

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

Phone: (215) 564-4544

Fax: (215) 564-4543

volunteer@philacares.com

<http://www.philacares.com/>

Description: In operation since 1994, Philadelphia Cares provides volunteers with hands-on projects that are scheduled on evenings and weekends and which are completed in a few hours. Philadelphia Cares has partnered with over 300 non-profit organizations and public schools in the Greater Philadelphia region. In 1997 they created the Solutions Project Bank, which connects groups looking to volunteer with nonprofit organizations who are meeting community needs.

Contact Person: Marquita Deans, (215) 564-4544

Procedure: Contact Marquita Deans to schedule a project, indicating how many volunteers are needed, their duties, and possible dates. Philadelphia Cares will assign a Project Coordinator, whose name and phone number will be advertised along with the volunteer opportunity. The Coordinator will contact SOSNA for information such as directions, parking, etc.

Advertising: Volunteer opportunities will be listed in a monthly calendar of events sent to all volunteers. They may also be advertised in the Solutions Projects Bank chart on the Philadelphia Cares' homepage on the web, which lists community agency, number of volunteers needed, project, and day of the week.

Lead time required for advertising: 1 month between contacting Philadelphia Cares and listing in monthly calendar.

Library-related participants: Free Library of Philadelphia, Greater Philadelphia Book Bank, Philadelphia Reads.

United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania

Main Office

Seven Benjamin Franklin Parkway

Philadelphia, PA 19103

Phone: (215) 665-2500

uwsepa@uwsepa.org

<http://www.uwsepa.org>

Volunteer Center

Philadelphia Office: (215) 665-2474

http://home.uwsepa.org/index_Tier2.asp?link_name=volunteerCenter

Description: The United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania has created “Volunteer Philadelphia,” an online partnership supporting local volunteerism by advertising volunteer opportunities and providing resources to help non-profits develop their volunteer programs. According to their Web site, the United Way Volunteer Center, which joined the United Way in 1990, is “a resource center that mobilizes people and other resources to provide creative solutions to community problems.” The resource center connects people with opportunities to serve, based on their lifestyle and time schedule; builds capacity for effective volunteering; promotes volunteerism; and participates in strategic initiatives addressing local community needs.

Contact Person: Camara Johnson, (215) 665-2474

Procedure: Non-profits can register with the United Way network at an annual charge of \$10. Before registering, non-profits need to provide proof that they have planned how they will use their volunteers (e.g., by presenting position descriptions). Currently 240 other organizations have joined this network. In addition, the Volunteer Center provides training workshops to agencies on how to create volunteer programs at a cost of \$30-40 for a day-long session. The Center will also provide telephone consultations for free, and in-person consultations for a nominal fee (dependent on the nature of the consultation). The center will also do outside training, such as workshops at an organization’s headquarters.

Advertising: Volunteers can register online.

Lead time for advertisement: Depends on length of registration/consultation process.

Library-related participants: Libraries such as the Free Library of Philadelphia and the Chester County Library have used the Center’s services.

VolunteerMatch

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/>

City Match for Philadelphia:

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/citymatch/philadelphia/>

Description: Founded in 1994, ImpactOnline is a nonprofit organization investing in the development of public interest Internet applications. ImpactOnline created VolunteerMatch, a free, nationwide internet database which links volunteers with volunteer opportunities posted by local nonprofit and public sector organizations. VolunteerMatch is subdivided by city (CityMatch), including Philadelphia. As of 2/11/00, matches made have totaled 133,555.

Procedure: Registering as a VolunteerMatch Partner is a three-step process: register yourself as a user, register the organization, and post the first volunteer opportunity. The process takes about 15 minutes. Registering requires a valid email address, the organization's mission statement, description, and tax ID number.

Volunteer opportunities may be posted online anytime. VolunteerMatch will provide Activity Reports summarizing your organization's online traffic.

Non-profit sign-up instructions are available at:

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/post/signup.shtml>

Registration form and details are available at:

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/post/register.jtmpl>

Discussion of benefits are available at:

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/post/benefits.shtml>

Tips are available at:

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/post/tips.shtml>

Advertising: Volunteers may search thousands of one-time and ongoing opportunities by zip code, category, and date, then sign-up automatically by email for those which interest them.

Lead time required for advertising: Due to internal approval processes, it may take up to 48 hours before information is displayed on the site.

Library-related participants: Free Library of Philadelphia.

Idealist

Action Without Borders, Inc.
350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 6614
New York, NY 10118
Phone: (212) 843-3973
Fax: (212) 564-3377
info@idealist.org
<http://www.idealists.org/>

Description: Founded in 1995, Action Without Borders (formerly the Contact Center Network) established the Idealist system in the summer of 1996 in order to allow any nonprofit or community organization to promote its mission and activities on the Web. Idealist is a directory of nonprofit and volunteering resources on the Web, including information on 20,000 nonprofit and community organizations in 140 countries, a free international database of volunteer opportunities, and links to resources for managing and funding nonprofit organizations. As of 2/11/2000, Idealist claims to receive approximately 150,000 page-views a week.

Procedure: Before posting a volunteer opportunity, organizations must register on-line at <http://www.idealists.org/IS/neworg.html>. Idealist requests that organizations complete an application form so that their information may be verified by Idealist staff. The application is available at: <http://www.idealists.org/IS/appli.htm>.

Advertising: Volunteers may search the online database by area of focus, project description, geographic information, skills needed, language needed, opportunities for certain ages and gender, and times they would like to volunteer. Alternately, volunteers may browse opportunities that are divided by state, then subdivided by subject category (including "library or resource center").

Lead time required for advertising: Information should be available once the Submit button at the bottom of the Organization Profile form has been hit.

Library-related participants: Corporate Dirt Archive Project (Philadelphia), Everett Free Library (Everett, PA), Read on the radio! - reading for the blind (Pittsburgh, PA).

SERVEnet

Youth Service America (YSA)

1101 15th Street, Suite 200

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 296-2992 or (888) 904-6060

feedback@ysa.org

<http://www.servenet.org/>

Description: Youth Service America (YSA) is a resource center and alliance of over 200 organizations committed to increasing opportunities for young Americans to serve locally, nationally, or globally. YSA created SERVENet as a commitment to America's Promise. SERVENet's mission is to encourage citizens to become actively engaged in their communities by volunteering, to provide resources to volunteer-based nonprofit organizations, and to match volunteers with opportunities. YSA also provides services for internet development and hosting, with special rates for non-profit organizations.

Procedure: The online registration form is available at:

<http://www.servenet.org/registration/org/>

Advertising: Volunteers can search the online database either by a fast search (zip code) or a personal search (zip code, activities, availability, interests, preferences, and skills).

Lead time required for advertising: (not available)

Library-related participants: (not available)

Appendix B. Model Job Application

Notice to Applicant

Thank you for your interest in serving our community through work at the SOSNA library. The library's staff is exclusively made up of volunteers like you. In order to make the collaboration between you and the library a satisfying and rewarding experience for you, SOSNA asks you to complete this application form. Your answers will help us to determine where in the library your skills are most appreciated and needed.

Last Name: _____ Date: _____

First Name: _____ Home Phone: _____

Middle Initial: _____ Business Phone: _____

Street Address: _____ E-mail Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Permanent address (if applicable): _____

Emergency contact: _____

Skills and Knowledge

Education and Training (High School - College - Vocational/Technical)

Type	Name of Institution	City/State	Years	Degree/Major

List past work experiences (including volunteer work):

List other skills and special knowledge you have which might be beneficial to the library, such as foreign language skills, prior library experiences, and teaching for example:

Schedule

Would you prefer to have a regular work schedule or work on special projects within a more flexible time frame?

How many hours per week/month would you have to give to the library?

When would you like to start volunteering?

Times available to work:

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

References:

1. _____
Phone: _____

2. _____
Phone: _____

Where did you first hear about us?

Why do you want to volunteer in our library?

What type of library work are you most interested in?

Is this a school requirement? Yes ___ No ___
(If yes, please tell us the number of hours you need, completion date)

Is this court ordered work? Yes ___ No ___
(If yes, please tell us the number of hours you need, completion date)

Date: ___/___/___
Applicant signature:

(Applicants under 18 need the signature of a guardian):

Appendix C. Model Code of Ethics

The SOSNA Library is a community run public library managed and staffed entirely by volunteers. The volunteer task force is committed to providing quality information and services to library patrons in an environment that fosters respect, safety and community involvement, which celebrates cultural diversity and which supports the policies and mission of the SOSNA Library.

1. Volunteers will not discriminate against or refuse service to anyone based on race, religion, ethnicity, disability or sex.
2. Volunteers will show respect to each other, their supervisors and the organization - its goals and mission.
3. Volunteers are expected to respect patron and coworkers privacy and keep all records confidential.
4. Volunteers will take responsibility for duties as assigned.
5. Volunteers will not undertake tasks or perform services which are beyond their level of experience or training.
6. Volunteers should promptly report, through proper channels , problems and concerns and have them dealt with in a professional manner, quickly and efficiently without fear of recrimination.
7. Volunteers should seek assistance for any problems beyond their bounds of competence.
8. Volunteers will present themselves on the job in a neat, well groomed manner consistent with library guidelines.
9. Volunteers are expected to adhere to a pre-agreed work schedule, report on time and work an entire shift *or* take responsibility for finding and scheduling a replacement.
10. Volunteers will be expected to refrain from arguing, shouting or causing physical harm to each other and patrons.

Appendix D. Model Reward System

The following are ideas for rewards and recognition of volunteers at the three levels of commitment.

Short Term Volunteers

- **Praise:** Must be ongoing and sincere throughout their commitment. Verbal praise should be general and public.
- **Gift Baskets:** Presented on departure, gifts could include items of personal interest to the volunteer; books, produce from the Farmer's Market, etc..
- **Gift Certificates:** These could be donated by local businesses.
- **T -Shirts:** Attractive shirts with the library logo and a caption indicating that they were a valued volunteer.

Long Term Volunteers

- **“Borrowing privileges”:** Special opportunities to avail of the library's services.
- **Job skills training:** On the job training emphasizing development of job skills.
- **Letters of recommendation:** Written testimony to their skills mailed to their current or future employers.
- **Newspaper feature:** A feature in a local paper such as the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *City Paper*, *Weekly*, or *Daily News*.
- **Honors celebration, ice cream social, picnic, block party:** A fun celebration open to volunteers, family, and community, held in honor of the volunteers, which could feature ceremonial awards of plaques or items described in the above section.

Volunteer Coordinators

- **Radio and TV spots:** Features on local television and radio shows. This could include local news, PBS, public access and others. Some communities have established a period of airtime with local radio stations devoted to interviews with local volunteers.
- **Opportunity to participate in larger goals of org. (promotion):** Depending on the volunteers' interests, skills, and experience, they may be moved or promoted to other areas of service in the community.
- **Expenses paid to attend conferences or seminars:** Ongoing professional development and job training should include the honor of all-expenses-paid attendance at conferences on volunteerism, librarianship, or community organization.
- **Honors celebration:** Special recognition at any honors celebrations as described in the section above.
- **Honorary Plaque at library site:** An on-site plaque, preferably worked into the design of the structure, would provide a place to honor the names of the long term volunteer librarians.

Appendix E. Models for Conflict Resolution and Conduct

The SOSNA Library agrees to provide prompt and fair resolution to all disputes that may occur in the workplace. This policy covers all claims of dispute including volunteer dismissal and is in accordance with terms of employment. Any volunteer who feels they have been discriminated against, treated unfairly or has a complaint arising from volunteer activities has a right to a formal conflict resolution procedure. No volunteer will experience harassment or intimidation from filing such a complaint.

1. Volunteers are responsible for promptly reporting any problems or concerns that are related to employment and present them in accordance with established guidelines.
2. Disputes will be handled by all parties in a good faith effort to resolve the problem by open discussion and communication.
3. If the conflict is not satisfactorily resolved, the volunteer may bring the dispute before the SOSNA volunteer board of directors.
4. The board may render a decision at this point after investigation and attempted resolution - this decision may result in termination of the volunteer's services.

Terms for Dismissal

1. Gross negligence and inconsiderate behavior while performing library duties; either against a coworker, patron or the organization.
2. Use of illegal drugs or alcohol while on duty.
3. Possession of a weapon on library premises.
4. Willful or careless damage of library property; violation of established safety/fire codes.
5. Interfering with the operation of the library or performance of a coworker; threatening or intimidating patrons or coworkers.
6. Habitual absence without prior arrangement with a supervisor.

Appendix F. Model Injury Report

SOSNA Library

Volunteer's First Report of Injury

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete the information below as soon as possible after an accident/incident occurs. Every accident/incident, even if it appears minor or irrelevant, occurring to a volunteer during **working hours** must be reported on this form.

Name of injured: _____ Social Security Number: _____

Address of injured: _____

Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Marital Status: _____ Home Phone Number: _____

Location of incident: _____ Date of incident: _____

Day of week: _____ Hour of day: _____ (am/pm) Hour volunteer reported for duty: _____

When was a supervisor first notified of accident/incident? Date: _____ Hour: _____ (am/pm)

Name of supervisor: _____

Describe in full detail how the accident/incident occurred:

What action was taken since the accident/incident:

Signature of employee: _____ Date: _____

Signature of supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Appendix G. Model Brochure

[On next page, folds into thirds]

Appendix H. Subject Bibliography

The following materials are relevant to the topic of volunteers in libraries. Although some of the publications may not be available at your library, an interlibrary loan service can be used to obtain them. It is recommended and efficient to ask a librarian if you need help locating information. All Web addresses (underlined) were online as of March 8, 2000.

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