

# Evaluating Your Organization from a Volunteer's Point of View

BY SUSAN J. ELLIS

**W**hat do volunteers experience in your organization as they do their work? Do you know? It is useful to be aware of the way volunteers are treated because your success in recruiting and retaining the best volunteers depends on the support you give them.

One interesting self-analysis exercise is to do a “mental walk-through” of the kinds of issues that might arise from volunteer participation. If you are starting a new volunteer program or project, you might consider this a necessary step in answering the question “Are we ready for volunteers?” Use the form on the next page to see if you give volunteers—and prospective volunteers—the right kind of response.

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Nonprofit World • Volume 18, Number 1 January/February 2000  
Published by the Society for Nonprofit Organizations  
6314 Odana Road, Suite 1, Madison, WI 53719 • (608) 274-9777

► For each of the numbered situations below, evaluate your organization's response to volunteers. None of these situations is unusual. Are you prepared?

		<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
		<b>What would happen?</b>	<b>OR</b> If you don't know, how will you find out?	<b>How could this response to volunteers be improved?</b>
<b>1</b>	A prospective volunteer telephones the switchboard to ask about volunteering.			
<b>2</b>	Someone comes to the reception desk on the day of his or her interview.			
<b>3</b>	A volunteer arrives for his or her first day on the job.			
<b>4</b>	A volunteer wants to store a briefcase while working on another floor or in another office.			
<b>5</b>	A volunteer needs some work space to spread out papers.			
<b>6</b>	A volunteer needs a red pen.			
<b>7</b>	A volunteer is handling an assignment in the field and calls in with a question, but his or her regular supervisor is out for the day.			
<b>8</b>	A volunteer wants to make a suggestion about a new way to help a client.			
<b>9</b>	A volunteer does something wrong.			
<b>10</b>	A volunteer does something wonderful.			
<b>11</b>	A volunteer sprains an ankle carrying a chair into the conference room.			
<b>12</b>	A volunteer finishes a work assignment and has two hours left on his or her shift.			
<b>13</b>	A volunteer is told something is too "confidential" for him or her to hear.			
<b>14</b>	A volunteer reaches the milestone of his or her first year anniversary of service to the organization.			
<b>15</b>	An employee acts discourteously to a volunteer.			