COLLECTIONS
VOLUNTEERS

HOW TO MANAGE THEM
JENNY WOODS

• Past President /current Board Member of American Association for Museum Volunteers

• 20+ years experience working with volunteers in museums

• Has a secret crush on collections management work, but knows it would never work out between us

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TODAY’S AGENDA

• Framework of a volunteer program
• Volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition
• Collections et. al. specific considerations
• Resources
• Q and A
POLLS
FRAMEWORK OF A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

What do volunteers do?

- Position Descriptions
- Difference between a volunteer and an intern
FRAMEWORK OF A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

What policies and procedures should volunteers know?

- Volunteer handbook
- Volunteer orientation
- Position specific training
FRAMEWORK OF A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Who is supervising the volunteers?

- Why supervising volunteers is different from supervising staff
- Training for staff
- When volunteers supervise fellow volunteers
FRAMEWORK OF A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

What is the process when things go wrong?

• Discipline and dismissal policy
• Conflict of interest policy
FRAMEWORK OF A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

What sort of volunteer data/record keeping should you do?

- Contact info, demographics
- Tracking service hours & years
- Volunteer management software?
FRAMEWORK OF A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

How are DEAI principles included in this framework?

- Barriers to volunteering
- DEAI training for volunteers
VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Some ideas:

- Advertise in local publications, community centers, neighborhood newsletters, Nextdoor
- Partner with other local orgs/museums to share recruitment leads
- Word of mouth, bring a friend events
- Signage about volunteering at your museum

And definitely:

- Have a simple application, and do an interview before placement
VOLUNTEER RETENTION

- Continuing education opportunities
- Communication
- Access to staff or subject experts
- Perks
- Treated as a valued team member
VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

EVERYDAY SIMPLE RECOGNITION

ONCE A YEAR BIG RECOGNITION

AWARDS FOR MILESTONE HOURS OR YEARS

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK – 3RD WEEK OF APRIL
COLLECTIONS SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

• What do collections volunteers do?
  • Sometimes everything!
  • Data entry
  • Materials classification
  • Archive research
  • Handling objects
COLLECTIONS SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Risk Management and Liability
  - Museum policies, insurance policies and loan agreements
  - Plans in place to mitigate risk
  - Background checks
COLLECTIONS SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Confidentiality
- Conflicts of interest
COLLECTIONS SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

• Skilled volunteers
• Quality of the work
• Supervisory duties
RESOURCES

- American Association for Museum Volunteers: AAMV.org
  - AAMV’s DEAI Toolkit
  - AAMV’s Volunteer Recruitment, Retention and Recognition: 60 ideas in 60 minutes
- American Alliance of Museums:
  - Designing a Museum Volunteer Program Toolkit: www.aam-us.org/programs/toolkits/designing-a-museum-volunteer-program/
- Volunteer Pro: Volpro.net
- Points of Light: Pointsoflight.org
Q AND A