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Implementation of Community Care Network of Nichols’ Volunteer Management Plan

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Introduction

Community Care Network of Nichols (CCNN) is a grassroots 501c3, created to help the elderly, disabled, and chronically ill to be able to stay in their homes for as long as possible. In order to accomplish this, CCNN provides four (4) direct services: friendly visits, reassuring phone calls, transportation services, and information and referral services to area human service agencies. These services and programs provided through CCNN are accomplished by over 100 volunteers. However, CCNN has been challenged with managing this workforce. In 2015, a volunteer management plan was developed for CCNN to assist with this challenge. The focus of my capstone has been developing volunteer management tools outlined in the plan, along with assisting CCNN with their implementation of this plan.

Approach

- Design & Implement Volunteer Assessment Form
- Design & Implement Volunteer Utilization Spreadsheet
- Redesign Volunteer Transporter Timesheet & Retrain Transporters
- Train CCNN staff using these new tools.
- Host Meetings for Committee Chairs
  - Recruiting New Volunteers
  - Engaging CCNN Clients and Program Recipients
  - Establishing Volunteer Recognition Plan
- Volunteer Committee Members
- Overall Organizational Volunteers

Volunteer Assessment Form

- Designed based on past experiences with CCNN volunteers.
- Allows the interviewer to properly gauge the appropriate activities, based on the volunteer’s desires, on which activities to assign and train the new volunteers (see Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013).

Volunteer Utilization Spreadsheet

- Designed to help alleviate underutilization and/or burnout of volunteers.
- This spreadsheet used by the CCNN Client Services Coordinator will help manage the utilization of the organization’s volunteers, regardless of the activities or frequency (see Handy & Srinivasan, 2005).

Redesigned Volunteer Transporter Timesheet & Trainings

- Designed to ensure that the information being collected by the volunteers captures necessary data for the various funders that support CCNN’s Transportation Program.
- Retrainings were conducted in small group settings (see Jamison, 2003).

Brainstorming with Committee Chairs

- To involve them in recruiting new volunteers and engaging clients/program recipients to help ensure that CCNN is both responsive and responsible to those it serves.
- To recognize and show appreciation to volunteers throughout the year, along with honoring volunteers at CCNN’s Annual Volunteer Appreciation reception (see Farmer & Fedor, 1999).

Conclusions

Through the implementation of Community Care Network of Nichols volunteer management plan, CCNN can more efficiently coordinate volunteer efforts, hold itself accountable and responsive to its stakeholders, while maintaining a dedicated workforce to assist in accomplishing its mission.

Keeping the timesheet simple. It was critical to design the Volunteer Transport Timesheet to capture the necessary information for reporting to funders, while not overwhelming the volunteer. To better manage this, the first draft of the timesheet was handed out to a couple of volunteers to use and report back problems. The timesheet went through three revisions before the current version. It will need further adjustments in the future. However, CCNN now has a timesheet that captures data for all of the funders for the transportation program.

Volunteer assessments pose challenges. Reassessing current volunteers seemed fruitless, as many are content to continue to serve as they have in the past. With 100 volunteers, one-on-one meetings will take time. However, CCNN is committed to ensuring volunteers have a positive, productive experience and therefore, is establishing a schedule to make rounds to every volunteer on an ongoing basis. This process will foster open communication, opportunity for volunteers to adjust their service to match their current abilities, and the assessment tool will also be adjusted to ensure it is responsive to the changing needs of the organization and those it serves.

Training new staff. Training the new Client Service Coordinator happened much later in the project than first projected; however, the coordinator quickly settled into the organization and was able to start working with the new tools almost immediately.

Volunteer participation. Committee chairs became enthusiastically involved in the brainstorming session. The session, intended to last an hour, continued for almost two hours. The group insisted on sharing their notes with the full board of directors.

Volunteer management is a process. CCNN continues to develop, use, and evaluate the elements of this process to streamline and enhance its outcomes.

Community Care Network of Nichols now has the tools necessary to ensure it can engage, maintain, and be responsive to its vital volunteer workforce.

Bibliography


