

Enabling • What volunteers should expect of staff

Enabling functions

1. Transmit the organization's values.
2. Engage volunteers in the meaning of your organization.
3. Respect and use the skills, expertise, experience and insights of volunteers.
4. Provide direction and resources, remove barriers and help develop skills.
5. Articulate expectations and clarify roles and relationships.
6. Communicate (which includes helping people transform information into knowledge and learning).
7. Encourage people to question organizational assumptions and ask strategic questions.
8. Ensure quality decision-making.
9. Anticipate conflicts and facilitate resolution.
10. Engage volunteers in process as well as tasks.
11. Encourage volunteers to use their power, practice their authority, and accept their responsibility.
12. Model behavior.
13. Coach people to succeed.
14. Manage.
16. Enhance attrition.
17. Monitor, evaluate, and enhance enabling.

Enablers have the right attitude. Enablers:

- respect and trust others;
- are trustworthy themselves;
- are comfortable with diversity and complexity;
- welcome divergent opinions;
- are flexible and comfortable with change;
- commit to process as well as outcome;
- appreciate conversation and disagreement;
- share responsibility for success;
- acknowledge responsibility for failure;
- balance personal ego with egos of others ;
- persevere; and,
- are patient.

Enablers possess essential skills. Enablers are:

- organizational development specialists
- proficient teachers and learners
- effective communicators (listening, informing and helping to transform information into knowledge);
- critical thinkers (anticipating problems, identifying solutions, and redirecting volunteer energies);
- strategists (analyzing situations, identifying barriers and opportunities, capitalizing on strengths, and ensuring action and results);
- comfortable with conflict and resolve conflict through shared power with as many individuals as possible; and
- effective motivators and can focus and manage people well.