

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS

Use this resource to adapt a set of 10–12 questions for conducting informational interviews to learn more about your organization’s volunteer efforts. The questions you use will depend on who you are interviewing. You might need to create different question sets for each interview. For example, if you are interviewing a long-term volunteer, she might not be able to say much about the organization’s funding history. You can reword, delete, or add items to create an effective set of questions.

WHAT NOT TO ASK

Interviewing can be a sensitive activity, and it’s possible that certain questions can be perceived as embarrassing or offensive. Since this is an informational interview, you probably won’t run into any concerns, and the questions below are written in neutral language. When writing your own questions (and asking probing questions during your interview), avoid questions that come across as personal or that relate to personnel issues. Put thought and care into writing your questions and if you have concerns, consult your supervisor on questions that might not be appropriate to ask in your organizational culture.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

History. How long have you had a volunteer program? Why was it established? Why did it end (if applicable)? How do people in the organization feel about using volunteers? What do you think is important for me to know about the history of volunteers in your organization?

Roles & characteristics. What are the different roles your organization asks volunteers to fill? What are the characteristics of a “successful volunteer” here? How do volunteers interact with other staff? How are volunteers integrated into the regular work of your organization?

Outreach/marketing. What strategies do you use to increase the visibility and opportunities of your volunteer program? Where have you recruited volunteers in the past? What recruitment strategies have you used? What did and did not work? What strategies do you recommend in moving forward?

Assets. What resources are available for the volunteer program (people, money, space, office equipment)? What expenses can volunteers be reimbursed for? Who supervises volunteers in this organization? What other staff works with volunteers?

Support structures. Does the organization have policies and procedures for using volunteers? Are there staff members whose responsibilities include managing volunteers? How are volunteers currently screened? How are they monitored and how are their activities tracked? Can you describe how volunteers are trained and supported? How is input collected from volunteers, staff, clients, and other stakeholders about the volunteer program? How has this input been used?

Successes. What have volunteers helped to achieve in this organization? What factors have helped to keep volunteers motivated and successful? Are there stories of volunteer successes that I should hear?

Challenges. What are the main challenges the organization has experienced related to volunteers? What resources are lacking or missing? What else should I know to prevent similar challenges in moving forward?