

Employee Engagement Workbook Series

Business Volunteers for the Arts®

This series of workbooks centers on employee engagement, or using the arts to foster and improve the work environment in businesses.

This series will help arts groups gain inspiration and practical tips to guide the creation and growth of employee engagement in local communities.



About Americans for the Arts Business Volunteers for the Arts®: Employee Engagement

Business Volunteers for the Arts® (BVA), a national skills-based management consulting program created in 1975, has been overseen by Americans for the Arts since 2005. We have seen a multitude of changes in the corporate volunteer environment, with shifting interests from both the employees who volunteer and the businesses in which they work. As a response to this shift, the Americans for the Arts Business Volunteer for the Arts® (BVA) Network now includes employee engagement resources on programs such as virtual volunteering, corporate arts challenges, skills-based volunteering, arts-based training programs, consultant events, mentoring, hackathon events, team-based volunteering, and more. This workbook focuses on Business Volunteers for the Arts®, the centerpiece of our employee engagement work. Find out more at www.AmericansForTheArts.org/BVA.

Americans for the Arts recognizes that engaging business professionals and employees through the arts is key to fostering a desirable work environment, increasing efficiency and morale, and building the competitive advantage of a business. Employees can be engaged through the arts in a number of ways, and Americans for the Arts serves as a resource, guide, and hub for all the information needed to start, sustain, or transform a successful employee engagement program.

About Business Volunteers for the Arts® Programs

This workbook series focuses on one of the many ways arts organizations can work with businesses: skills-based volunteering. The Business Volunteers for the Arts® (BVA) program, a pro bono consulting program, operates in several cities around the United States. The program is overseen nationally by Americans for the Arts.

Since its founding in 1975 by the Arts & Business Council Inc., the BVA program has grown and adapted to serve the changing needs of both the arts and business communities. Over its 40-year history, the BVA program has proven to be a dynamic and effective model for diverse sizes and types of communities. Since the program's inception, nearly 25,000 business volunteers have served more than 26,000 arts groups across the United States.

About This Workbook

This guide is designed to assist new Business Volunteers for the Arts® (BVA) program managers by orienting them to all of the options and full potential of the program, as well as delineating best practices in each of the program elements. It contains information on creating a BVA program, and is accompanied by a number of supplemental materials, including case studies from four different BVAs across the country.

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PROGRAM BASICS

Business Volunteers for the Arts® (BVA) is a proven program with a 40-year track record of engaging business professionals in the arts. It is based on the premise that business people have more to give than just money, and that by providing opportunities for those who are so inclined, both the nonprofit and for profit parties involved benefit from the exchange. To foster more of these partnerships, Americans for the Arts launched the **pARTnership Movement**, a campaign designed to reach business leaders with the message that partnering with the arts can build their competitive advantage.

BVA programs across the country find and recruit business professionals who are interested in volunteering their skills with arts organizations. In any given community, the BVA connects those professionals willing to donate their time with arts organizations looking for pro bono assistance from business professionals.

The BVA program provides a range of leadership development opportunities for business volunteers, increases a sense of community connection for the volunteer, and provides resources to arts groups that would ordinarily be out of reach. The Arts + Business Council of Greater Philadelphia conducted a study about the effect of BVA volunteering on business people, and found that after becoming BVA volunteers, business people became more engaged in the arts in the following ways:

- 75 percent increased their financial support to arts and cultural organizations up to \$1,000, with 29 percent giving more than \$1,000
- 56 percent increased their frequency of attendance at arts and cultural events
- 68 percent indicated they were more aware of the importance of arts and culture organizations to the local economy
- 57 percent believed more emphatically that a stronger arts and culture community makes a stronger business community

In the past, BVA has also served as the entry point for a deeper relationship between volunteers and arts organizations. It is not uncommon for volunteers to transition from their role in the program to board member, indicating that such an entry point is needed and that this program has a place in the relationship development continuum.

The BVA program provides an opportunity for the organization facilitating the program to connect with the business community for the benefit of the arts community at large.

By encouraging employees to participate in the Business Volunteers for the Arts® program, businesses have the opportunity to fulfill their corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals, in addition to the increasing demands from employees for social engagement and volunteer opportunities. BVA programs provide leadership training, skills-building opportunities, quality volunteer experiences, and positive visibility for the company in the community.

WORKING WITH AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS

Americans for the Arts provides research, resources, and best practices for the BVA network. Being a part of the BVA network provides opportunities to share ideas, learn from others, express concerns, address major policy issues, and generally become re-energized by colleagues in the group.

In order to start a BVA, an organization/person must have an [organizational/individual membership with Americans for the Arts](#), through which it/he or she receives a multitude of benefits that can assist in working with the private sector. Americans for the Arts is eager to help your new BVA succeed. As a BVA program, Americans for the Arts asks that you:

- **Sign a memo of agreement with Americans for the Arts:** In order to use the name, logo, and materials and receive assistance in all start-up phases, a letter of agreement delineates parameters within which all organizations that operate BVAs are expected to maintain the integrity of the program. The sponsoring agency must sign this agreement with Americans for the Arts.
- **Include a credit line in all media:** An identification line must be incorporated in all printed and electronic media that reads: (name of BVA program) is a member of [Americans for the Arts](#).
- **Promote your activities through our communication channels:** Information about your activities and programs should be submitted for use in our [arts and business e-newsletter](#), the [pARTnership Movement news section](#), and in the [BVA Tools & Resources](#) section of the Americans for the Arts website.
- **Participate in our professional development opportunities:** Whenever possible, participate in the Americans for the Arts Annual Convention, related webinars, and conference calls.
- **Participate in leadership opportunities:** Submit nominations, as appropriate, for [The BCA 10: Best Businesses Partnering with the Arts in America](#), Americans for the Arts' annual gala recognizing businesses for their exceptional support of the arts. Also, submit potential recruits for the [BCA Executive Board](#) and [Private Sector Council](#).

Business Volunteers for the Arts® is a registered service mark available only to licensed program partners, and most of the written materials provided by the Americans for the Arts are under copyright. All materials are to be used only by program partners in conjunction with the BVA program. If you would like to receive permission to use the Business Volunteers for the Arts® servicemark and logo, please contact Americans for the Arts at privatesector@artsusa.org.

PLANNING

Sample Timeline of BVA Pilot Year

Months 1-3

- Volunteer Solicitation and Selection
- Arts Organization Recruitment
- Volunteer Orientation
- Arts Organization Orientation

Months 4-5

- Match Volunteers and Arts Organizations
- Ongoing Recruitment, Interviews, and Placement

Months 6-8

- Volunteer Project Evaluation and Progress Reports
- Ongoing Recruitment, Interviews, and Placement

Months 9-11

- Second Volunteer Orientation
- Matching New Volunteers and Arts Organizations
- Ongoing Project Evaluation

Month 12

- End-of-Year Final Reporting
- Survey Arts Organizations and Volunteers

There are five key, sequential steps to address in your planning process: 1) completing a feasibility study, 2) establishing business partners, 3) developing a leadership structure, 4) raising funding, and 5) effectively marketing the program. Carefully consider each component to ensure a successful BVA program. As always, Americans for the Arts is available for program guidance and assistance in any of these areas.

Feasibility Study

A feasibility study helps you determine if a BVA program is right for your community. Americans for the Arts has developed a thorough guide for performing a feasibility study, which can be found in the supplemental materials, but the key points are summarized below:

Adequate Market—Is there an adequate market for this program? Are there a sufficient number of nonprofit arts groups that will use BVA to sustain the program?

Need—Do the arts organizations want the program?

Competition—What types of technical assistance services are already available?

Business Access—Do the arts groups need improved access to the business community?

Business Leadership—Is there potential leadership for BVA?

Business Interest—Is there a sufficient pool of business expertise to draw upon to meet the requests for assistance?

Staff—Is there a commitment to hiring a qualified administrator to manage the BVA program?

Business Partners

Once you've determined a community can support a BVA program, your next steps include setting it up, including developing business partnerships, forming a steering committee, and initiating fundraising.

An essential part of building a foundation for your BVA program is developing partnerships with a core group of businesses. Core members of this group serve the purpose of encouraging their employees to participate as “early adopters” of BVA, or businesses who would be interested in supporting the BVA program itself financially or with in-kind donations of meeting space or other benefits. Without such partners, you may not experience the launch, growth, or survival of your BVA program.

When establishing a funding partnership with a corporation, you must consider the needs of the business as well as your own. With that in mind, it is best to design your partnership together. The first step is gaining access to the right business partner,

something your board may be able to help with. Once you have established a principal contact, you will need to work with him or her in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages.

Look at what your program can offer and then seek to apply those offerings to the needs of the business. You must prove to the business representatives that engaging in a partnership with a BVA program will benefit them and their employees. For instance, studies have shown that businesses that offer opportunities for their employees to become engaged with volunteer programs are more likely to:

1. Attract top candidates
2. Retain outstanding staff
3. Increase employee morale

In other words, starting a partnership with a BVA program makes good business sense. Here are some examples of projects that businesses or business leaders may be interested in funding, hosting, or organizing:

Volunteer Orientation Program

Corporations can host the training, duplicate the materials, provide direct cash support, or other related activities.

Volunteer Graduation Reception

A sponsor might be identified to host the entire event including invitations, postage, service, food, and beverages.

E-blast

A simple monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly e-newsletter can cover BVA volunteer placements, lists of new volunteers, contributor acknowledgments, special events, board news, and volunteer activity. The e-newsletter can be sponsored by one company or each issue can have a different sponsor.

Offices

Businesses whose employees are involved in the program may be approached to provide space that can be either donated or subsidized.

Arts Orientation Program

Businesses can host and provide hospitality. They can also directly sponsor the event, covering staff time and costs such as printing and postage.

Arts Management Workshops

Space, speakers, hospitality, printing, and covering staff costs and direct expenses are all possibilities.

Special Volunteer Teams/Task Forces

Projects involving a team of employees from one company working on an event have generated special grants. Support can include in-kind printing, space donation, graphic design services, postage, and hospitality. Direct cash gifts are also possible.

Special Events

Funders like special events where their name is prominent and they can bring officers and customers of the company. The event could be part of a regular luncheon series or an annual gala event.

Regular Awards Events

Restaurants or hotels are good sponsors for these awards shows, especially if they are willing to contribute a dinner or weekend guest package for a volunteer as a reward.

Roundtables

Informal opportunities for volunteers and arts groups to meet, share ideas and concerns, and become acquainted have been successful BVA projects. A company sponsor could host these or provide cash to cover organizing expenses.

Leadership

While a BVA program needs a dedicated staff member to ensure success, another necessary component is program leadership. A BVA steering committee is the policy-making body for your BVA program. It may be your organization's board of directors, a subcommittee of that body, or an ad hoc committee of stakeholders. It may also include former and current BVA volunteers. Regardless of its legal status, the steering committee should represent a cross-section of sectors including business, arts and culture, government, and other nonprofits.

A steering committee is an effective way to solicit advice from the business community that the BVA program is attempting to reach. The steering committee can provide guidance in:

- Promotion of the program
- In-kind donations
- Financial support
- Recruitment
- Public relations
- Fundraising
- Hosting events or meetings

Funding

One of the most important tasks for a BVA program director is fundraising through any of the funding sources listed on the following page.

Your board or steering committee should be involved in helping you fundraise. Business members of your board should be encouraged to bring support from their companies annually, and may also be instrumental in encouraging businesses to provide volunteers. These expectations should be clearly expressed at the introductory meeting prior to joining the board.

Examples of Funding Sources

Americans for the Arts does not provide grants or financial support, nor does it offer any restrictions on how you raise financial support. Here are just a few examples that have worked for other BVA programs:

Business: Business contributions are the most common source of support, and usually the largest percentage of income, for many of the reasons cited previously. Opportunities for business funding include buying tables at BVA fundraising events, sponsorship of various initiatives, and business fees for the training and placement of volunteers.

Government: Government agencies (state, regional, and local) have been instrumental in a number of start-up and on-going funding initiatives. Support usually comes from technical assistance budgets, which tend to be small.

Foundations: When approaching foundations, it is important to look for funders that are focused on giving money to one of the many areas of interest that BVA programs support. For instance, some foundations are interested in volunteerism, improving arts management, fostering greater partnerships between the private and nonprofit sectors, and technical assistance. Foundations may also have many other niche interests that can apply to BVA programs. For instance, Boston's BVA program had success securing funding from a foundation that was interested in engaging Baby Boomer retirees.

Individuals: Some program partners have initiated modest individual membership fees that bring in several thousand a year. These fees cover administrative costs that come with training BVA volunteers, the matching process, and evaluation. Some BVA programs have "friends of" groups and other socially-oriented membership programs that not only pay dues, but help raise funds through special events.

Earned Income: Earned income from such areas as orientation or training fees, publications, interest, fees for special services, event attendance, and other sources is possible. Educational programs such as seminars, conferences, workshops, forums, and other types of educational programs have brought in modest income for a number of program partners.

Fees: Fees can be charged for certain BVA program services to generate revenue for the program. Some BVA programs have membership fees for volunteer participation, overall membership programs for the community, a fee for processing the application from an arts group, special training and educational programs, and other services.

Special Events: A number of program partners sponsor arts and business recognition events, usually luncheons, during which awards are given for outstanding service to the arts by individuals, arts organizations, and businesses. Other types of benefits are arts showcases, employee talent shows, and gala dinners around a community event.

Marketing

You may want to create a comprehensive webpage that outlines the mission, vision, and scope of your BVA program. The BVA program's webpage should include all the basic information, including history, an overview of how it functions, and its importance in the community.

You may also choose to include the following:

- Online applications for interested volunteers, businesses, and organizations
- A matching portal for volunteers and arts projects
- An online donation function
- A calendar of upcoming events and opportunities
- Information about the program's connection to Americans for the Arts
- Volunteer training materials

People should be able to access all the information they need—or a way to get the information they need—by visiting this site. We encourage you to [visit the websites of other BVA programs](#) for tips and ideas.

You may also choose to have promotional materials in hard-copy describing the BVA program for prospective volunteers, arts groups, and contributors. While the exact format may vary (brochure, postcard, leave-behind) a hard-copy piece can be useful when visiting businesses, alumni clubs, chambers, and other parties that may be interested in getting involved with the BVA program.

You can view an example of a promotional brochure from the Arts + Business Council of Greater Philadelphia in the supplemental materials.

It is best practice to announce the start of the BVA program publicly. You can use press coverage, a special event, a written announcement, or another form of promotion such as:

- A press release to publicize the program to the community
- An informational session to introduce BVA to the community
- A press conference to announce the program to the community

IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM

Recruiting Volunteers

The recruitment and selection of volunteers for the BVA program is one of your most important duties as a program manager. While volunteers involved in a BVA program are “volunteering” in the traditional sense of donating their time for a good cause, they have the distinction of using their professional skills for the projects. This means that each volunteer must have the appropriate level of expertise for a particular project, whether it’s a marketing executive assisting with a promotions plan for a theater or a financial expert helping a small community arts organization balance its budget. Even if you are running a well-established BVA, you will want to evaluate and update your volunteer recruitment strategy regularly to reflect the changing needs of your volunteers and participating arts organizations.

Before launching your BVA program, it is best to assess the needs of both the arts organizations requesting volunteers and the businesses supplying them, as well as the employees themselves. Make the effort to reach out to groups including: trade associations that provide the target skill sets that are most requested; businesses whose CSR goals match the BVA program and participating arts organizations; and retirees from the business world.

Recruitment Strategy Tips

List volunteer opportunities on your website, social media, and other volunteer websites. After you have discerned what kinds of volunteers are most needed by your local arts community, post the information on websites that are distributed to the kinds of volunteers that you want to attract, such as VolunteerMatch.org and Idealist.org. Corporate HR departments may also be willing to post volunteer opportunities, or you may consider creating an online portal that matches volunteers with projects, like the Arts & Business Council of New York. Each BVA, but not the volunteer opportunities it provides, will also be listed on the Americans for the Arts website.

Work with your steering committee. If you choose to create a steering committee, the members in the business sector should play a large role in developing the strategy for volunteer recruitment through personal and professional contacts. You can ask committee members to do the following:

- Personally contact possible candidates about the opportunity
- Arrange for an article in their company e-blast
- Schedule an on-site meeting to explain the program to interested employees
- Send a personal memo to mid- to upper-level professional contacts about the BVA program and ask for assistance in establishing a connection with their company’s HR department

- **Reach out to retired workers.** With more time to give and strong experience, the Baby Boomer generation is eager to put their years of professional experience to use. Many companies have retiree clubs that can be a vehicle for recruitment, and when working with professional associations, stress that retired members are encouraged to participate.
- **Reach out to arts organizations and their networks in your area.** Inform arts groups who may participate in your program that you are beginning your recruitment process.
- **Actively seek the involvement of a diverse volunteer pool.** Approach alumni and professional associations or social groups that represent the kind of diversity that you want to have represented in your volunteers—by management discipline, race, gender, etc. Some companies also have special employee clubs or affinity groups which can be a good vehicle for recruitment.
- **Target a variety of companies and professions.** It is best practice to reach out to a mix of industries to avoid having a surplus of professionals with skills in a defined area. The last thing you want is to have too many volunteers with marketing skills and not enough arts organizations in which to place them.
- **Ask your local media to run a news story about the opportunity to become a BVA volunteer.** Having someone from the media sector on your steering committee may help with this.
- **Ask to make presentations at chamber of commerce meetings, service club luncheons, community board meetings, and professional organizations.** Ask those in your network to support recruitment efforts on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Please view the supplemental materials to see sample volunteer applications from the BVAs at Arizona Citizens for the Arts, the Greater Hartford Arts Council, and the Arts & Business Council of New York.

Interviewing and Selecting Volunteers

Each volunteer applicant to the BVA program is interviewed by the BVA manager before participating in projects that require a special placement. The interview is best as an informal conversation to help you get a sense of the potential volunteer, his or her personality, preferences, skill sets, goals, working style, and other qualities that will influence his or her work with an arts organization. Keep notes from these meetings for your own reference in the matching process. This meeting also sets the tone for your involvement with the matches, and helps to establish you as a resource for the volunteer, as well as an organization to return to for other employee engagement opportunities.

According to past BVA volunteers, the involvement of the BVA manager from the beginning of the application and assessment process through to project completion is one reason why the program is attractive to business people. The manager fills an important role in helping to facilitate the relationship between the volunteer and the arts organization staff.

Most potential volunteers will be eligible for placement assuming the right kind of project presents itself, but occasionally you will encounter someone who does not seem like a good fit for the program. Some BVA managers may look for other ways to engage

Suggested Interview Questions

- Why do you wish to be a BVA volunteer?
- What type(s) of art interests you most and why?
- Do you have a personal connection to art?
- What skills would you like to share with an arts organization?
- What do you hope to accomplish through the BVA program?

an interested but inappropriate candidate, while others choose not to extend beyond the immediate offerings of the BVA program. One option is to place the person on a project with a more seasoned volunteer who can supervise him or her, or another option is to engage the person as a volunteer for your organization so you can assess his or her skills prior to placement with an arts organization.

Most BVA program directors require candidates to have at least three to five years of professional work experience. Also, good volunteers tend to have a demonstrated interest in the arts and the time to invest fully in volunteer projects which will vary in the time commitment required.

See a full list of volunteer interview questions from the BVA at the Greater Hartford Arts Council in the supplemental documents portion of this workbook.

Volunteer Orientation

It is recommended that each BVA program provide group orientations for all new volunteers. The number of times you hold orientations per year depends on the number of volunteers you have, and whether or not you accept them on a rolling basis. The standard suggestion is to hold quarterly orientations, though you may consider having them as often as every month or as infrequently as once or twice a year.

Some organizations choose not to hold formal, in-person orientations. Instead, they direct individual volunteers to a series of self-paced, online trainings that take the volunteer through the basics of nonprofits, as well as what is expected of the volunteers in the program. You can access standard BVA volunteer training videos in the supplemental documents portion of this workbook.

The orientation's main goal is to define nonprofit governance, financial and legal requirements, fundraising, audience and marketing considerations, and strategic priorities.

Some program partners conduct the orientation program over one afternoon, others a weekday evening and a Saturday session, and others five weekly two-hour sessions after working hours. The format and frequency of these orientations is flexible, but all the materials should be covered.

Formats may include group participation, role playing, video presentations, speakers, and group exercises. Speakers may be experienced arts managers from major institutions, veteran BVA volunteers, government officials, representatives of major arts organizations, consultants, or business experts who work closely with nonprofits.

It is helpful for each participant to receive a packet of materials, which may include the agenda for the day, a class roster (with names, titles, and companies of attendees), brief bios of speakers, PowerPoint presentations, a glossary of terms, a list of expectations for the program, and whatever else you deem appropriate. The materials and emphasis (e.g. marketing, finance, technology) may differ according to the focus area of the volunteer/group of volunteers attending the orientation.

Should you choose to hold in-person orientations, you can find a sample orientation

program outline and agenda from the Arts + Business Council of Greater Philadelphia in the supplemental materials.

Special Volunteer Activities

Volunteers are often motivated to participate in the BVA program in order to meet other people who share an interest in the arts. Businesses often encourage employees to involve themselves in pro bono work in order to fulfill a desire to “do good” in the community, which can have the effect of increasing satisfaction with their daily work. People who are more engaged in the community make for happier employees, so often employers are more likely to encourage participation in BVA if there are opportunities to engage with other volunteers in special activities. Many BVA program partners create special programs, which may include:

- Sharing of experiences during informal happy hours or coffee meetings
- Social activities such as behind-the-scenes arts experiences, discounted tickets, or a “BVA Bag” for volunteers with brochures, special ticket offers, and more
- Online networking opportunities, like a LinkedIn group, Facebook page, Google group, or other online forum
- “Art After Hours” events that begin with visiting an arts event and end with a post-event discussion with the artists and BVA volunteers
- Graduation events for a class of volunteers, which are a cause for celebration and can generate news coverage and further introduce the program to the community, could take the form of a luncheon to an evening cocktail party
- Opportunities for volunteers to continue engagement by joining the board of an arts nonprofit

Recruiting Arts Organizations

Recruiting arts organizations to submit volunteer project proposals may seem like the easiest part of operating a BVA—what nonprofit would turn down the chance to host a pro bono expert to push its work forward? However, it’s a much more involved task than first meets the eye. BVA managers need to be clear with arts organizations that project proposals for volunteers have to be explicit and clear in their scope, manageable in the level of work being asked of the volunteer, and rewarding enough to satisfy the reasons a business person is volunteering in the first place. Interest is usually the easy part—it’s making sure arts organizations identify a problem or area with which they need help, and develop a distinct project that is clearly articulated for a business volunteer.

Get the Word Out

- Generate publicity in the press through articles in the local paper, notices in arts council and organization newsletters, e-blasts, or other publications
- Create a social media campaign, encourage stakeholder organizations to post relevant links on Facebook, etc., and use campaign hashtags on Twitter and Instagram
- Make a presentation at meetings and conferences involving the arts community, or at your local chamber of commerce or local businesses that might be interested in

involving their employees

- Make sure the BVA manager is a leading member of the arts community with a lot of contacts in the sector, and is perhaps also involved in a group such as the local chamber of commerce
- Make personal phone calls to organizations that might be interested
- Send information through newsletters, mailing, advertisements, and e-mails
- Profile successful volunteer projects in your newsletters and blogs, and interview arts organizations that have benefited from the program

Arts Organization Applications

Applications should include the following materials:

- Mission statement of the organization
- A narrative description of the project, if the group already has one in mind for the BVA program
- A list of board members with business and community affiliations
- Staff list with titles and phone numbers
- Current organizational budget
- Recent organizational brochure, sample press release, programs, and reviews
- Long-range strategic plan, if available
- IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter
- Organization's bylaws
- Most recent financial statement or audit
- Articles of Incorporation

Please view the supplemental materials to see sample arts organization applications from the BVAs at Arizona Citizens for the Arts, the Greater Hartford Arts Council, and the Arts & Business Council of New York.

On-Site Interview

The next step in the process of accepting arts organizations is the on-site interview. BVA program staff should meet with the key people who will be working with the volunteer, with one person designated as the chief liaison. This meeting should occur at the arts organization's site if possible.

The object of the assessment meeting is to identify the right project for the arts organization to put forth to potential BVA volunteers, and to gather information that volunteers will need to know about the status and operation of the organization in order to complete the project effectively. Try to get the arts organization to be as specific as possible in defining a project.

There may be times when you simply cannot help. Sometimes the project timeline is too short, it is too crisis-oriented, or it is too time intensive. Other times the organization is not at the right stage to work with a pro bono consultant, but can benefit from other services offered by your organization or other local resources. Having technical

Arts organizations must know how to:

- Develop appropriate projects for business consultants
- Work with and manage volunteers
- Maintain the necessary level of contact throughout the duration of the project
- Follow-through to complete the project in a way that benefits the organization and values the time of the volunteer
- Recognize volunteers for their efforts

Suggested Interview Questions

- Has the board stated support for the BVA program?
- Does the board list represent the community? Does it have non-arts representatives, business people, and community leaders?
- Do the organization's brochures and programs show a clear mission, goals, and objectives in a concise, direct, compelling, and graphically-pleasing way?
- Did the organization provide current financial statements and a clear budget that shows fiscal health?
- Are the bylaws outdated without any revisions in the past five years?
- Does the organization have proof of 501(c)(3) status from an IRS Determination Letter? According to IRS rulings for BVA programs, only groups that have a 501(c)(3) status from the IRS or are under an umbrella organization that has this determination may apply.

assistance and professional development resources ready for referral in these instances allows you to guide arts organizations that are not yet ready for a volunteer match, but may benefit from other information that could further their development.

See a full list of arts organization interview questions from the BVA at the Greater Hartford Arts Council in the supplemental documents portion of this workbook.

Reassessment

You do not need to hold a formal assessment each time the organization requests a BVA volunteer, unless more than two years have passed since your initial assessment, there have been significant changes in the organization, or the major contact is no longer there. If things have changed a great deal, the assessment should be conducted in its entirety.

Arts Organization Orientation

While much of the process of orienting the arts organizations to the BVA program takes place through the assessment process, some BVA managers find it useful to host a formal orientation twice a year; the session goes into more detail and focuses on the expectations and outcomes of the BVA program.

The following provides a format that may be used for a participating arts organization's orientation. It may function as either an informational session, or as a requirement for participation in the program. Many arts organizations have never worked with a professional volunteer, and some have not worked with a consultant, so it's important that those issues be a key part of the orientation. Remember, BVA volunteers are management consultants first, and volunteers second. An arts organization should neither expect a volunteer to magically solve all of their problems, nor should they be afraid to redirect the volunteer if he or she should stray from the assigned task. Some topics that should be addressed during the arts organization orientation are:

- A brief history of the BVA program, and the network at large
- Q&A session with a past BVA volunteer
- The benefits that arts organizations receive, and what the volunteers bring to the project
- What to expect from volunteers (time, skills, potential leadership, relationship to fundraising)
- How the arts organization's staff should play a role in the project
- How to request and get placed with a volunteer
- The volunteer orientation, what is covered, and how it prepares them
- The matching and placement process
- Typical project timelines and expectations
- Project evaluation, both ongoing and post-reflection
- What a BVA volunteer cannot do (i.e. act as staff or raise money)
- Examples of successful BVA projects

- Tips for working successfully with volunteers
- Potential problems and troubleshooting
- The importance of keeping BVA staff informed of victories and issues
- The responsibilities of the arts organization (reporting, treatment of volunteer(s), etc.)

Matching Volunteers and Arts Organizations

Facilitating matches between volunteers or a team of volunteers for an arts organization is the basis of the BVA program. Consider the following when matching a volunteer to an organization:

- Does this volunteer have the skills needed?
- Is the volunteer compatible with the arts group represented?
- Does the arts group fit the volunteer's interest areas?
- Is this the best project for the volunteer's talent and experience?
- Is the volunteer enthusiastic about the project and the group?
- Is the arts group enthusiastic about the volunteer?
- Is there potential for a long-term partnership?
- Should a team of volunteers be assigned to the project or can one volunteer handle it?

Much of the matching process is intuitive. Follow the steps outlined below, and then ask yourself if it really seems right.

The Process

By the time you are ready to match volunteers and projects, you have interviewed both the potential volunteers and representatives from arts and culture organizations. Your notes and impressions from the arts assessment and interviews will be invaluable as you begin to put people together. Some matches will be obvious, but a few may stump you.

Start by creating a listing of available volunteers that is sortable by skill set(s), arts interest(s), geographic preference, and other considerations you determine to be relevant. You will need to do the same for arts groups—list needs, disciplines, size, location, and other considerations. By comparing these two lists, certain matches will become obvious.

Once you have identified these matches, contact the remaining volunteers to discuss taking on projects that might not match their preferences precisely but which you believe have a likelihood of success. If you have volunteers you are unable to place, consider whether they could be added to an existing match for a team project or if they could contribute to your BVA program by serving on the advisory committee. Maintain contact with volunteers that are not placed immediately on a project.

Send a packet of materials about the project and the organization to each volunteer. The materials might vary based on the nature of the project, but some components of this packet should be:

- A cover letter describing the project in detail
- A copy of the arts organization's initial application
- Appropriate background materials on the organization, including its history, mission, and programs
- Your assessment notes about the project or the organization

All information is confidential. If there is very sensitive information that the volunteer should know, you may wish to relay this by telephone.

Give the volunteer a few days to review the materials, and then follow up to see if he or she is interested in a meeting with the arts group. If there is no interest, ask for the materials to be returned and move on to another volunteer. This rarely happens, but sometimes it is necessary to contact several people before you find the right participant.

Once you have a volunteer who is interested, set up the match meeting. You should also send the volunteer's resume to the arts organization prior to the meeting so they are familiar with his or her background.

The Match Meeting

The purpose of the match meeting is to introduce the volunteer to the representatives of the arts group and develop a scope of work agreement for the project.

Setting

The arts organization in question is preferred, as this gives the volunteer the opportunity to see the space and atmosphere prior to committing to the project.

Attendees

- BVA manager
- Volunteer
- A representative from the arts organization, preferably the person who will be overseeing the volunteer
- Other staff people, if they will be closely involved in the project
- A board member if there is the potential for board involvement

Process

- Lead the introductions
- Take a tour of the facility
- Review the project scope with the arts organization representative and the volunteer
- Start, facilitate, and observe an exploratory discussion about how the arts organization and volunteer can work together
- After the discussion, help both parties come to an agreement regarding how they will work together
- Review and sign a work agreement that outlines the scope and timeline of the project, as well as expectations on both sides

The Agreement

A written agreement between the volunteer(s) and arts group is essential to document expectations on both sides. It will outline the scope of work, identify the key players, assign responsibilities, set a basic timeline, and include any special conditions. Both parties should sign and receive a copy. Please note that this is not a formal contract and has no legal status. After the agreement is signed, the volunteer and arts organization are required to work independently on a mutually agreed upon schedule. Please see the supplemental documents to view the Greater Hartford Arts Council's project agreement form.

It is best to complete this agreement at the match meeting, though sometimes the scope of the project is not completely clear at that time and one or more additional meetings between the volunteer and arts organization will be needed to further define the project. In this event, leave the agreement with the arts group and volunteer, asking them to complete it together and return it to you as soon as possible. If you do not receive it within two weeks, call both parties to determine the status. In the event that the agreement is still not forthcoming, you will need to attend the next meeting between the volunteer and arts organization and execute the agreement at that time. If an agreement has not been signed after a few weeks, that could mean that things are not progressing and you may need to intervene to assist with the process or place the volunteer elsewhere.

If the project scope changes significantly throughout the process, you need to alter the agreement accordingly and have both parties sign again. All agreements should be copied and given to the volunteer, the arts organization, and the BVA manager.

Handling Concerns

If all parties are enthusiastically discussing how to solve the particular need of the project in question, and begin talking about the next meeting, it is usually a match. In the event that a match meeting does not go well, do not be overly concerned. If you detect hesitation from either party, there appears to be little enthusiasm, no one is coming up with ideas, or there is even outright antagonism, end the meeting and tell each party that you will speak to them individually. This rarely occurs, but it is certainly a possibility. After you have ended the meeting, contact each separately to get feedback. The more detailed the feedback you elicit, the more likely you will be to find both the volunteer and the arts organization a more appropriate match. Encourage all parties to be honest about the match potential, and assure each that turning down a bad match will not disqualify future participation in the program. In fact, avoiding a bad match is preferable to a bad experience for either party, and you should let each know separately that you will continue looking for a suitable match.

Placing More Than One Volunteer

Arts organizations rarely only need assistance in one facet of operations, and can sometimes benefit from help in related areas that require different types of volunteers

with different skill sets. Team projects are sometimes the best approach, though you will need to determine the feasibility of it on an individual basis before approaching everyone as a group. An example of a team project is a market analysis that requires both a focus group specialist and someone to design and interpret an audience survey. If a team project seems likely, make sure that the separate roles are clearly delineated and that all parties involved will be compatible working partners.

The major criteria in team placements are the needs of a project, and how much the volunteer group is able to handle. It is important to work with both the arts organization and the volunteers to ascertain whether they would like a group project or not.

It is also important to acknowledge that there are often more requests for help than volunteers, so placing a number of volunteers with one group could mean that other organizations do not receive a volunteer at all. You may decide to avoid team placements in order to widen the reach of the program as much as possible.

View a sample checklist for BVA project matches from the Arts Council of Fort Worth in the supplemental documents.

EVALUATION & MOVING FORWARD

Evaluation is a key component of any Business Volunteers for the Arts® program, and is essential in maintaining both the integrity of the work completed by the volunteers, and the level of involvement from arts organizations. It is recommended that, in addition to a standard post-volunteer project evaluation, the BVA manager conduct ongoing evaluations throughout the duration of the project to ensure that goals are being met, both parties are fulfilled and content, and that everyone involved is adhering to the timeline.

Goals of Evaluation Process

- Provide feedback for the timely resolution of problems and issues that may occur in a project
- Ensure that projects are helping and advancing participating arts organizations
- Determine whether or not volunteers are having a satisfying experience
- Generate documentation for fundraising and public relations goals to support the continuation of the program
- Facilitate the completion of successful projects that promote the BVA program and its visibility within the community

Nature of Ongoing Evaluation

Both the volunteer and the arts organization should receive either a monthly phone call or email for ongoing evaluation. Below are some common questions that may be used during the call or email:

- Are both parties happy with how the project is progressing?
- Is the project moving along the timetable agreed upon by both parties?
- If not, why not? If a change is necessary, have both parties agreed to re-evaluate?
- Are additional resources such as volunteers with other expertise needed on the project?
- Is BVA staff involvement needed during the next meeting between the volunteer and arts organization?
- Are enough hours being spent on the project to assure its success?
- Is it probable that this project will continue on a successful course?
- When will it be completed?
- Are additional resources for either party being generated because of the association?

Be sure to date and document both the correspondence attempts and the responses to these questions; they provide useful examples and can be cited for conflict resolution in the future. When projects are progressing smoothly, participants are eager to

talk about the work. If phone calls or e-mails are not returned after several attempts at contact, there may be issues. If you find that there are serious problems, you should schedule an in-person meeting to assess.

The ongoing evaluation process involves encouragement and validation. It is common for volunteers to underestimate their contribution and, without reinforcement from BVA staff and the hosting arts organization, feel as though the work does not make a difference. Arts organizations may feel threatened by the volunteer if the area in which they are seeking help is an area of insecurity, particularly if the volunteer gives advice or feedback that is difficult to absorb, for any number of reasons. BVA staff must assume the role of translator and watch for indications of misunderstanding, neglect, or antagonism.

View the supplemental documents for examples of mid-project progress reports for both arts organizations and volunteers from the BVA at the Greater Hartford Arts Council.

Post-Project Evaluation Report

Arts organizations are required to submit reports to the BVA based on project type, volunteer skill set, number of hours volunteered, and similar types of measures. It is recommended that complete written evaluations are conducted at the conclusion of each project. It is encouraged that you emphasize the importance of evaluation and reporting from the beginning to encourage participant compliance. View the supplemental documents for a final report form from the BVA at the Greater Hartford Arts Council.

Evaluation Meeting

It is also a recommended practice to conduct separate meetings with each volunteer and arts organization at least once a year or when a project has ended. The meeting with the arts organization is an opportunity to update its assessment and determine any additional help it may need from the BVA program. As stated elsewhere, major changes to projects may necessitate revisions to the scope of work agreement being filed with each party.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Available on the Business Volunteers for the Arts® page at www.AmericansfortheArts.org/BVA

FEASIBILITY STUDY

BVA BROCHURE

VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS

VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

VOLUNTEER TRAINING VIDEOS

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION AGENDA

ARTS ORGANIZATION APPLICATIONS

ARTS ORGANIZATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PROJECT AGREEMENT FORM

ARTS ORGANIZATION AND VOLUNTEER MATCHING CHECKLIST

ARTS ORGANIZATION PROGRESS REPORT

VOLUNTEER PROGRESS REPORT

ARTS ORGANIZATION FINAL REPORT

Other Americans for the Arts Resources

For more information on engaging employees through the arts and partnering with the business community:

Visit the [pARTnership Movement](#), an initiative from Americans for the Arts to reach business leaders with the message that partnering with the arts can build their competitive advantage.

View our pARTnership Movement tool-kits, [Business Volunteers for the Arts®](#) and [Working with Volunteers](#).

Send us an e-mail with any questions: privatesector@artsusa.org.

Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. With more than 50 years of service, we are dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts.



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