

# **City of Independence, Missouri**

## **Volunteer Business Plan**

### **June 2004**

#### **Volunteer Plan Summary**

The City of Independence, Missouri, and its citizens will benefit from having a dedicated volunteer Coordinator position to implement, develop and support the Independence Citizen Corps and associated volunteer programs. Volunteers drawn from the Independence community would provide the best source of long-term service since they live in the area and have a vested interest in their community. The volunteer program would also benefit from targeting volunteers in the Greater Kansas City area. Although some of these volunteers may provide long-term service, they are more likely to provide supplemental or short-term assistance since they live outside the city.

Recruitment should be one of the last planning steps implemented in a volunteer program. Other factors such as detailed job descriptions, city policies, facilities and organizational expectations must be in place before any recruitment can take place. Otherwise, a volunteer's interest may wane if there is long initiation waiting periods, nothing to do, feel used or have a negative experience, which may seriously impact recruitment. The volunteer coordinator will be vital to this stage of planning and development.

To have a successful volunteer program the volunteer coordinator must be a strong recruiter to attract and retain the best and most motivated volunteers. The coordinator must be provided with clear and precise position descriptions and appropriate tasks from departments and organizations needing volunteers to sustain interest and develop involvement with the vision of the volunteer project. Each department and organization volunteers' needs and attitude must be determined, and fit into a unified citywide volunteer program.

The training of volunteers is paramount to a successful program. Training helps to assure that volunteers are serving safely and efficiently, but the quality of volunteer training is also inherently linked to the retention. Volunteers who have not been trained properly will be more likely to feel frustrated and leave the program. In order to best capitalize on volunteer resources, effort must be spent to educate volunteers about the policy and procedures related to the job duties. Well-trained volunteers are informed and motivated because they realize the importance of their responsibilities. It is important to think of volunteers as customers who give their time in exchange for training and time fulfillment.

Because only two in five volunteers become involved in a volunteer organization on their own, a coordinated volunteer drive and awareness program must be implemented. The volunteer office and coordinator need to become a clearinghouse for all volunteer efforts for the City of Independence, Missouri. All existing and future volunteer program needs should be communicated and advertised through the volunteer coordinator's office. A unified recruitment approach will need to be conducted through the volunteer office. The coordinator must work with existing volunteer groups not associated with the City of Independence, Missouri, such as United Way, Salvation Army and Red Cross. A volunteer association committee to bring all organizations recruiting volunteers should be established through this office. The volunteer program may work best under an umbrella organization called "The Independence Citizen Corps" that will help coordinate and connect volunteers to the city departments and organizations needs.

Many issues that face an employer and its employees are true of volunteers as well. It is imperative that guidelines and adherence to local, state and federal laws be adopted. Full understanding and implementation of these regulations will benefit all parties involved. A Volunteer Handbook should be developed and supplied to all volunteers outlining conduct, legal and expected rules to follow. Questions about medical and

other liabilities must be brought to the forefront during volunteer training. All volunteers appreciate open communication and will stay committed longer to the program if they feel the organizers are being truthful and can be trusted by telling them all risk involved.

A Volunteer Satisfaction Plan must also be developed to keep the vision and mission of the volunteer program on track. Feedback from volunteers on how to improve the program is vital. Existing volunteers influence family and friends to enter volunteer service. The volunteers must feel their input is requested, valued and acted upon. Volunteers should feel they have a centralized place to associate their program with even though they may work in different departments around the city. The Independence Citizen Corps coordinator of the volunteer workforce will require some sort of physical permanent office location. Use of office space associated with the community such as City Hall, Palmer Center or Community Centers will be necessary for convenient accessibility to the volunteer/citizen requesting information.

In addition to coordinating activities with various volunteer organizations, development of new relationships with corporate partners will be vital. Eighty-one percent of companies surveyed connected volunteering to their overall business strategies. Corporate volunteering helps create healthier communities and improves a company's image. Developing a volunteer rebate program with local retailers to help recognize program participants would be a good way to promote programs in the way of awards, and help advertise local retailers.

## **Volunteer Mission Statement**

### ***Working together to build a stronger community***

**Through providing diverse volunteer opportunities, the City of Independence, Missouri, Independence Citizen Corps Volunteer Program seeks to develop a bonding relationship with the public to help support and facilitate citizen involvement in the stewardship of our community.**

## **Vision Statement**

***To be the Kansas City Area's premier and most successful volunteer organization by:***

- ***Identifying diverse community needs.***
- ***Developing creative volunteer-driven solutions to address community needs.***
- ***Mobilizing people and resources to address community needs.***
- ***Creating a fun and satisfying social environment for all volunteers.***
- ***Developing and maintaining a sense of community spirit and pride through volunteerism.***

## **Present City Volunteer Overview**

At least one in four adult Americans volunteer. The volunteer workforce represented the equivalent of over nine million full-time employees; their combined efforts were worth \$225 billion, and the assigned hourly value (for 1998) was \$14.30. More than eight out of ten people (86%) said they volunteered because they felt compassion for those in need. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents (72%) volunteered because they had an interest in the activity or work, and 70 percent volunteered to gain a new perspective. Two in five volunteers became involved with the main organization for which they did volunteer work on their own initiative; that is, they approached the organization. Another two in five (44%) were asked to become a volunteer, most often by somebody in the organization. Almost 44 percent were asked to become a volunteer, most often by someone in the organization.

These facts are encouraging and show citizens are willing to give of their time to volunteer. Unfortunately the volunteer participation within the City of Independence, Missouri, has been falling over the past years. City volunteers have gone from 1,100 in 1996 to about 600 in 2003. This reduction in the volunteer force is exactly opposite of what is happening in other areas of the country. The Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reports volunteer rate from September 2002 through September 2003 grew to 28.8 percent, up from 27.4 percent.

Why have volunteer programs in the city of Independence, Missouri, been losing participation or not been as responsive to citizen involvement as expected? The problem is not ignorance or lack of experience. Today we have a number of existing and accessible well-known volunteer programs available throughout the city. The following are programs now available for participation to volunteers:

- Channel Seven (City 7)
- Citizens Crime/Neighborhood Watch
- Police Department Volunteers In Police Service (VIPS)
- Recycling Center
- Animal Control
- Parks Clean-up days
- Code Enforcement Volunteer Program
- Adopt-A-Street
- Beautification Committee
- Truman Station
- City Boards and Commissions
- Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)
- Radio Amateur Communications Emergency Systems (RACES)
- National Frontier Trails Center
- Tourism Sites

With these very worthwhile and important volunteer programs available why do we continue to lose or not have effective implementation of citizen participation? We have the knowledge to run these programs and several city departments presently utilize volunteer coordinators. The following departments have dedicated volunteer coordinators: 1) Police Department 2) Tourism 3) Parks Department 4) Animal Control, and, 5) National Frontier Trails Center. The missing ingredient is placing higher priority on the development of volunteers and coordination between agencies. Organizations and agencies fail to place sufficient operations priority to the encouragement of volunteer participation within their department/agency. This resistance is not a result of hostility towards volunteers but many times indifference or not knowing how to integrate volunteers into their existing workforce. The priority of volunteer programs by organizational leadership is not perceived as vital when compared to other task/projects viewed as urgent to the organizations survival or

well-being. Too often, the departmental “gatekeepers” keep the gate closed to citizen participation or open the gate just a crack for token high-profile, expected or copycat projects.

Often when volunteers are utilized in an organization the employees look upon the help as “extra work to train” or they are told to “figure out what to do with them”. Some departments view volunteers as “more trouble than they are worth”. Recently some departments have identified volunteer programs as a solution to tightening dollars and workforce reductions. Their motivation to use volunteers is mostly based on necessity and short term as opposed to development and maintenance of a meaningful, unified, and effective long-term volunteer program.

The present city volunteer program needs to have a coordinator that can develop departmental/agency partners who are willing to work together and build a strong commitment to encourage volunteer participation within their agency. The city’s volunteer program is uncoordinated and individualized at this point. Volunteer needs and positions are unknown with the recruitment process non-unified and undefined. Many departments have a “hands off” attitude towards their existing volunteers regarding coordination with other departments for fears of “volunteer pilfering” which breeds competitiveness and decreases the “volunteer experience” for participants. This also causes the program to lack a centralized recruitment message and feedback system that demonstrates to the community that volunteers are assets and we value them as partners. The present volunteer system lacks knowledge of community demographics, which is necessary to match potential volunteers to positions. The program is so fragmented that a coordinated effort to improve the program with other city and regional volunteer organizations is not practical.

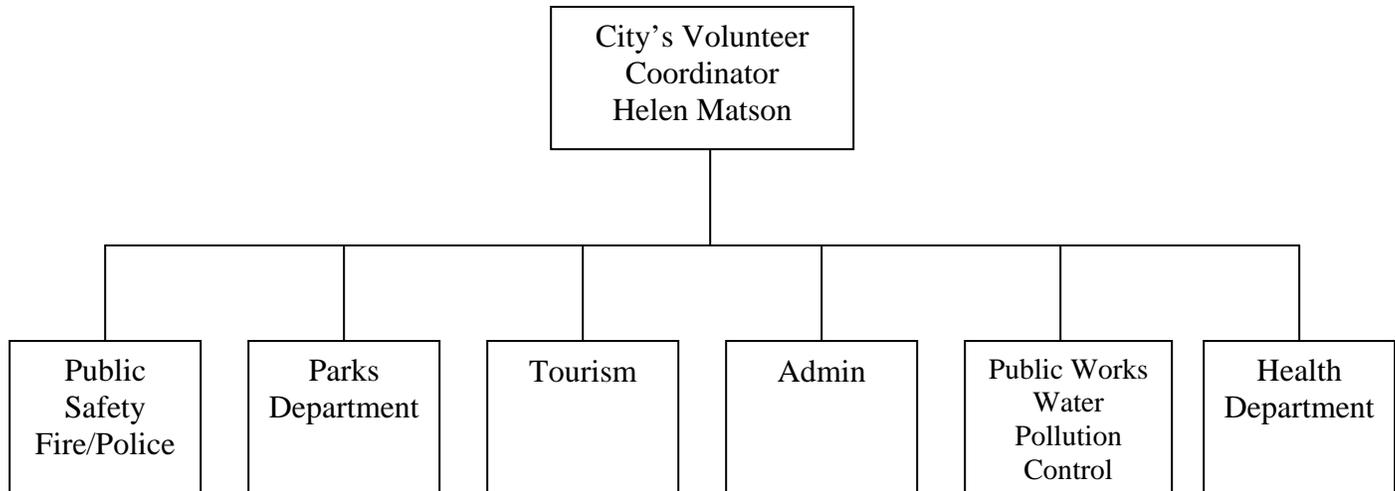
## **Goals**

- Identify the needs/positions in each City department that a volunteer can fulfill.
- Hold routine volunteer informational meetings to increase awareness of the city’s volunteer programs, opportunities and services for citizens, as well as, gain their feedback to improve and expand the volunteer program.
- Contact all local schools, service clubs, organizations, businesses, and churches to inform them of the volunteer opportunities the city has for their members.
- Recruit medical and military personnel into the Emergency Preparedness Program.
- Seek out the high school A+ students, CERT groups, Youth Court participants, senior citizens and other parties that actively utilize community service projects.
- Development of effective recruitment strategies, techniques, process and message to encourage citizens to become involved with the city’s volunteer program.
- Increase the present volunteer level of 600 volunteers to past levels of 1100 volunteers within the next 24 to 30 months.
- Develop and maintain an accurate volunteer database to allow for accurate identification and record keeping of time, as well as, the analysis of volunteer activities.
- Create the opportunity for professional training to city departments/agencies regarding the use and management of volunteers.

## Program Development

To successfully develop the city of Independence Volunteer Program the city's volunteer coordinator will need to implement a strong recruitment effort to attract the best and most motivated volunteers to help manage the program. These Volunteer Coordinators will be chosen for their commitment to specific program areas and will be the planners and overseers for specific volunteer operations. They will work with the city's volunteer coordinator to grow, coordinate and sustain the volunteer program they are directing.

The city volunteer program will be divided into the following volunteer coordination areas (VCA) each utilizing a Coordinator:



**Public Safety** – This coordinator will help develop and recruit volunteers for programs involving the Fire and Police Departments, Municipal and Youth Courts. This volunteer coordinator will work closely with assigned city department personnel regarding existing programs or take on specific management responsibilities if deemed necessary by the department involved. These include such programs as:

- CERT – Community Emergency Response Teams
- VIPS – Volunteers in Police Service
- Neighborhood Watch Areas
- Fire and Police Explorers
- Youth Court Public Service Programs
- RACES – Radio Armature Communications Emergency Services
- Weather Spotter/Adopt-A-Siren Program

**Parks & Recreation Department** - This coordinator will help develop and recruit volunteers for programs involving the Parks and Recreation Department. This volunteer coordinator will work closely with assigned city department personnel regarding existing programs or take on specific management responsibilities if deemed necessary by the department involved. These programs include:

- Park Clean-up Days
- Sermon Center Activities
- Palmer Center Activities

- Truman Station
- George Owens Nature Park

**Tourism** - This coordinator will help the Tourism Department recruit volunteers for their existing programs. The Tourism Department Volunteer Coordinator will work closely with the city's Volunteer Coordinator to include their needs in the citywide volunteer recruitment process. The city's Volunteer Coordinator may take on specific management responsibilities involving specific programs, if requested, by Tourism Department personnel. The coordinator will also work with the National Frontier Trails Museum director and curator in their volunteer efforts as well. Volunteer programs in this area include:

- Staffing volunteers for historic locations throughout the city
- Staffing volunteers for the National Frontier Trails Museum

**Administration** – This coordinator will help develop and recruit volunteers for programs involving Clerk's Office, City Manager's Office, Community Development, Finance, Human Resources, Technology Services and City 7 productions. The volunteer coordinator will work closely with assigned city department personnel regarding existing programs or take on specific management responsibilities if deemed necessary by the department involved. These programs include:

- Beautification Committee
- Human Resources Personnel Board/Human Relations Committee
- City Channel 7 Volunteer Program
- City Hall Information/greeters

**Public Works** – The coordinator will help develop and recruit volunteers for programs involving the Public Works Department. This volunteer coordinator will work closely with assigned city department personnel regarding existing programs or take on specific management responsibilities if deemed necessary by the department involved. These programs include:

- Adopt-A-Street Program
- Recycling Center

**Health Department** – The coordinator will help develop and recruit volunteers for programs involving the Health Department. The volunteer coordinator will work closely with assigned city department personnel regarding existing programs or take on specific management responsibilities if deemed necessary by the department involved. These programs include:

- MMRS Dispensing Site Volunteers
- MARC Medical-Corps Program
- Surveillance/epidemiological volunteer programs
- Code Enforcement volunteer program
- Animal Control
- Office/Staff Assistance

The volunteer coordinators' success and participation will be dependent on the amount of control they are given over the VCA they are managing and their acceptance by the departments they are interfacing with on a day to day basis. The volunteer objectives and creative ideas of these volunteers must be encouraged and supported by seeing their ideas are implemented and completed. They must not find barriers put up by city department personnel as they do their requested duties. The reward for these volunteers will be greater involvement and recognition in the community and the feeling of accomplishment from a successful volunteer organization. The volunteer coordinators must be given the following authority:

1. These individuals must feel free to plan and develop their VCA program according to their best knowledge and creativity.
2. They must have support and communication with the City's Volunteer Coordinator.

3. They should be treated as full members of the participating departments organization and invited to participate openly in long range planning of all matters affecting their VCA programs.
4. Their needs, ideas and requests must be met with timely, considerately and programmatically supportive response by the city's volunteer coordinator and department management.
5. Ongoing professional development training must be provided including participation in conferences and seminars.
6. Recognition for these volunteers should develop them as individual personalities in the community. They need to be associated with their VCA programs through local media and honors at community events.

Volunteer coordinators should be highly motivated and skilled individuals for these positions since the success of the individual VCA programs will depend on them. Retired city employees, students, retired government employees and corporate sponsorship employees are all likely candidates who could contribute the necessary experience and expertise to the VCA program. Complete levels of expertise would probably be very hard to find in a single volunteer, so some VCA's may need to incorporate a team of volunteer coordinators which would bring individuals together with different and ideally complimentary skills. This would also help with the workload because it would encompass a wide range of responsibilities such as:

1. Working with the city's volunteer coordinator to define volunteer positions for their VCA, along with recruiting, interviewing, training and evaluation of volunteers.
2. Documentation for their VCA including developing necessary policies and procedures for safety, daily procedures, volunteer conduct policies, requirements of participating city department and necessary identification. Documentation of policies and procedures is of the utmost importance since these policies and procedures are what the volunteer will refer to while he is working.
3. Coordination and supervision of daily operations such as scheduling.
4. Managing the volunteers' time and possible budget, if applicable.
5. Daily, weekly and yearly reports regarding VCA activities.

To recruit volunteer coordinators we would:

1. Write detailed job descriptions.
2. Utilize existing volunteer talent.
3. Advertise the positions with the existing volunteer agencies in the community, professional organizations, local newspapers, colleges and retirement organizations.
4. Apply rigorous and extensive interviewing of applicants.
5. Try and develop grants through Vista, AmeriCorps and Citizen Corps to obtain personnel.

## **Volunteer Service Levels**

To assure a reliable volunteer organization the workforce will need to be organized into four levels of volunteers:

- Volunteer Coordinators – See volunteer Coordinator/VCA section
- Long-Term Volunteers
- Short Term Volunteers
- Special Projects/Events Coordinators

### **Long-Term volunteers**

One of the very first responsibilities of the volunteer coordinators will be to help recruit long-term volunteers. This may be six months to a year of scheduled commitment. These volunteers will be involved in the day-to-day operations of the organization. They are willing to commit their services for an extended period of time. The job description for this type of volunteer must emphasize the importance of reliability and long-term commitment. Once these volunteers have completed introductory training they should be able to work fairly independently depending on the volunteer position. Long-term volunteers will have considerable amount of responsibility, so rules of conduct should be established. These volunteers are expected to attend regular staff meetings and they will need to report to a designated volunteer coordinator. Some long-term volunteers may even supervise projects that involve short-term volunteers and attend specific training. It will be important to constantly motivate and reward this group. Efforts to retain members of this group are vital and the following should be considered:

- An important factor in retention of long-term volunteers will be the readiness in which the organization responds to their physical environmental needs and comforts. The volunteer coordinators will need to keep open communications and be cognizant of any changes they can reasonably accommodate. This means providing amenities and perks such as free coffee, pleasant working conditions and, very importantly, a responsive ear for any complaints.
- Scheduling for these volunteers must be flexible.
- Their interest and participation must be supported and sustained by strong communications with the Volunteer Coordinator and departmental management. Their reports, work and suggestions must be taken seriously and utilized whenever possible.
- Appreciation must be a daily communication and rewards should come as formalized departmental, city and community recognition, such as an article in the Weekly News, CityScene, Channel 7, and other local news media.
- The Citizen Corps Volunteer Coordinator should make every effort to develop the work future of applicable volunteers by writing letters of recommendation, excellence and praise to current or future employers. Records regarding specific areas of service should be maintained to help volunteers meet specific requirements, such as community service required by school programs.
- Positions should be designed to develop important job skills that the volunteer can take on to other work. This should be reinforced by including volunteers in ongoing training and increased responsibilities as part of their volunteer experience.

### **Short-Term volunteers**

Many of these volunteers will only commit their services for a short period of time, but have the potential to become long-term volunteers. Their type of project work would include special projects, fundraising, recruiting, limited action projects and seasonal activities. This group may consist of highly motivated individuals, but in general, they will have less time to contribute on an ongoing basis. For many members in the community this may be the only way in which they can contribute to volunteer projects. Training is minimal for this type of volunteer and emphasis should be placed on introducing other volunteer opportunities available through the city's Volunteer Office. These volunteers will be the direct result of ongoing recruitment efforts and will be individuals who have indicated that they are only able to commit for single events or short planning periods such as a month. Short-term volunteer should:

- Be given a task and final goals that are clearly defined before they are recruited.
- Be given a task which they can see to completion.
- Not be expected to participate in any planning.
- Be given praise and creative rewards in a public way and at the time of their service.
- Be managed by Long-Term or volunteer coordinators with defined management structure.

- Be informed regularly of additional short-term volunteer opportunities.

### **Special Projects Coordinator**

This position would be a special coordinator associated with a particular large and very visual event. This person would be chosen because of their position in the community and would most likely need additional volunteers to help them with coordination efforts.

## **Recruitment of Volunteers**

Before actual recruitment efforts can occur, other factors such as Independence Citizen Corps Coordinator, facilities, applications, background checks, departmental Acceptance policies and detailed position descriptions must be developed and in-place before any recruiting activities can be initiated. Otherwise, a volunteer's interest may dwindle if there is a long waiting period or a volunteer has a misunderstanding regarding expectations resulting in a negative experience, which may seriously impact future recruitment.

Recruitment will need to be done in stages; first, recruiting volunteer coordinators for the VCA's (preferably volunteers with existing experience such as retired/non-working professionals), who will then recruit their long-term and short-term volunteers. For immediate volunteer recruitment/advice we will initially work with local and regional organizations such as United Way, Salvation Army, Points of Light, Red Cross, VCC and Regional/State VOAD. These organizations provide training workshops for organizations on how to design volunteer recruitment programs. It will also allow the Independence Citizen Corps program to kindle relationships with these organizations.

### Recruitment steps/strategies

- I. The first step is determining position needs and job descriptions for the different city departments. This includes skills required and duties the volunteers will perform. Reviewing the present volunteer programs with each department is also critical. Interviewing active volunteers will also be necessary to get their volunteer experience views. All these efforts will help determine the type of volunteers to target, which will in turn help determine where to recruit.
- II. A successful recruitment program will predict and address possible objections to volunteering. This is why polling presently active and past volunteers is necessary. Although a focus group of this type has not been convened, possible objections might be:
  - a. Other demands on time (family, jobs, schoolwork)
  - b. Transportation
  - c. Security
  - d. Disabilities
  - e. Unfamiliarity with departmental locations
  - f. Volunteering with other agencies
- III. Volunteers can be recruited from two areas, local and regional. In some cases considerable overlap may occur. We must be very specific when we are recruiting volunteers by defining exact locations they will be expected to work. We will also want to place recruiting emphasis on local efforts since most of our volunteers will come from the Independence area. Some sources of volunteers are:
  - a. Possible sources of local volunteers
    - i. Service clubs and organizations
      1. Girl/Boy Scout troops

2. Rotary Clubs
  3. Jaycees
  4. Neighborhood Groups
  5. Kiwanis
  6. Lions Club
  - ii. Schools
    1. Community Colleges
    2. Trade Local High Schools
    3. A+ Programs
    4. Schools
  - iii. Religious Organizations
    1. Ministerial Alliance/Community of Christ
    2. Knights of Columbus
    3. Masons
    4. Salvation Army
  - iv. Other Local Organizations
    1. Local Businesses
    2. Local Hospitals
    3. United Way
  - b. Possible sources of regional volunteers
    - i. Regional volunteer agencies
      1. Points of Light
      2. KCVOID
      3. University/college placement offices
      4. AARP
      5. Retired professional organizations
      6. Military Forces personnel
- IV. Advertising will increase the chances of reaching a broader range of volunteers. A complete advertising plan will need to be developed but will include the following media:
- a. Internet
    - i. Development of a Independence Citizen Corps website that can be used as a recruiting device
    - ii. Virtual Volunteers that can complete part of their volunteer task over the internet
    - iii. Utilize the internet E-mail bulletin boards for local businesses to advertise specific volunteer needs
  - b. Printed Materials
    - i. Brochures will be developed describing the history and mission of the Independence Citizen Corps and distributed through the community schools, homes, churches, businesses, etc
    - ii. We will advertise in local newsletters or bulletins of the service clubs, schools, churches, apartments and other organizations
    - iii. Posters will be created and placed throughout the community promoting the Independence Citizen Corps and required volunteer positions
    - iv. Use of placing advertisements in local newspapers, CityScene and city-wide papers such as the Kansas City Star
  - c. Audio-Visual Materials

- i. We will utilize the Channel 7 TV station to bring awareness to the Independence Citizen Corps and the volunteers that work with the program
- ii. Radio Announcements (PSA's)
- iii. Cable Television PSA's announcements

## **Workspace – Office requirements**

An open team management approach requires some sort of physical, identifiable and open office space. The Volunteer Office needs to be Very Visible and located in a known location. Volunteer Coordinators will need a place to:

- Conduct interviews and hold staff meetings
- Make necessary phone calls for recruiting and scheduling
- Store supplies, policies, procedures, etc.
- Do all necessary paperwork and reports

Because of all these needs a dedicated office space will be required. An excellent location would be utilization of the existing Space at the Truman Memorial Building. This area located near the main entrance would make a very visible location. It would also enhance the City's Information and Volunteer Greeters program. The office space would initially need two phones supplied by the city. Eventually, additional office equipment and supplies would come from sponsors developed by the City's Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Objectives/Action Steps**

1. Determine the exact number of volunteers now being utilized by city departments. A list of names and job descriptions will be obtained and put into a database. This will be completed by August 2004.
  - a. Survey developed and distributed to individual departments requesting information about volunteer activities and needs of departments for volunteer services. An initial survey has been developed and distributed with a follow-up interview to be conducted with responding department personnel after the results have been analyzed.
  - b. Volunteer meeting with about 30 active volunteers to get their suggestions on how to improve the city's volunteer program and get additional participants.
  - c. Send a survey out to existing volunteers utilized by city departments to get their input on volunteer programs and verify contact information.
  - d. Creation of well defined volunteer job descriptions that can be matched to prospective participants.
2. Creation of a volunteer database that can match volunteers' talents and interest with prospective volunteer opportunities within the city. This will be completed by August 15, 2004.
  - a. Work with the existing Independence Citizen Corps/CERT computer and software to develop the database.

3. Create a presentation that will update department directors to the advantages of associating and coordinating all volunteer programs needs under the Independence Citizen Corps umbrella and what the new volunteer coordinator can do to help their volunteer activities. This should be done by July 15, 2004.
  - a. Creation of a PowerPoint presentation outlining how the Independence Citizens Corps can help them and what the program needs from them.
4. Assist the Public Health Department in obtaining volunteers for the Bio-Terrorism exercise scheduled for June 23, 2004, and future exercises.
  - a. Help bring over 200 volunteers into the exercise process by utilizing existing volunteers and known resources.
  - b. Develop a survey for volunteers participating in the exercise to complete that will capture information both the Health Department/Independence Citizen Corps can utilize.
  - c. Help coordinate and bring volunteer resources together for the exercise, such as Salvation Army volunteers, VIPS and RACES groups.
  - d. After the exercise assist the Health Department in creating a qualified volunteer staff to help support activities required in the city's Bio-plan
5. The creation of an Independence Citizen Corps Volunteer Organization Board. This board would be comprised of organizations that are normally associated with volunteer activities in the Independence area. The board would meet every quarter with the first meeting occurring in September 2004. The board would help coordinate and update overall volunteer efforts going on within the City of Independence and surrounding areas.
  - a. Identify contacts with organizations like the Salvation Army, Red Cross, United Way, Ministerial Alliance, Rotary, Kiwanis, corporate citizens and Chamber of Commerce.
  - b. Determine an executive board and extend invitations for members that would include dignitaries such as the Mayor, Council members and local business executives.
  - c. Develop rules and goals for the group along with finding sponsorship to help with expenses such as meals, printing, etc.
6. Development of a Volunteer Policy Manual for distribution to volunteers. This does not need to be an elaborate publication, but should provide policies and conduct expectations along with the rationale behind them and steps of implementation. A first draft should be completed by the end of September 2004.
  - a. Research of present city department's volunteer policies along with other volunteer organizations policies.
  - b. Work with the city's legal department on developing the Volunteer Policy Manual
  - c. Standardized application and information forms will be developed. All volunteers will be required to fill out the forms and specific volunteer activities, as with the Police Department, will require applicants to have a background check.
7. Development of a unified recruitment program for all the city's volunteer needs. The process can start by utilizing existing resources like the United Way and Red Cross, but eventually once the needs and job descriptions are defined a recruitment strategy must be developed. A draft recruitment policy should be developed by the end of November 2004.
  - a. Determination of position descriptions (objective 1d) must be completed and continually analyzed.
  - b. Possible objections to volunteering must be determined by focus groups. These resistance factors must be considered in the recruitment process.
  - c. All possible sources of volunteers must be considered and contacted. In many cases the volunteer coordinator will need to foster individual relationships with these sources.
  - d. A recruitment message will be developed that is inviting and tailored to the volunteers being sought such as students, professionals, neighborhood groups, etc. The message will also be continuous and ongoing. The Volunteer Coordinator will work with all possible resources such as news media and diverse groups to make this happen

- e. Printed materials for the Independence Citizen Corps will be developed and produced to aid in recruitment. A volunteer newsletter will be created along with brochures, posters and flyers. Public service announcements and a “volunteer of the month” show should be developed in conjunction with Channel 7.
  - f. Contact local schools and church organizations to start a program allowing youth groups and honor society organizations to complete community service requirements by volunteering through the Independence Citizen Corps programs.
8. Volunteer Booth at Santa-Cali-Gon days to promote the Independence Citizen Corps and sign up prospective volunteers. The Santa-Cali-Gon days occur each Labor Day weekend.
  - a. Work with the Independence Police Department to share booth space.
  - b. Develop and print literature for the Independence Citizen Corps along with collecting and utilizing literature for existing programs.
  - c. Get volunteers to work the Independence Citizens Corps booth and distribute literature.
9. Work with the Police Department to make information available regarding the Independence Citizens Corps along with other volunteer activities for the Police Service kiosk that will be located at Independence Center. The kiosk will be opened on June 10<sup>th</sup> 2004.
  - a. Deliver existing information about the Independence Citizen Corps, CERT and Project Community Alert to the kiosk for their opening.
  - b. Develop additional information about volunteer opportunities with the city for distribution at the kiosk.
  - c. Work with the Independence Police Department to obtain volunteers to help staff the kiosk.
10. Creation of an Independence Citizen Corps web site that not only allows information to be communicated over the Internet but create a communications link between volunteers and the volunteer office. The development of “Virtual Volunteers” could be accomplished as well. Virtual volunteers complete all or part of their volunteer task via the Internet and their computer at home.
  - a. Work with technology staff to develop the basic Independence Citizens Corps Website.
  - b. Research the use of virtual volunteer job descriptions.
  - c. Develop a bulletin board to link volunteers with volunteer opportunities.
11. Seek and apply for grant opportunities.
  - a. Help administer, develop and implement the present Independence Citizen Corps grant recently completed by the Independence Fire Department for the advancement of CERT and the Independence Citizen Corps development.
  - b. Meet with the state of Missouri Citizen Corps director to promote and obtain additional grant monies.
  - c. Work with the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) on regional Citizen Corps projects and Mid-America Medical Corps activities.
12. Establishment of a permanent visible volunteer office. Since “**perception becomes reality**” the establishment of a volunteer office demonstrates the city of Independence, Missouri, is serious about the program. Volunteers that will help with volunteer recruitment will staff the office. People most often volunteer when they feel they are being asked to get involved personally. The office will give the capability to recruit for specific projects and programs throughout the year and a designated place volunteers can come to do specific tasks. The office should be established by December 2004.
  - a. Find and establish a location for the office.
  - b. Explore utilizing or partnering with the office presently established for the Neighborhood Groups or in the Palmer Center/community centers.
  - c. Find a sponsor that will help defer the cost of phone lines, lights and office supplies
13. Develop a program for the retention and training of volunteers. A volunteer satisfaction plan will need to be created. Volunteers give their time in exchange for the “Volunteer Experience” and they need to be considered as customers and partners. We must be willing to learn from their experiences and change the volunteer programs to help meet volunteers’ needs.

- a. Create regular informational awareness meetings for volunteers to attend. These meeting will be held at the same location each time and will allow direct contact with the volunteers and solicit their input regarding the “Volunteer Experience” the Independence Citizen Corps has offered to them.
- b. Create an Independence Citizen Corps recognition program. This will start by developing a logo and letterhead to be used for correspondence and website pages. An Independence Citizen Corps ID card will be developed and distributed to volunteers. Eventually the card will have a bar code placed on it for additional uses.
- c. Start working with local stores and merchant organizations to have a Rewards Program that recognizes volunteers. The Independence Citizen Corps ID card can be presented at participating merchants granting the holder discounts, etc. This program will take time to develop and may require working with the Chamber of Commerce, etc.
- d. Continue the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet held each year.
- e. Develop a training program for volunteers that will prepare them for volunteer positions. Programs such as CERT training are a start, but additional areas can be explored. There are many trade schools in the local area that could use volunteer projects to help train students for permanent jobs. Active Independence Citizen Corps volunteers could be given consideration on City of Independence, Missouri, job applications.