



VOLUNTEER RISK AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT POLICIES

JUNE 2012



Introduction to the VRPM Policies

Since 2009 the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) has been funding a Volunteer Risk and Program Management (VRPM) project. The overall purposes of the project are to decrease and manage risks related to volunteer involvement in SMPs and increase the management and coordination of volunteer efforts, thereby enhancing the reach and effectiveness of SMPs across the country. SMPs will be safer for both volunteers and beneficiaries and liability exposure will decrease among SMP agencies.

Project objectives include:

1. Identify, evaluate and prioritize risks related to volunteer involvement in SMPs.
2. Create a risk management plan for the most pressing identified risks.
3. Develop risk management-oriented policies, procedures, standards and guidelines and associated resources and training around the involvement of volunteers in SMPs.
4. Develop additional best practices and associated resources and training in volunteer program management.

As part of the VRPM project described above, the AoA has developed comprehensive VRPM policies for SMPs. These policies provide guidance and direction to staff and volunteers and are designed to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and safety of SMP services. This document is the introduction to those policies and provides a brief overview of the policy implementation timeframe along with other resources available to the SMPs through the VRPM project.

Implementation Timeframe

Ever sensitive to the resource demands and infrastructure requirements necessitated by this project, the plan from the beginning has been to roll out the policies in stages to allow ample time to adjust, adapt, and meet new requirements. These are all complex, and in some cases, extensive undertakings. For this reason the SMP Resource Center and their subject matter experts have been working to create resources and guides to help with the implementation process. Most of these materials became available in May 2012.

The implementation deadline for the first round of policies is the end of June 2013. The second round of policies must be implemented by the end of December 2013 and the third round of policies by the end of December 2014, as illustrated below.

VRPM Implementation Timeline



Reminder – Not All Are Required

Only the *required* VRPM policies must be implemented, and they are designated as such in this policy list (see the Icon Legend below for details). Other policies are important enough for safe and effective volunteer program management to be *recommended*, while others are illustrative of a degree of *exemplary practice* in volunteer program management that SMP programs might aim for in the future.

Introduction, continued

Additional Resources

Keep in mind that this list of policies is merely the skeleton of the risk and volunteer management project. The policies have been and will continue to be supplemented by many additional resources, including:

Samples, Forms, Templates – A broad range of resources to support the implementation of policies and their associated procedures, including samples, forms, templates, checklists, and so on, have been created. They are accessed within the guides below, particularly the Policy Implementation Guide, and many are also available within the Volunteer Risk and Program Management area of the SMP Resource Center’s website, www.smpresource.org.

Enactment Guide - This guide helps SMPs begin the process of implementing the VRPM policies by providing an overview to the entire process, with an emphasis on working with agency leadership and partner organizations.

Policy Implementation Guide – This guide provides an overview, rationale, implementation tips, and resources for each policy.

Companion Guides – Three companion guides have been created to address key areas of volunteer risk and program management. These guides are:

- Risk Assessment Policy Companion Guide – This guide provides practical assistance for implementing the Policy 2.2, requiring an annual local risk assessment
- Screening Policy Companion Guide – This guide covers a systematic approach for screening volunteers for suitability (policies 3.31 – 3.59)
- Volunteer Performance Management Policy Companion Guide – This guide indicates how to develop a system for evaluating and managing volunteer performance and behavior

Volunteer Program Management Manual – The SMP Resource Center is preparing a volunteer program management manual customized to the SMP environment, due out by the end of 2012. It will provide tips and strategies for safe and effective volunteer engagement.

Volunteer Handbook – The SMP Resource Center has prepared a volunteer handbook template that SMPs can customize and distribute to their own and their host organizations’ volunteers. The handbook is an introduction to the SMP program for volunteers. It also addresses many of the volunteer performance and behavior related policies that apply directly to SMP volunteers.

Introduction, continued

Webinars – a series of webinars on key topics related to of the policies have been and will continue to be provided through the SMP Resource Center. Recordings of all VRPM webinars can be found on the Resource Center’s website, www.smpresource.org.

Ongoing Training and Assistance – As always, the SMP Resource Center will be available for ongoing assistance with this initiative into the future. As formal project activity winds down in 2013, the Center will continue to provide support, resources, and technical assistance, as needed, with the ongoing implementation and maintenance of risk and volunteer program management strategies.

The VRPM Polices – Three Ways

1. Quick Reference List of the Policies

This is a straight forward list of the policy *topics* (not including the policy statements) in a “programmatic order” - in logical sequence, beginning with a few introductory policies followed by risk management & health and safety policies, volunteer program management policies (including, among others, those pertaining to volunteer behavior, performance and roles), and finally, information technology policies.

2. The Policies (in their entirety)

Here is the full policy document in logical, programmatic sequence. This list includes the icons denoting which policies are required, which are recommended, and which represent an exemplary practice (see Icon Legend below for details). In addition, the “toolbox” icons on this list signal additional resources and materials to come.

3. [Policy Implementation Guide](#)

This electronic guide is organized in programmatic order and contains the full policy text. Each individual policy is followed by implementation guidance. It also explains whether or not each policy is required, recommended, or an exemplary practice. It is housed at www.smpresource.org.

Introduction, continued

Icon Legend

As you read through the policies you may find the following icons helpful:



Required: This icon identifies policies that SMPs are required to implement by their respective deadlines.



Recommended: The “*Thumbs Up*” icon identifies those policies that are highly recommended. They represent excellence in risk and/or volunteer program management and it is recommended that SMPs attempt to attain these standards.



Exemplary Practices: The “*Trophy*” icon identifies exceptional practice in volunteer program management. For most SMP programs these policies will be long term goals towards the creation of the very best volunteer program possible.



Resources: The Risk and Volunteer Program Management project will be supplying a wide range of resources to accompany the release of each of the three sets of policies, including samples, forms, templates, checklists and other support materials. The “*Toolbox*” icon indicates where resources will accompany the policy.



Information: This icon indicates cross-references to related policies, definitions, and other important information.

For questions or more information on the VRPM project or materials, contact:
VRPM@smpresource.org