



# 2019 SMP/SHIP NATIONAL CONFERENCE

## Creating Performance Measurements for Your Volunteer Program

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# Some opening comments

- ACL has relatively few requirements for how or what you measure in relationship to your volunteer program. It does require that you measure effectiveness in reaching beneficiaries.
- The VRPM policies don't require that you measure anything in your volunteer program.

# Why not?

- Performance measurements have to be tailored to exactly what you are doing and how you are going about doing it.
- Anything else wouldn't let you really figure out what you were doing and would simply require you to do work that probably wouldn't help you and would definitely irritate you.

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# So

- So this is a session just for those of you who have ever wondered “how am I doing?” or “is there anything I really need to worry about?”



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As Socrates put it:

“The unexamined life is  
not worth living...”

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# Form a Group

- Intelligent, alert faces
- 3-4 people



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- We don't have time for real introductions.
- Look around and say "hello."
- We do need to pick a group leader very quickly, so I'm going to impose a method for selecting that person whose primary virtue is that it is very quick.

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# “Point!”



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# Discussion Questions

- What facts, factors, processes or other things might tell you how you were doing in operating a volunteer program?
- What could you measure or track that would provide you with some reliable data on this subject?
- Try to settle on 1-2 things to share with the rest of the groups.

The point of performance measures

- To tell you *what* is happening
- To explain *why* it is happening

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# The basic process for performance measurement

- Establish a base number
- Record changes, so you can compare with previous history
- Compare your numbers with other programs
- If you're either lucky or good these will suggest why something is happening and how you might improve it.

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# Two basic techniques

- Strict research
- “I’d just like to have a clue about what is going on...”

# Possible performance measurements for volunteer programs

- Quantity measures
- Shape measures
- Satisfaction measures
- Process measures
- Retention measures
- Effectiveness measures

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# Quantity Measures

- # of volunteers
- # of volunteer hours
- # of beneficiaries served
- # of volunteers passing credentialing

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# Shape Measures

- Average length of service per volunteer
- Number of hours per volunteer per week/month
- Volunteers in different categories of age, race, sex, geography
- Sources of new volunteers
- Range of volunteer roles
- Amount of volunteer turnover

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# Satisfaction Measures

- Volunteers with volunteer role, management
- Staff with volunteers
- Beneficiaries with volunteers

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# Process Measures

- Intake
- Training
- Communication
- Supervision

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# Retention Measures

- Overall departure statistics
- Departure by time, stage of involvement
- Departure by demographics

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# Effectiveness Measures

- Outcome evaluation
- Cost effectiveness
- Donations by volunteers
- Outreach to new populations

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# Questions or Comments?

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# What you might miss if you don't track some things: demographics

- In 1960 volunteering in a hospital was the most popular form of volunteering in the United States, with almost 25% of the US volunteer population involved.
- By 1995, this percentage had shrunk to less than 5%.
- Today it is under 2%.

# An odd thing

- If at any point during the 30-year period between the 1960's and the 1990's you had conducted a volunteer satisfaction survey or a volunteer retention tracking system you would have found only outstanding results: these volunteers didn't quit and they were happy to be there. They also invited all their friends to volunteer.

# So what happened?

- 1950s: Volunteers were in their 30s
- 1960s: Volunteers were in their 40s
- 1970s: Volunteers were in their 50s
- 1980s: Volunteers were in their 60s
- 1990s: Volunteers were in their 70s
- 2000s: Volunteers were in their 80s, if they were still around

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# A brief warning:

- Typical volunteer programs with a wide age range of volunteers can survive this experience because they have time to notice it and to react.
- Programs that focus on involving seniors need to figure this trend out as quickly as possible or they can fall over the edge of the earth virtually overnight.
- Guess which group you fall into?



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# A final word, from one of my favorite people, Sir Josiah Stamp:

- “The government are very keen on amassing statistics. They collect them, add them, raise them to the  $n^{\text{th}}$  power, take the cube root and prepare wonderful diagrams. But you must never forget that every one of these figures comes in the first instance from the village watchman, who just puts down what he damn pleases.”

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