

College of Urban & Public Affairs > Hatfield School > Public Administration
Volunteer Engagement and Leadership
8 credits
Certificate of Professional Development

The Division of Public Administration at Portland State University is dedicated to preparing individuals for ethical, competent and effective public service in a range of roles in policy, management and leadership. The department seeks to improve practice by facilitating learning through community engagement, promoting scholarship, and encouraging reflection as we develop and work with leaders representing diverse communities across all domains of public service.

The Volunteer Engagement and Leadership series of class engages students in learning the various elements of leading a professional quality volunteer program in agencies and nonprofits. It uses the most current scholarship with time for reflection, interaction with other students, and opportunities for practical application. Students who successfully complete the four classes receive a certificate of professional development.

Recruitment of Volunteers (11 weeks) engages students in a marketing approach to the recruitment of volunteers. Interactive activities involve students in practical discussions of the different styles of volunteering—traditional and episodic; building a recruiting plan, advertising and promotion for volunteers, and the organization of a volunteer recruiting team. Assignments in all classes are interactive and designed to build skills directly applicable to a manager of volunteers program. Assignments can be used immediately in existing volunteer programs.

Training of Volunteers (10 weeks) engages students in organizing training sessions for volunteers. Topics include: how adults learn, learning styles, building content, measurable learning objectives, selecting the best teaching techniques, and evaluation of learning. Assignments in all classes are interactive and designed to build skills directly applicable to a manager of volunteers program. Assignments can be used immediately in existing volunteer programs.

Leadership and Management in Volunteer Programs (11 weeks)

Effective leadership begins and ends with successful communication. Managing volunteers requires knowledge of one's own communication and leadership style and that of others! Information must be passed accurately in order to lead people. Students in this class study the components of communication required to effectively lead and manage the work of volunteers: personal communication style, feedback, leadership, and building effective relationships.

Managing volunteers is based on an understanding of what motivates volunteers to serve and to stay. This class reviews four motivational theories and applies them in the volunteer setting. There is also opportunity to review conflict resolution strategies. Risk management is discussed in some depth.

Evaluation and Recognition for Volunteer Programs (11 weeks) tackles two functional areas for those who manage volunteers. Students tackle evaluation methods, types, and styles for programs and for individual volunteers. Motivational theories are connected to the effectiveness of different type of recognition, intrinsic and extrinsic.

Assignments in all classes are interactive and designed to build skills directly applicable to a manager of volunteers program. Assignments can be used immediately in existing volunteer programs.