Volunteer Services Workload Analysis

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

The Volunteer Services Office (VSO) oversees and administers all volunteer activities at the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) including activities within the hospital and several remote locations. Remote locations include areas outside of the main Ann Arbor hospital such as Motor Meals. The VSO experiences peak seasons of new volunteer processing during January, June, and September. VSO staff has reported that these peak seasons cause overwhelming stress and workload. The VSO is currently staffed by two coordinators (1 full time/1 part time) and one full time administrative assistant. The Volunteer Services Office asked our operations project team to conduct a workload analysis to determine if this heavy workload is due to redundant and inefficient steps within the volunteer application and placement process or if it is due to a shortage of staff within the office.

The purpose of this report was to present:

- Assessment of current VSO operations and tasks
- Recommendations for an improved volunteer application
- Recommendations for an improved system for managing and tracking volunteers
- Recommendations for number of staff during peak seasons
- Implementation steps for the provided recommendations

This report outlines our methods of data collection, key findings, and recommendations.

2. Approach and Methodology

To analyze the workload and process efficiency, our project team interviewed the VSO staff members, performed time studies, and performed work studies. Interviews with both the coordinators and the administrative assistant helped our project team further understand each of the staff member’s responsibilities, collect information on the current volunteer application process, and document process concerns and recommended areas of improvements. Our team conducted time studies to evaluate the staff tasks and work process within the Volunteer Services Office. Lastly, we performed a work sampling analysis where staff members wore random alarms with an average frequency of two times per hour. The purpose of the work sampling study was to determine the approximate percentage of time each staff member spent on given tasks during their work shift and to validate the data collected by the team’s time study observations.

The VSO Manager also provided the following information to aide in our analysis:

- List of VSO staff responsibilities
- Interview schedule for 2003
- Number of new volunteers processed per month
- Phone Log results
3. Key Findings and Recommendations

Based on the collected data we provided findings and recommendations for reducing VSO staff stress and increasing the efficiency of the volunteer application and placement process.

3.1 Workload Smoothing

The first area of improvement is smoothing the workload of the VSO. Due to the existence of large peaks in the number of new volunteers each year, it is necessary to reduce peaks and raise valleys by leveling the workload over the year.

**Workload Smoothing Findings**

- Workload (number of new volunteers) peaks in January, June, and September
- Number of new volunteers has been increasing annually
- Returning volunteers are placed during peak seasons
- VSO Manager reported that staff are overly accommodating to prospective and current volunteers

**Workload Smoothing Recommendations**

- Place returning volunteers prior to peak season
- Allow new community volunteers to interview during non-peak seasons
- Schedule additional office volunteers during peak seasons to level workload

3.2 Improved Volunteer Application and Placement Process

The second area for improvement is the volunteer application and placement process. Recommendations are based on eliminating delays and duplicate steps, and reducing the number of staff and volunteer interactions in the current process.

**Process Findings**

- Application and processing forms are filled out at VSO at time of interview
- Security Check information is sent to security department day of the interview and results are returned several weeks later
- Applicants may complete health screening and photo identification processing activities the day of the interview or at a different time
- After the volunteer completes the processing form, he/she returns to the VSO
- A printed copy of the online application gets attached to hard copy application
- Pre-Placement checklist is given to volunteers during general orientation

**Process Recommendations**

- Replace general orientation with information session and make first step in volunteer process
- Fully utilize online application
- Give security check information to security prior to interview
- Use interviews for screening purposes instead of informational purposes
- Place Blue Sheet Processing Form in drop box or send in University Mail to VSO

3.3 Website and Data Management

A third area of improvement is increasing the functionality of computer resources in the VSO. The two main computer resources include the volunteer management database, VolunteerWorks, and VSO web site. Recommendations are based on reducing database management time and increasing volunteer awareness of processing requirements.
Website and Data Management Findings
- Current website provides limited information on volunteering at UMHS
- Scheduling and placement information is duplicated in multiple computer resources

Website and Data Management Recommendations
- Replace current website with Project Team’s revised website
- Utilize VolunteerWorks software scheduling capabilities
- “Clean-up” VolunteerWorks™ software to better fit current storage uses
- Improve volunteer uniform checkout procedures

4. Future Studies

Because our studies did not take place during a peak season, we recommend the following studies be performed at a later time:
- Perform similar studies and analysis during peak periods
- Evaluate functionality of Volgistics Software which is expected to release in January of 2004
- Explore possibilities of implementing online annual video competency reviews and tests

5. Conclusion

Implementing these recommendations will result in reduced stress of the VSO staff and increased efficiency of the volunteer application and placement process without the addition of staff during peak seasons.

The following are the projected results from implementing the above recommendations:
- Decreased workload in peak seasons
- Less variation in the application process
- Increased computer efficiency
- Information easily accessible to prospective volunteers
INTRODUCTION

The Volunteer Services Office (VSO) at the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) experiences peak seasons of new volunteer processing during the months of January, June, and September. The VSO Manager reported that these peaks cause an overwhelming workload on the VSO staff. Currently the office is staffed by two coordinators (1 full-time, 1 part-time) and one full-time administrative assistant.

The VSO oversees and administers all volunteer activities at the UMSH including activities within the hospital and several remote locations. Remote locations include areas outside of the main Ann Arbor Hospital such as Motor Meals. Approximately 1600-1700 new volunteers are processed annually (excluding Motor Meals). Processing activities include, but are not limited to, interviewing applicants, entering volunteer contact information and placement into a database, conducting a general orientation, and training new volunteers when applicable. The VSO asked us to conduct a workload analysis to determine if this heavy workload is due to inefficiency of the volunteer application and placement process, or if it is due to a shortage of office staff.

The purpose of this report was to present:
- Assessment of current VSO operations and tasks
- Recommendations for an improved volunteer application & placement process
- Recommendations for an improved system for managing and tracking volunteers
- Recommendations for number of staff during peak seasons
- Implementation steps for the provided recommendations

To analyze the staff workload, our project team conducted time and work sampling studies. These studies provided information on what tasks significantly consume each staff member’s day, and the completion times and frequency of each of those tasks. From further investigations through interviews and general observations, a flowchart of the current volunteer application and placement process was created and analyzed for areas of improvement. This report provides findings and recommendations for reducing VSO staff stress and increasing the efficiency of the volunteer application and placement process.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

To analyze the workload and process efficiency, we conducted interviews, time studies, and work studies.

1. Interviews

1.1 Description
We interviewed the two coordinators and one administrative assistant to:
- Better understand each of their responsibilities
- Collect information on the current volunteer application and placement process
- Document process concerns and potential areas of improvements
Two team members interviewed each of the three staff members for approximately 1 hour between the weeks of September 28th and October 5th, 2003. Interviews were scheduled by the VSO Manager and took place at the VSO. A list of responsibilities for each staff member and brief volunteer application process description were provided by the VSO Manager prior to the interviews. The following questions were asked to each staff member:

- What are your responsibilities in Volunteer Services?
- What steps do new volunteers have to follow before they can begin volunteering at UMHS? How are you involved in each of these steps?
- What happens during a new volunteer interview?
- What aspects of the volunteer application process do you see as areas of improvement?

Most interviews took on the form of a conversation and all staff members openly discussed the current operations of the office.

1.2 Summary of Interview Results
The following information was gathered from the interviews with the VSO staff.

Current Volunteer Application and Placement Process
Each applicant is required to complete the following steps prior to volunteering at UMHS:

1. Fill out Volunteer Application
2. Interview with Volunteer Services Coordinator
3. Obtain Hospital Blue Card and Photo Identification (ID) Cards
4. Complete Health Screening Requirements
5. Attend General Orientation
6. Complete Volunteer Unit Training (if applicable)

The current volunteer application process is often altered to accommodate volunteers with scheduling conflicts or who do not complete the above steps in the sequential order. Currently there are no checks in place to ensure that a volunteer has completed the required procedures. The flowchart of the current volunteer application and placement process is diagramed in Appendix A.

Online Application and VolunteerWorks
The VSO uses a database management program called VolunteerWorks to keep track of volunteer information. When a volunteer fills out an online application on the VSO website (www.med.umich.edu/volunteer), the administrative assistant downloads it from the website into VolunteerWorks. The information provided by the online application includes: contact information for the applicant, emergency contact information, and references. However, the only information imported into the database is the applicant contact information. All remaining volunteer information must be manually entered into the database by the administrative assistant or an office volunteer. If the information is entered by an office volunteer, the administrative assistant checks the data for accuracy and makes any necessary changes.

Scheduling and Placement
Staff uses multiple computer resources to schedule and place a volunteer. During the interview, placement and scheduling assignments are written on the new volunteer’s application. The information is later added to a Microsoft Word document and entered into VolunteerWorks.
Volunteer Uniforms
Nearly all volunteers are required to wear uniforms. These uniforms are checked out directly from the VSO. Several times a year, additional uniforms are ordered to replace those that are not returned by a volunteer.

2. Time Study

2.1 Description
Each project team member observed and recorded Volunteer Services staff tasks for 4-6 hours per week from October 12th, 2003 to November 9th, 2003. Team members timed VSO staff tasks using a stop watch. All tasks were documented in a data collection sheet (Appendix B) compiled from a responsibility list provided by the VSO Manager. The sample size for the time study was 250 samples.

The purpose of the time study was to determine the tasks completed by each staff member and to calculate the average time spent on each task. These times used to estimate the amount of time savings that would result from our recommendations.

2.2 Summary of Time Study Results
Table 2 below shows the average time and standard deviation for each task of the current volunteer application and placement process.

Table 1: Average Times Observed for VSO Tasks (minutes:seconds)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check In</td>
<td>1:49</td>
<td>0:06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>App Fill Out</td>
<td>8:57</td>
<td>1:52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>21:42</td>
<td>2:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk to next building</td>
<td>1:08</td>
<td>0:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Completes processing</td>
<td>25:20</td>
<td>9:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Returns Processing Sheet</td>
<td>1:41</td>
<td>0:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checks out w/ Coordinator</td>
<td>2:23</td>
<td>0:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Hour Logs</td>
<td>0:58</td>
<td>0:36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking Pre-Entered Data</td>
<td>1:21</td>
<td>1:53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updating Volunteer Profiles</td>
<td>0:38</td>
<td>0:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement Description Update</td>
<td>4:15</td>
<td>4:49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Call</td>
<td>2:07</td>
<td>2:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk In</td>
<td>4:38</td>
<td>4:38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Validation</td>
<td>0:21</td>
<td>0:08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filing Apps</td>
<td>0:25</td>
<td>0:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Response</td>
<td>4:19</td>
<td>4:48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation Letters</td>
<td>1:55</td>
<td>1:32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Work Sampling Study

3.1 Description
To obtain an accurate representation of the tasks performed on a daily basis, a work sampling study was conducted on the VSO staff. The work sampling study measured the percentage of time each staff member spent on given tasks during their work shift. The sample size for this study was a minimum of 880 samples.

For the study, both the coordinators and administrative assistant carried random alarms that were set to either beep or vibrate according to a uniform distribution with an average of 2 pages per hour, a maximum of 4 per hour, and a minimum of 0 per hour. When the alarm beeped or vibrated, the staff member made a check mark on the data collection sheet in the row that most accurately described the task that she was performing when the alarm went off. If a task was being performed other than what was on the collection sheet, the staff member placed a check mark in the “Miscellaneous” row and wrote a brief description of the task. The work sampling study data collection sheet can be found in Appendix C.

The start and end times were recorded on each time sheet to accommodate the different work schedules for each staff member. The administrative assistant and one coordinator typically worked an 8 hour day. The second coordinator worked part time which typically consisted of a 6 hour day. This included any breaks and/or lunches. The work sampling study took from October 26th, 2003 to November 20th, 2003. The study was extended to November 24th, 2003 due to vacation and sick days.

3.2 Summary of Work Sampling Study Results
Findings from the Work Sampling Study analysis are given below:

Administrative Assistant Spends Significant Time on Data Management and Phone Calls
As shown in Figure 1 below, the VSO administrative assistant spends approximately 38% of the work day (3 hours per day) on data management and approximately 22% on phone calls (1.75 hours per day).

![Figure 1: Administrative Assistant Spends Significant Time on Data Management and Phone Calls](image)
The 38% spent on data management can be broken down as follows:
- 17% updating volunteer profiles
- 10% logging volunteer hours
- 6% checking pre-entered data
- 3% entering new volunteer application information
- 2% other data management activities

The 22% spent on phone calls can be broken down as follows:
- 13% other issues/concerns
- 3.5% general volunteer maintenance
- 3.5% general problems/issues
- 2% new volunteer management

*Coordinators Spend Significant Time on Email Follow up/Response*
As shown by Figure 2 below, both coordinators spend significant time responding or following up on emails.

*Figure 2: Coordinator 1 Spends Significant Time on Email Follow up/Response, Volunteer Interaction, and Phone Calls*
Figure 3: Coordinator 2 Spends Time on Database Management, Email Follow up/Response, and Phone Calls

For coordinator 1, the part time coordinator, approximately 31% of the workday (almost 2 hours) is spent on email follow up and response. Coordinator 1 also spends significant time on volunteer interaction and phone calls. For coordinator 2, the full time coordinator, approximately 20% of the workday (over 1.5 hours per day) is spent on email follow up and response. Coordinator 2 also spends significant time on database management and phone calls.

In addition to the administrative assistant, the two coordinators spend approximately 7 hours per week managing the database.

The results from the work study data do not correlate to a peak season. For example, during a peak season, as much as 75% of a coordinator’s time would be spent on interviews.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the following recommendations is to:
- Shift workload from peak seasons to non-peak seasons to smooth workload
- Improve data management to reduce staff time spent processing new volunteers
- Improve volunteer information resources to prepare for processing activities
- Minimize number of multiple visits to VSO by volunteers

1. Workload Smoothing

The following presents findings to support reports that VSO staff is overworked and present recommendations for leveling the workload over non-peak periods.
1.1 Workload Smoothing Findings

Existence of Peak Seasons

From data given by the VSO Manager, three peak seasons for new volunteers have been identified during January, June, and September as shown in Figure 3 below. These are the three months that correspond with the start of a school term at the University of Michigan. This is consistent with information provided by the VSO Manager stating that the majority of volunteers are University of Michigan students.

![Figure 3: Study Period](image)

Figure 3: Study Period

The period over which our analysis took place is represented by the two vertical lines in Figure 3 above. This raised the concern that data that was collected and used in drawing conclusions is biased because we studied the office in a non-peak season. Therefore, data collected may not accurately represent the new volunteer processing activities that take place during a peak season.

Due to the low levels of work during October and November, we are aware that the staff's working pace may decrease. This may change the staff operations and processes depending on the period. One example that has been observed is the change in the interview process. Currently (during off-peak season) the staff conducts one-on-one interviews. However, during peak-hours, a large number of students are in the queue, coordinators interview multiple applicants simultaneously. Due to the changes in the volunteer application process during peak and non-peak seasons, it is not possible to correlate the time study and work study data collected during a non-peak season to a peak season.

Number of New Volunteers Increasing Yearly

From data provided by the VSO Manager, the number of new volunteers has increased for all three peak seasons during 2001, 2002, and 2003. This is shown below in Figure 4.

![Figure 4: Project Study Conducted During Non-Peak Season](image)

Figure 4: Project Study Conducted During Non-Peak Season

The period over which our analysis took place is represented by the two vertical lines in Figure 4 above. This raised the concern that data that was collected and used in drawing conclusions is biased because we studied the office in a non-peak season. Therefore, data collected may not accurately represent the new volunteer processing activities that take place during a peak season.

Due to the low levels of work during October and November, we are aware that the staff's working pace may decrease. This may change the staff operations and processes depending on the period. One example that has been observed is the change in the interview process. Currently (during off-peak season) the staff conducts one-on-one interviews. However, during peak-hours, a large number of students are in the queue, coordinators interview multiple applicants simultaneously. Due to the changes in the volunteer application process during peak and non-peak seasons, it is not possible to correlate the time study and work study data collected during a non-peak season to a peak season.

Number of New Volunteers Increasing Yearly

From data provided by the VSO Manager, the number of new volunteers has increased for all three peak seasons during 2001, 2002, and 2003. This is shown below in Figure 4.
Figure 5: Number of New Volunteers Increasing during Peak Seasons (2000-2003)

The greatest increase is in the September peak season. In one year (2000 to 2001), the number of new volunteers increased by 60%. Moreover, in two years (2000 to 2002), the number of new volunteers increased by 116%. No additional staff has been added to accommodate the increase in new volunteers.

Returning Volunteers Placed Before and During Peak Seasons

Just prior to each peak season current volunteers can begin to choose their placement for the following term. This gives priority to current volunteers over new volunteers that will be interviewed and placed in the following month. They can either continue their placement they are currently at, change placements, or choose not to volunteer. All prospective, returning volunteers are notified and can choose a variety of methods for placement. Returning volunteers may choose their placement by email, phone, or in person. The placement process for returning volunteers continues through the peak season. Once new volunteers begin interviewing placements are filled on a first-come-first-serve basis.

During the placement for a returning volunteer, updates to the volunteer’s information are made. Updates include the following:

- Personal information (i.e. address)
- Medical updates (i.e. TB skin test)
- Video updates (i.e. HIPAA, fire safety)

No Additional Staff Needed During Peak Seasons

To calculate the percentage of work time the coordinators spends on interviewing, the following factors were considered:

- number of interviews per peak
- number of work days per peak
- number of coordinator hours spent interviewing per day
- total time per interview

Table 2 below shows the percentage of time per day spent conducting interviews.

**Table 2: Percentage of Time per Day Spent on Interviews by Coordinators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical Worst Case</th>
<th>September 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Interviews per peak</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Work Days per peak</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Coordinator Hours per day</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time per interview (hours)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% time/day spent on interviews</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown above, approximately 70% of the coordinators time is spent interviewing applicants during the peak season of September 2003. Given the practical worst case scenario, if the number of interviews increase by 23% and the number of work days are increased by 7 days, only 62% of the coordinators time would be spent interviewing applicants. Both assume that coordinator 1 interviews for 8 hours per day and coordinator 2 interviews for 6 hours per day. Although this shows that no overtime is necessary for interviews, the September 2003 interview schedule displays that the coordinators consistently work overtime. For example, coordinator 1 worked overtime 9 out of 22 days (41%), and coordinator 2 worked overtime 3 out of 22 days (14%). This does not include essential tasks, other than interviews, that must be completed during the day. Overtime hours were shown to range between 1 and 4 hours over the coordinator’s regular working day.

**1.2 Workload Smoothing Recommendations**

*Process returning volunteers prior to peak seasons*
We recommend that returning volunteers be notified two months prior to peak season to update their volunteer status. This should be done before the deadline provided by the VSO. This deadline should be set at least one month prior to a peak season to allow for all returning volunteer processing to be completed with out overlapping new volunteer processing. Once returning volunteers have been placed, new volunteer interviews should begin. This will allow interviews for new volunteers to begin sooner and will also increase the number of months that interviews may take place.

*Allow new community volunteers to interview during non peak seasons*
Our recommendation is to conduct new community volunteer interviews during non peak seasons. This will reduce the number of new volunteers interviewing during peak times.

*Schedule additional office volunteers during peak time.*
These volunteers will be available to give directions to processing activities, act as runners for anything that may need to be done outside of the office, and check that interviewees have the required paperwork completed. The office volunteers could also accept the completed processing form and complete uniform check out. This will limit the number of interruptions and total interaction time with the VSO staff. This will also allow the VSO staff to focus on the interviewing, processing, and placement of new volunteers by reducing interruptions.
1.3 Workload Smoothing Implementation

The most important step in implementing the above recommendations is enforcement. It is necessary for the VSO to follow these procedures instead of attempting to accommodate prospective and/or current volunteers who come to the office. Enforcing volunteer requirements prior to the placement interview is necessary to receive the benefits of a standardized process. Implementing and enforcing a standardized process will increase efficiency within the Volunteer Services Office and decrease the time the new volunteer spends with the VSO staff throughout the volunteer application and placement process.

- Redefine returning volunteer placement schedule
- Create new volunteer placement within VSO

2. Improved Volunteer Application and Placement Process

The volunteer application process has been redesigned to create simple and standardized steps for a volunteer to follow prior to volunteering within UMHS. Each of these steps has been placed accordingly to help re-enforce volunteer requirements.

2.1 Process Findings

Application and processing forms filled out at VSO during interview time

When an applicant comes to the Volunteer Services Office for an interview, he/she spends approximately 7-10 minutes filling out a volunteer application. Unless the volunteer comes early to the interview, completing the application takes place during the interview time. Since the interview typically lasts 15-20 minutes, this could cause a back up of interviews during peak season when interviews are scheduled back to back. The coordinators compensate for this by having multiple applicants interview at one time if possible.

Security Check information sent to security department day of interview and results are returned several weeks later

When an applicant checks in with the administrative assistant prior to interviewing, the administrative assistant collects security check authorization from the applicant. The administrative assistant then sends the applicants name and license number to the security office to check whether or not any felonies have been committed. Results from the criminal check are not returned to the Volunteer Services Office for several weeks.

Although it is rare, it is possible that a volunteer may begin volunteering at UMHS although he/she has committed a felony. Additional efforts from VSO will be needed to cancel/omit the volunteer’s activities and find a replacement.

Applicants may complete blue sheet processing activities the day of interview or at a different time

These blue sheet processing activities consist of obtaining a blue hospital card, obtaining a photo ID card, and completing health screening. A signature is required from each processing location inside the hospital to confirm each activity has been completed. Once completed the form must be returned to the VSO.

Some volunteers do not schedule time to complete the interview and processing activities on the same day and will either come back a different day or not complete the processing prior to starting volunteering. This causes additional interaction with the VSO staff whether the staff has to track down the new volunteer to make sure the processing gets done or simply validate additional parking.
After completion of processing form (blue sheet), the volunteer returns to the VSO. After completing the processing procedures, the new volunteer returns to the office to drop off the signed blue sheet, check out a uniform, and receive parking validation. Some exceptions include times when uniforms are distributed during the interview or when the blue sheet is mailed back to the VSO using University mail. Bringing the volunteer back to the office requires additional interaction with VSO staff.

Online application gets attached to hard copy application
Even if an applicant fills out an online application, the applicant still has to fill out a hard copy application. The online application is used to import a minimal amount of volunteer information into the volunteer management database, VolunteerWorks. Since the online application only contains approximately 1/3 of the information needed to volunteer, a hard copy is still needed to get the additional information. A copy of the online application is printed off and stapled to the hard copy application. This presents a duplication of paperwork, significant time spent manually entering application information into VolunteerWorks, and inefficient usage on online application.

Pre-Placement checklist is given to volunteers during last stage of process
During general orientation, volunteers receive an information packet containing general information about volunteering at UMHS, and watch videos on safety and patient privacy. In this packet of information, a pre-placement checklist is provided. This checklist outlines activities that must be completed prior to interviewing. Because this information is provided after the interview at orientation, many volunteers are uninformed and unprepared for the interview and processing activities. Coordinators spend interview time going over this general information such as volunteer commitment and possible areas of placement that is later provided at orientation after the volunteer has already been placed. Time is also spent answering emails and phone calls in response to questions that are answered at the orientation.

2.2 Process Recommendations
The recommended volunteer process flowchart can be seen in Appendix E. Recommended changes include:

Replace General Orientation with Information Session and Make First Step in Volunteer Process
Our recommendation is to replace the General Orientation with an ‘Information Session’ and make it the first step in the volunteering process instead of the last. The session will provide general information about volunteering at UMHS, help potential volunteers confirm commitment and determine areas of interest, and allow those interested to schedule a placement interview. The pre-placement checklist will be distributed to instruct volunteers as to what requirements MUST be done prior to their interview. The session will also show the required safety and HIPAA videos. In the future these videos will be available online.

The following are the projected results:
- Re-enforced volunteer requirements to help standardize process.
- Increased volunteer awareness and preparedness.
- Decreased phone/email time currently used for scheduling interview.
- Decreased phone/email/walk-in for general questions about volunteering.
- Reduced average time per volunteer interview because information previously provided.
Fully Utilize Online Application
Currently, the online application only contained approximately 1/3 of the information needed to volunteer at UMHS. Our project team has modified the online application to include the missing information. The new online application can be seen in Appendix F.

All volunteers should fill out an online application so that the information can be imported into VolunteerWorks. For those not able to access the web, these volunteers should be instructed to come in to the VSO at least 15 minutes prior to the interview to complete the online application at the office. Assistance should be provided as needed to help volunteer to complete the online application.

The following are the projected results:
- Decreased paperwork handling.
- Eliminated duplicate paperwork.
- Decreased data entry time.
- Eliminated interview time used for filling out the application.

Provide Security Check Information to Security Prior to Interview
The online application should require the information needed for the security check. Once the online application is received and the applicant has agreed to the security check, the administrative assistant can send the information to the security department. This should take place prior to the volunteer’s interview, allowing the results to be returned to the VSO before the volunteer begins volunteering.

Use interviews for screening purposes instead of informational purposes
Since all general information should be provided in the Information Session, the coordinator can focus on screening the volunteer to confirm that the individual is a good candidate for volunteering at UMHS. Once confirmed the coordinator can then evaluate the applicant’s interests and matching those interests to the hospital’s needs. Tasks such as parking validation and uniform check out should also take place during interview time instead of after completing blue sheet processing activities.

The following are the projected results:
- Improved screening process.
- Decreased number of interruptions between new volunteer and VSO staff.

Blue Sheet Processing Form placed in drop box or sent in University Mail
The health screening and photo identification (blue sheet) processing activities should continue to be completed after the interview. Instead of returning to the Volunteer Services Office to return the signed sheet, the sheet should be placed in a drop box in the office or mailed through University mail in which the envelope is provided by the coordinator at the interview.

The following is the projected result
- Decreased number of interruptions between new volunteer and VSO staff.

2.3 Process Implementation
The most important step in implementing the recommended process changes is enforcement. This means that the VSO staff must require that all interested applicants complete the pre-placement checklist prior to interviewing. Volunteers will be provided assistance as needed.
Additional communication with the security office may be necessary to improve the security check process and ensure that the information returns before a volunteer begins volunteering.

The online application has been revised so that it can replace the current application.

3. Website and Data Management Recommendations

3.1 Website and Data Management Findings

*Current website provides limited information on volunteering at UMHS*

Although the current UMHS Volunteer Services website provides detailed information for volunteer activities, it lacks a clear and concise outline of what steps need to be completed prior to becoming a volunteer. Volunteers may be easily overwhelmed by the amount of information provided.

*Scheduling and Placement Information is duplicated in multiple computer resources*

Currently the volunteer services office uses a series of Microsoft word documents and the VolunteerWorks to store volunteer information in their computer system. The following tables indicate the different areas of information storage and the information currently stored in each:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Placement Schedule</th>
<th>Table 4: Placement Description</th>
<th>Table 5: VolunteerWorks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Placement Schedule</strong></td>
<td><strong>Placement Description</strong></td>
<td><strong>VolunteerWorks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS Word</td>
<td>MS Word</td>
<td>Database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept. Info</td>
<td>Job Title</td>
<td>Volunteer Info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Dept. Info</td>
<td>Personal Info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Placements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone No.</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept. Contact</td>
<td>Phone No.</td>
<td>Dept. Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Dept. Contact</td>
<td>Dept. Info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone No.</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Phone No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule</td>
<td>Phone No.</td>
<td>Hours Volunteer Req'd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently scheduled</td>
<td></td>
<td>Training Req'd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteer's name, email, and</td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>start date</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently scheduled volunteer's name, email, and start date

Qualifications

Training Req'd

Responsibilities

Dept. Info

Name

Address

Phone No.

Dept. Supervisor

Name

Title

Email

Phone No.

Volunteer Supervisor

Name

Title

Email

Phone No.
These resources are all used to manage volunteer information. Initially, when a volunteer is interviewed, the volunteer’s placement and scheduling is written on the volunteer’s application by the coordinator. The information is later placed on a Microsoft Word document which shows the schedule for a given month for each placement area. Finally, once confirmed that the volunteer has returned his/her blue processing form, the placement and scheduling is entered into VolunteerWorks.

### 3.2 Website and Data Management Recommendations

*Replace current website with Project Team’s revised website*

Our project team has revised the website to include the following information:

- How to become a volunteer
- Upcoming Information Session dates, times, and locations
- Areas within UMHS where volunteers can be placed
- Online Application including all information needed to apply for a volunteer position
- What to do on days you volunteer
- Policies and Procedures for volunteering at UMHS
- How to contact the Volunteer Services Office

This website outlines what sequential steps need to occur for a person to volunteer at UMHS. For example, a pre-placement checklist is provided along with a list of upcoming information sessions. It also describes expectations for volunteers on the days they volunteer. This website clearly organizes and conveys how to become a volunteer and what to expect as a volunteer.

*Fully Utilize VolunteerWorks Software Scheduling Capabilities*

Our project team recommends full utilization of VolunteerWorks scheduling capabilities and elimination of Microsoft Word documents used for scheduling and placement purposes. VolunteerWorks has a section devoted to job scheduling that is currently not in use. This section has the capability to store a scheduling and placement information for each volunteer and placement area.

*“Clean-up” VolunteerWorks™ software to better fit current storage uses*

To improve database management, our project team recommends eliminating fields in VolunteerWorks that are not being used or are not seen as being used in the future. Eliminating these fields should decrease the time to enter new data and decrease the time to check pre-entered data since the staff will not have to ignore or skip over unused fields.

*Implement Volunteer Uniform Checkout Procedures in VolunteerWorks*

A final recommendation for improved usage of computer resources is in the area of uniform checkout. The VolunteerWorks database is fully capable of holding information about which volunteers have checked out uniforms. Coupling this with the availability of tracking checkouts in the reminders tab under each volunteer’s personal information section each uniform can be tracked.

### 3.3 Website and Data Management Implementation

To implement the recommendations for changes to the website and data management, the following should take place:
Website
The Volunteer Services website and online application has been revised to replace the current site. A CD with all web files has been given to the VSO Manager for implementation at her discretion. The project team is available to make changes to the website until December 16th, 2003.

VolunteerWorks
To implement the scheduling and placement capabilities of VolunteerWorks, all current information stored in the Microsoft Word documents must be transferred into the database. Transferring this information would consist of “cutting and pasting” the information from the Word document to the appropriate location within VolunteerWorks. Future schedules and placements should be directly entered into the database.

To track the number of hours served at each placement for each volunteer, a volunteer must be added to the department schedule and a job must be entered in the jobs tab under that volunteer’s record.

Step-by-step procedures for implementing the scheduling functions of VolunteerWorks are included in Appendix F. This is a chapter from the user’s manual and key points have been highlighted.

To format the VolunteerWorks database and eliminate unnecessary fields several steps must be performed. First, a comprehensive list of all unnecessary fields must be compiled. Second, all the fields that currently not used must be hidden by using the system setup commands within the VolunteerWorks database. Appendix G contains an excerpt from the user’s manual outlining how fields may be formatted and hidden.

FUTURE STUDIES
Our project team recommends the following future studies be conducted:

1. Perform Similar Analysis during Peak Periods

Due to the timing of our project, our project team was not able to conduct studies during any of the VSO’s three peak seasons. Therefore, our time and work sampling studies do not represent activities that take place during the peak seasons.

A follow-up study, including both time and work sampling studies, should be conducted during at least one peak season. From this study, times for the following activities should be obtained:

- New Volunteer Interviews
- Database Entry (new applications, information updates, etc.)
- Volunteer Health Screening and Photo ID processing activities
- Secondary tasks (Bambi back pack, magazines, etc.)

The follow-up study should also include analysis of the current volunteer application process to determine if the process changes from our study have been implemented, and if so, the changes have been beneficial. Additional process changes following the study should be recommended to further improve the volunteer application process.
2. Evaluate Functionality of Volgistics Software

The company that manufactures VolunteerWorks™ is ready to release a new volunteer database software package, Volgistics. This program is supposed to have increased online capabilities. Neither an accurate description nor a demo of this package was available so proper analysis could not be performed. We recommend that this package be evaluated when a demo is available to determine if it might provide a better fit for the VSO.

3. Implement Online Video Competency Reviews and Tests

Currently the UMHS uses an online video training system for employees. This training system consists of a series of safety and health related video reviews and competency tests that must be completed annually by employees. These videos are only available internally within the UMHS computer network. If this system is made externally available to volunteers, it would be possible to eliminate the showing of these videos from the general orientation. Eliminating videos from the general orientation would allow coordinators to spend more time explaining the application and placement process, and the necessary steps that each volunteer must follow. This will also provide documentation that each volunteer has watched the necessary videos and comprehends what he/she has watched.

More information will be necessary to determine whether the online video training matches the needs of the Volunteer Services Office. The following people may be contacted for further information:

Karen Fischer   fischerk@med.umich.edu
Ellen Meiselman  emeiselm@med.umich.edu

CONCLUSION

In general, the project team feels that if the recommendations are implemented, the VSO staff will feel reduced stress during peak seasons.

Projected results from implementing the above recommendations are:

- Decreased workload in peak seasons
- Less variation in the application process
- Increased computer efficiency
- Information easily accessible to prospective volunteers

Table 6 below outlines results further outlines from our recommendations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workload Smoothing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process returning volunteers prior to peak season</td>
<td>Reduced # of interviews during peak by &gt; 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow new community volunteers to interview during non peak seasons</td>
<td>Reduced # of interviews during peak by &gt; 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule additional office volunteers during peaks</td>
<td>Reduced interaction time/interruptions with staff by &gt; 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteer Application and Placement Process</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Info Session’ first step in process</td>
<td>Reduced # of phone calls &gt; 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully utilize online application</td>
<td>Reduced interview time by 8 min 57 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide security check information to security prior to interview</td>
<td>Reduced chance of applicant volunteering with unknown felony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing form placed in drop box or sent in University Mail</td>
<td>Reduced interaction time/interruptions with staff by 4 min 3 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Website and Data Management</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace current website with Project Team’s revised website</td>
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<td>Eliminates duplicate work</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>