

It is important to provide an orientation for new volunteers. Volunteers need to be aware of job duties, supervisory roles, personnel policies, affirmative action practices, and other administrative or programmatic policies. While the Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC) provides an orientation for all volunteers in its trainings and workshops, each volunteer literacy program should provide its own personalized orientation. The orientation should introduce the volunteer to your organization and your specific program, including goals, services and resources. If possible, it should include best practices in volunteer program management. The following is a sample outline of a volunteer orientation. Feel free to use what works for you and your organization, and remember that you can always add or change things later.

I. Introductions

- Staff/volunteers
- Overview of program/agency
- Overview of learners
- Associate relationship with the Minnesota Literacy Council

II. Roles and Responsibilities

- Learners
- Volunteers
- Staff/volunteer coordinator
- Program/Agency
- The MLC
- Risk management issues

III. Curriculum and Tutoring Assignments

- Curriculum outline
- Samples of curriculum
- Overview of the placement process
- Evaluating learner progress
- Program calendar

IV. Resources

- Staff expertise
- Volunteer tutor and learner expertise
- Photocopying and supplies
- MLC Trainings and In-Service Workshops
- The MLC lending library and online resources

Orientation materials may include:

- Brochures outlining the organization, school district, or adult literacy program
- Job description and reporting structure
- Volunteer and learner placement process
- Program calendar
- Rights and responsibilities of the volunteer, learner, and program
- Program policies and procedures
- Record-keeping forms
- Coordinator contact information
- A list of contact information from other program volunteers
- A substitute teacher list and absence policy
- A program “wish list” (sometimes volunteers can help organizations acquire wish list items)
- Other volunteer opportunities in the program
- Information on adult learning theory
- Cultural information for the groups you serve
- General tutoring tips
- Training opportunities, including the MLC In-Service Workshop schedules