

# Tutor Coordinator Handbook



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# Introduction

This handbook has been designed for administrators and tutor coordinators of Pennsylvania adult education programs. It can be useful to programs with existing tutoring components or for programs considering a new tutoring program.

Volunteer tutors and classroom aides can be wonderful resources for adult education programs. They allow us to offer more students the opportunities and attention they need to make progress toward their goals, and they bring a diversity of talents and experiences to our programs. When volunteers are properly trained and supported, they can make a positive impact on the lives of our students and the effectiveness of our programs. This handbook is designed to help tutor coordinators to recruit, train, and retain volunteers.

Sections of the handbook include information shared by tutor coordinators throughout Pennsylvania. Other tutor coordinators have reported that they find these strategies, techniques, and resources extremely useful. Thank you to the many tutor coordinators who have shared their experiences and resources.

## Definitions and Job Descriptions

Tutor coordinators are encouraged to read the Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL) Guidelines, which are updated annually and posted on the [Pennsylvania Department of Education's website](#).

The following sections are especially relevant to the tutor coordinator role:

- **Tutoring** 403.2.4
- **Tutor Coordinator** 501.6
- **Volunteer Classroom Aide Program** AA1.4
- **Tutoring Program for Adults** Appendix F

Tutor coordinator roles vary from program to program; for example, some tutor coordinators are more involved with classroom aides than others, so if you have questions about how your role compares to the description in the guidelines, please reach out to your supervisor and/or program administrator.

# Job Descriptions

The previous section included general job descriptions for the tutor coordinator, volunteer tutor, and classroom aide as outlined by the AEFL Guidelines. Your agency would benefit from elaborating on the tutor job description and making them specific to your program and learners' needs.

Additionally, tutors may have questions about the job such as:

- What will I be doing?
- How often will I volunteer?
- Where will I be tutoring?
- What kind of support will I receive?
- Would I prefer being a tutor or a classroom aide?

Those questions can be answered in the job description. In [Appendix A](#), you will find examples of volunteer tutor and classroom aide job descriptions from programs throughout Pennsylvania. Below is a list of components commonly found in volunteer job descriptions. This may help you in creating or reviewing your program's job descriptions.

## Components of Volunteer Position Job Descriptions<sup>1</sup>

1. **Position Title:** Recognize your volunteers with a title that is appropriate to their role.
2. **Purpose:** Let the volunteer know how the role will impact the agency's mission. (This may be included in the position summary.)
3. **Position Summary:** Write a clear and concise position description.
4. **Responsibilities and Duties:** Describe exactly what you want the volunteer to do, including tasks like writing lesson plans and completing reports (if applicable).
5. **Work Location:** Be specific about where the volunteer will be working and include guidelines if the tutor and learner are responsible for agreeing on a location.
6. **Qualifications:** Include required education, skills, abilities, experience, and personal characteristics. Distinguish between skills that are required and those that are simply "nice to have." Describe any required background checks or screening tests for volunteers.
7. **Time Commitment:** List length of service requested, hours per week/month, and any other special requirements.
8. **Orientation, Training, and Support Provided:** Let volunteers know what kind of training will be required and how it will be provided.
9. **Volunteer Supervisor and Contact Information:** Let volunteers know who the volunteer supervisor is and how to contact that person. Also consider including a link to your website so prospective volunteers can get more information.

<sup>1</sup> Sources: <https://www.501commons.org/resources/tools-and-best-practices/volunteer-management/volunteer-design-1>  
<https://volpro.net/right-volunteer-job-description/>

# Students

Ultimately, the volunteer program exists to serve students as they work toward their goals. Consider how it is presented to students and how you will ensure that students working with volunteer tutors will receive the same support as students in your class-based program.

## Orientation

Once you have thought about how to define the role of tutors and classroom aides at your agency, consider how you will introduce these volunteers to students. Many programs use part of student orientation to let prospective students know that they may have a chance to work with volunteers. This is an excellent time to point out that being matched with a volunteer is not a punishment and to explain how volunteers can help students make progress toward their goals. It is also helpful to point out that volunteers are carefully screened and trained, but that students may request a different solution if they are assigned to a volunteer who is not a good match. It is a good idea to address the following points during orientation:

- Who are volunteers?
- How are they selected/screened/trained?
- Why might a student be matched with a volunteer?
- Can a student meet with a volunteer in addition to attending class?
- What happens if a student and volunteer aren't a good match?

## Student Support Plan

Your student support plan outlines when and how a student should be referred to the student support coordinator or other staff who can address student goals and barriers. Collaborate with the student support coordinator when creating or updating this plan to make sure that it will work for everyone involved. Consider these questions:

- When should students be referred to the student support coordinator?
- How can the referral be made?
- How is this information shared with volunteers?
- How is this information shared with students who are working with volunteers?

# Getting Started with Volunteers

## Volunteer Recruitment

As a tutor coordinator, one of the first things you may need to do is increase your pool of tutors. This section will provide suggestions on ways to reach out to your community and attract quality tutors who will be appropriate for your program. Effective tutor recruitment will allow you to attract people with the qualities needed for the roles you have available.

### Recruitment Planning Questions

- What skills and talents do current volunteers have?
- What are the gaps in the volunteer pool?
- What prevents a person from volunteering?
- What encourages or attracts a volunteer?
- Are there untapped volunteer pools?
- Do you have a planned and targeted recruitment campaign?
- Do the methods and messages relate to the community and kinds of volunteers you want to attract?
- Is there a system and tools in place to bring in volunteers quickly and easily?
- Is the recruitment team composed of knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and well-trained members?

### Steps for Tutor Recruitment

#### 1. Know Your Ideal Tutor Opportunities

- Be sure your volunteer opportunities are integral to achieving your agency's purpose.
- Prepare job descriptions which clearly delineate volunteer tasks. (See previous section for more on job descriptions.)

#### 2. Get to Know Your Community

- Acquaint yourself with all the ways you can spread the word about your volunteer opportunities.
- Reach out to your current volunteers to let them know you're recruiting – happy volunteers are your best advertisement! Your students may also know people in the community who would be good volunteers, and several students have gone on to become volunteers.
- Create a [list of places to recruit for volunteers](#)<sup>2</sup>

#### 3. Craft Your Recruitment Message

- Compose a message which answers the tutor's unspoken question: "Why should I volunteer for you?" This is not the same as your question, "Why should you volunteer for us?" Consider involving input from current tutors in the composition of your message.
- In your message, answer other typical questions that new recruits ask: "What will I be doing? How often? When? Where?"
- Reassure volunteers that they will be trained and that you will support them.
- Avoid words such as "need" and "desperate."
- Include pictures and/or success stories when possible.
- Be honest. Truth in advertising counts!
- Tailor your message to the circumstance: individual discussions, presentations, in print, or online.

2 Examples in [Appendix C](#)

#### 4. Create a Clear Path to Your Door

- Write a procedure that includes a recruitment campaign, screening process, training, and placement.
- Don't start recruiting volunteers until you are ready to move them right into your screening and training procedure.
- Respond to volunteers in a timely fashion. Many volunteers report lack of response from organizations as the reason they do not volunteer. Answer initial phone calls and emails within 24 hours.

## Volunteer Screening

After putting so much effort into recruiting volunteers, screening can seem counterintuitive, but it is well worth the time it costs. Screening ensures that volunteers have the required credentials and skills required for the position and that they understand what volunteering entails, and it allows you to consider what type of volunteer role will be the best fit for an individual. Screening does not need to be a pass/fail exercise; a volunteer who is not a good match for one position might be excellent in a different role. An effective screening process will save everyone time and effort by ensuring that volunteers do not complete the training for positions that are not a good fit.

Many volunteer coordinators complete screening during a casual conversation in person or over the phone. Some coordinators use a volunteer application or other form that contains screening questions, and sometimes screening may be completed in conjunction with orientation. In addition, your agency may determine that some volunteer positions (for example, an aide in a family literacy classroom) may require a formal background check.

Regardless of which method you decide to use to screen volunteers, consider asking questions that will allow you to learn the following information about potential volunteers:

- Reasons, goals, and motivation for volunteering
- Training and teaching experience
- Communication style
- Availability
- Values and compatibility with agency values

## Volunteer Matching

In volunteer matching, you combine the information you know about a particular volunteer with what you know about the needs of your program to select the classroom or student for the volunteer to work with.

When matching a volunteer with a student, it is a good idea to consider the following information:

| Volunteer              | Student              |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Availability           | Availability         |
| Subject(s) of interest | Goal(s)              |
| Preferences            | Preferences          |
| Challenges/Strengths   | Challenges/Strengths |



While no match is guaranteed, the student and the volunteer are most likely to be happy when the volunteer's interests and skills align with the student's instructional needs. It's also important to consider characteristics of the student and the volunteer that could affect the match positively or negatively. For example, a volunteer who is "all business" may not be a good match for a chatty student who likes to relate lessons to stories about their personal experience; however, the same volunteer may be perfect for a student who is trying to earn an HSE credential on a deadline.

If you can talk to volunteers and students individually before making a match, that is, of course, helpful. You can also get useful information about volunteers and students from applications/intake paperwork, observations during orientation, and sometimes by talking to others in your organization who have direct experience with the individuals (e.g., instructors, student support coordinators, receptionists).

If you are matching a volunteer classroom aide with a class, many of the same criteria apply, but it is a good idea to discuss the position with the classroom teacher before sharing it with a potential volunteer. This allows you to verify that the teacher wants an aide and is prepared to support the volunteer by planning activities and instruction with the aide in mind.

# Volunteer Orientation and Training

## Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer orientations are specific to each agency or program. This is your opportunity to make sure volunteers have all the essential knowledge and skills they will need to get started with their positions. Orientation is a time for volunteers to learn more about the organization, the students, and their role. It is also a chance for them to ask questions and find out how to get the support they will need later. While a good orientation can go a long way toward helping volunteers feel comfortable with their assignments, this is also a “last chance” for potential volunteers to change roles or bow out altogether. In this way, the orientation serves as part of your screening process and avoids introducing students to volunteers who aren’t willing or able to teach them. The required components of initial tutor training are listed in section AF1.1.3 of the [Adult Education and Family Literacy Guidelines](#) and integrated into the outline below. The remaining components are recommended for volunteer orientation, though there is no need to follow this organization of topics. You will likely need to tailor this general plan to the needs of your program and volunteers.

- Welcome and introductions
- Organization
  - History
  - Mission, vision, and values
  - Funding sources
  - Programs and services
- Location/logistics
  - Site tour and classroom visits if appropriate
  - Locations and hours
  - Contact information of key staff
  - Emergency information (e.g., fire evacuation)
- Volunteer Role
  - Expectations of volunteer (include job description and required number of weekly hours)
  - Expectations of agency
    - Support for volunteer
    - Support for students
  - Collect volunteer data for agency
  - Method volunteers will use to report student data and submit lesson plans
- Students
  - Adult education and literacy definition and facts
  - Adult learner characteristics
  - Samples of student goals and how to support goal setting
  - Student support services at your program and how to refer students
- Instruction
  - Teaching adults
  - Tutoring routines and teaching strategies
  - Lesson planning
  - Accessing resources and materials
- Next steps – the volunteer assignment/matching process
- Questions and concerns

In addition to your program-specific orientation, the PD Portal has online tutor training modules available to volunteers. Help volunteers select the modules that are most relevant to their needs when they are getting started. You can always recommend others as needed for ongoing training. For an up-to-date list of modules and information on accessing them, visit the [Tutoring Page](#) of the PA Adult Education Resources (PAAER) website.

## Ongoing Volunteer Training

Training for volunteers begins with orientation, but it should continue throughout the volunteer's time with your program. Volunteers can benefit from new skills and knowledge that will help them be more effective instructors. Ongoing training is also a way to help improve your volunteer retention rate since volunteers who feel that they are effective are more likely to continue in their roles. Identify your volunteers' professional development needs by keeping track of questions and requests you hear in conversations, performing regular observations of tutoring sessions, talking with teachers who work with classroom aides, and reading volunteer reports. Once you identify a need, you can begin to plan training to address that need. Several options are available for this.

The on-demand online tutor training modules mentioned in the orientation section above are also good options for ongoing professional development. While they may be taken individually by classroom aides and tutors, you can also facilitate the modules in a group setting. This way, volunteers have the opportunity to talk about what they have learned and describe how they will apply the information in their role as a classroom aide or tutor.

Volunteers can also participate in other courses and modules offered through the PD Portal, and some programs include volunteers in their professional learning communities (PLCs). You can reach out to your agency in-house professional development specialist (IHPDS) or digital literacy specialist if you think that these opportunities would be helpful for your volunteers.

The Tutoring page of the PA Adult Education Resources website also offers information on the Volunteer Tutor and Classroom Aide Webinar Series, which is a series of live webinars offered monthly. Volunteers can attend webinars live or watch the recorded sessions on demand. As with the tutor training modules, you may want to organize group discussions around the presentations that you think will be useful for many of your volunteers.

You can also design your own professional development opportunities for your volunteers. This is excellent for sharing program-specific information or providing support for using a particular resource. It is also a great opportunity to introduce volunteers to agency staff who have specialized skills and knowledge. For example, you may ask an instructor to share subject-specific teaching strategies or invite your student support coordinator to discuss skills students will need for transitioning to work or higher education.

Whether you design your own professional development or use the resources provided above, remember that volunteers will need time to practice implementing and reflecting on new knowledge and skills. Volunteers can also learn from each other and frequently enjoy sharing successes and challenges with their peers, so make sure to plan time for sharing and group discussions.

# Volunteer Retention

Retaining volunteers is good for everyone. Students benefit from experienced, knowledgeable instructors and from the consistency provided by a low turnover rate; the program benefits from improved student outcomes and from fewer resources spent in recruiting and training new volunteers, and the volunteers develop a sense of accomplishment and a strong relationship with your program.

The best way to retain volunteers is to make sure to support them in their work, help them develop relationships with the program and with other volunteers, allow them to personalize their work to fit their interests and skills, and provide them with plenty of positive recognition.

It is important to have a range of strategies for retaining volunteers because no two people are exactly alike. For some volunteers, recognition is very important, while others are more focused on relationships or on being able to customize their position to match their skills. Below are some strategies to consider, but you may come up with others that are a better fit for your program and volunteers.

## Support

- Create a warm, friendly atmosphere where volunteers feel welcome.
- Be specific about responsibilities and expectations.
- Explain the volunteers' support system. The tutor coordinator needs to be available to answer questions, provide resources, or act as a mediator between teacher and volunteer or volunteer and learner, if needed.
- Meet with volunteers on a regular basis. Open, regular communication is vital; it is important to listen to their questions and suggestions.
- Provide regular, relevant professional development opportunities.
- Provide needed materials and resources. Be available with suggestions of techniques that can be tried when working with learners. Have prepared materials available for volunteer use.
- Have a "mentor tutor" volunteer available to provide guidance to other tutors.
- Provide modern technology such as smartboards, tablets, and computers, for use during tutoring sessions.
- Ensure that all of your locations and materials are accessible and inclusive, and make it easy for volunteers to request accommodations when necessary.

## Relationships

- Provide training frequently and consistently. Give reminder calls for professional development, especially if an opportunity is relevant for a particular volunteer.
- Arrange informal volunteer get-togethers. Provide networking time for volunteers so they can share ideas and build community.
- Provide food, if possible; potluck lunches are popular.
- Include volunteers in holiday activities, graduations, and other special events.
- Introduce volunteers to staff whom they will see regularly or who may help support them in working with their students.

## Personalization

- Let volunteers work in their interest areas. Align strengths with needs.
- Share opportunities for additional ways that volunteers can help the program:
  - Completing administrative work
  - Planning celebrations and events
  - Working with the student support coordinator to help a student fill out job applications or find resources

- Offering technology assistance to students or staff
- Mentoring new volunteers
- Participating in outreach events
- Give volunteers new challenges and permission to try new ideas.
- Respond to reports and other communications in a timely and thoughtful manner.
- Offer online and in-person options for tutoring, trainings, and other events, and hold them on varying days and times to accommodate different schedules.

## Recognition

- Be aware of your volunteers' personalities and needs for recognition. For instance, most volunteers appreciate recognition in the quarterly newsletter or at celebration events, but some are embarrassed by such attention and prefer a phone call or email from their coordinator.
- Recognize volunteers in as many ways as possible; by recognizing volunteers, you show that your program values volunteer support, and it provides a motivation for continuing commitment.
- Send handwritten birthday cards, holiday cards, and/or "anniversary" cards commemorating the volunteer's service with the agency.
- Consider both formal and informal recognition:
  - Publish names in a newsletter or on the agency's website.
  - Thank and praise the volunteers in private conversations or emails.
  - Nominate volunteers for recognition by other organizations.
  - Have an end-of-the-year recognition event.
  - Award gifts, pins, certificates, flowers, etc., at recognition events.
  - Tell board members about a volunteer's work and accomplishments.
  - Highlight student successes and name volunteers who helped each student.

# Documenting Volunteer Work

Consistent communication between tutors and the tutor coordinator is critical. Program administrators and funders need to know what is happening in the tutoring component of the agency. In addition, as the tutor coordinator, you will want to know about the challenges and successes the tutor/learner pairs are experiencing so you can provide any needed support. Each agency has information that must be reported via the eData system, so there are basic details you must request. Beyond the basics, many agencies also gather additional information from their tutors.

There are several ways that you can improve the success of your data collection efforts. First, keep your own data reporting deadlines in mind when creating schedules. You can certainly stress the importance of submission of timely, accurate reports to your tutors, but you will likely still need to send out reminders to those who miss their deadlines. Second, you are more likely to receive reports if they are easy for volunteers to complete. Many programs use online forms for this purpose, which are faster and more convenient for most volunteers, especially if you choose a format that is compatible with mobile phones. Keep in mind, though, that you may still need a paper alternative for some volunteers.

[Appendix D](#) has some helpful tips for creating forms.

## Data to Collect

- Names: student and tutor
- Meeting dates
- Total hours per meeting date
- Targeted skills and/or standards
- Assessment of skills/student proficiency
- Resources used/needed
- Ongoing progress toward attainment of goal
- Questions and next steps
- Other information required by your funders or of importance to your program

# Volunteer Evaluation

Evaluation and feedback are important tools for helping volunteers to improve their instructional skills. The best way to know how well a volunteer is doing is to use several different types of evaluation, since each has its strengths and weaknesses. Some effective ways to evaluate volunteers are:

- Getting student feedback
- Asking volunteers to self-evaluate
- Observing lessons
- Analyzing data

In addition, remember to reach out to volunteers for their feedback on your program. This will help you improve your support for volunteers in the future. Some programs request volunteer feedback as part of the volunteer self-evaluation or lesson observation process, while others may make this a separate process, allowing volunteers to remain anonymous. Consider the questions that you ask when soliciting feedback so that you collect information you can use to improve the program. For example, it is more helpful to ask volunteers what support they need when discussing standardized tests with their students than it is to ask them their opinions on whether their students should take standardized tests. This is because you can change some aspects of the standardized testing process, offer training to volunteers, or provide written guidelines on discussing tests with students, but your program is unlikely to cease using standardized tests altogether.

## Student Feedback

Student feedback can help you get a sense for whether a volunteer is a good match for a particular student or group. It can also give you a different perspective on the effectiveness of a volunteer's lessons. You might collect student feedback informally through chatting with learners outside of their lesson time (for example, before a lesson observation), or you might use a survey delivered orally, on paper, or online. It can be helpful to collect this information at about the same time as the tutor self-evaluation, since this will give you a sense of whether the student and tutor agree about their challenges and successes.

## Self-Evaluation

Many programs include a reflection or self-evaluation question on the report forms that volunteers fill out. This encourages volunteers to step back and think about how they are doing, identify successes and challenges, and reach out for assistance if needed.

Depending on your program and volunteers, you may decide to encourage a more in-depth self-evaluation once or twice a year. This is sometimes done in conjunction with a lesson observation.

As the tutor coordinator, you should review any self-evaluations that volunteers share with you and be prepared to help them find any resources or support they may need. [Appendix B](#) includes a self-evaluation checklist you may choose to share with your tutors.

## Lesson Observation

Lesson observations are one of the best ways to evaluate a volunteer's instructional skills, but they require careful preparation and implementation. Be sure that you use observations regularly with all volunteers and reassure them that this is not a punitive exercise; it is just one way you have of supporting volunteers as they continue to strengthen their instructional skills. Limit the number of focal areas that you will attend to during the observation. This allows you to pay better attention to a few aspects of the lesson and makes the feedback for the volunteer more manageable. It is best to have the volunteer help you choose the focal areas of the observation, though you may

suggest areas that have come up in previous conversations or reports. Appendix B has an example observation form with many questions you can select from when observing a lesson.

## Steps for Successful Lesson Observations

1. Communicate with the volunteer before the observation. Explain the purpose for the observation and share any tool you will be using during the observation. Work with the tutor to identify two to four focal areas for your observation. It is important to observe enough of the session to gather adequate evidence. If necessary, arrange your arrival and departure times to correspond with natural breaks in the tutoring session.
2. At the beginning of the observation, introduce yourself to the student(s) and briefly explain why you are there.
3. Try not to interfere with the lesson. Use your observation tool to take notes, paying attention to specific evidence relevant to each of the focal areas you agreed on.
4. Take time after the lesson to organize your notes and complete a clean copy of the observation tool that you can share with the volunteer. Review your notes to make sure that you have noted concrete evidence and not opinions or vague impressions. It is best to hold the post-observation meeting 24 to 48 hours after the observation.
5. Meet with the volunteer without the student(s) present. Start by asking for their observations about the lesson. Then, discuss each focal area together following these steps:
  - a) Ask the volunteer for their reflections on the focal area.
    - i) “We agreed that one focal area for this observation would be incorporating activities that would allow Kim to practice applying her multiplication skills. Do you think you were able to do that today?”
  - b) Share your observations without judgmental or evaluative comments.
    - i) “I noticed that Kim completed five of the six computation problems correctly without help. With the word problems, though, she needed your support when she had to decide which operation to use.”
  - c) Ask questions to help the volunteer reflect on the focal area and plan for strategies to try in the future. (You might want to make a note of any ideas the volunteer has on the observation sheet.)
    - i) “What might help Kim learn when to use multiplication to solve a problem?”
  - d) If the volunteer is struggling to think of a way to address a particular challenge, try offering a general suggestion and asking the volunteer to think about how to make it work within their context.
    - i) “I know that when you were working on subtraction, Kim enjoyed working with manipulatives. Do you think manipulatives would also help her with multiplication?”
6. Follow up after the observation. Thank the volunteer and student for allowing you to sit in on the lesson. Share any resources that you may have promised the volunteer and offer support with any strategies that the volunteer expressed interest in trying.

## Data Analysis

While the other forms of evaluation described here focus on qualitative information, data analysis can help you use numbers and statistics to evaluate individual tutors and the volunteer program as a whole. Your program data manager can help you access eData performance reports including the following information about each tutor:

- Number of Adults Served
- Number of Enrolled Adults (12 hrs. + Entry Level)
- Average Number of Hours
- Number of Adults Posttested
- EFL Gain % for Enrolled Adults they have tutored



Consider how you might use this information in your planning and in communicating with volunteers. For example:

- Share information with an individual tutor to congratulate them on a job well done.
- Look up a student's attendance hours to inform a discussion with a tutor whose student is not attending regularly.
- Examine overall patterns in the volunteer program to inform professional development options offered to volunteers.
- Use data to identify volunteers for special recognition (for example, most student hours for the year).

# Lesson Planning

One task of the tutor coordinator is to ensure that volunteer tutors are using written lesson plans in their instruction. (Classroom aides should be implementing plans created by the classroom instructor and do not need to plan lessons.) Some programs achieve this by providing tutors with pre-written lessons, and others train their tutors to write lesson plans. There are also ways to combine these strategies (for example, by providing a selection of generic lessons that tutors can modify to meet the needs of their students).

Tutor coordinators are responsible for monitoring the lesson plans tutors are using and providing feedback and assistance to ensure that students are receiving quality instruction. Lesson plan templates and evaluation rubrics are available in the lesson bank on the [Submit a Lesson](#) page of the PA Adult Education Resources (PAAER) website. (Use the regular lesson bank resources, not the ones for supplemental distance lessons). Tutors who are interested in learning more about planning standards-aligned lessons can be directed to the [CCRS Tools and Resources](#) page of the website or to courses you identify in the PD Portal. Your agency IHPDS can assist you with selecting appropriate resources to share with tutors.

You will need to use your professional judgment when using materials developed for professional instructors with volunteer tutors. Break concepts down into digestible chunks and focus on a small number of topics at a time, whether you are offering a professional development session or discussing a lesson one-on-one with a tutor. It is always a good idea to provide some high-quality model lessons for volunteers to use, adapt, and refer to when designing their own.

Many tutors benefit from learning to think about how lessons build on one another and provide students with repeated opportunities to practice their skills. The Tutoring Routines available on the [Tutors page of the PAAER website](#) can help tutors develop consistency across their lessons. Tutoring Routines are flexible instructional methods that volunteers can use daily or weekly, adjusting the content as needed to meet the needs of their student(s). Tutors can incorporate one or two of the routines into their lessons to help provide regularity and structure to their lessons. Tutoring Routines are standards-aligned and provide students with structured, regular practice with key academic skills.

Tutoring Routines can also be a helpful resource for instructors at your program who are working with classroom aides and would like an activity that an aide can implement with an individual or small group of students.

# Appendix A: Sample Job Descriptions

## Program A: Tutor Job Description and Agreement

**Title:** Tutor

### **Qualifications:**

- A high school diploma or the equivalent and the content knowledge necessary to provide high-quality instruction in the content areas you will teach
- Experience in writing lesson plans or willingness to learn to write lesson plans for all tutoring/small group sessions and to work with tutor coordinators to review goals and adjust student placement as needed
- Participation in initial tutor training and additional professional learning opportunities while at the program
- Commitment to an assigned period of tutoring time (usually a semester) for a minimum of three hours a week
- Completion of a Volunteer Interest Form about experience and availability

### **Preparation:**

Complete the program's local adult education staff orientation and initial tutor training prior to being paired with students. Tutor training may include the following:

- Tutoring Routines
- Teaching Adults
- Teaching Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Lesson Planning
- Using Textbooks and Authentic Materials
- Preparing Students for the High School Equivalency Exams
- Teaching Strategies
- Learning Differences

### **Major Responsibilities:**

- Provide instruction to adult learners, one-on-one or in a small group of two to six students, in one or more of the following content areas: English as a second language (ESL), high school equivalency (HSE) preparation, or adult basic education (ABE).
- Provide a professional, respectful, supportive, and safe learning environment by always meeting with your student as per the agreed schedule (time and place).
- Ensure all assigned paperwork is completed, updated, and submitted on time (includes but is not limited to attendance records, progress reports, assessments, activity logs, and goal sheets).
- Guarantee that any use of materials is for tutoring purposes only and must be used according to Program A's policies and procedures. Any borrowed materials must be returned accordingly.
- Plan meaningful lessons for students that incorporate student needs and goals.
- Communicate openly with the tutor coordinator about any tutoring information, questions, problems, or updates, and notify the coordinator directly if unable to meet with the student(s) due to an emergency.
- Participate in professional development activities and attend pre-service training and in-service meetings as requested.

Please sign below. By signing, you acknowledge you will abide by all policies and procedures as outlined for you. Failure to follow or complete any of the tutor responsibilities may cause removal from our program.

- I have read, understand, and agree to follow my responsibilities as outlined in the Adult Education Volunteer Job Description.
- I understand that changes to my schedule, including place, time, students in group, etc., must be discussed with the tutor coordinator and approved PRIOR to initiating a change.
- I understand that any questions and concerns may be addressed at any point throughout my term of service with the tutor coordinator, who will be available to provide ongoing feedback, advice and encouragement to me on a regular basis. Emergency situations should be referred to the program coordinator.

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Program B: Classroom Aide Job Description**

**Title:** Classroom Aide

**Goal:** Provide in-class support to a student or students who are in a class or group. The volunteer classroom aide is not responsible for instructional planning. The classroom instructor or the tutor coordinator will provide materials for the aide to use and guidance on how to use the materials.

**Reports to:** Tutor Coordinator

### **Duties:**

1. Be prepared to commit to at least six months of volunteering with the agency.
2. Complete required basic volunteer training, which may include online tutor modules located in the PD Portal.
3. Work closely with the classroom instructor to support the academic needs of the students.
4. Participate in additional professional development as required.
5. Review and reinforce learning regularly.
6. Notify the tutor coordinator promptly of any questions, concerns, or problems.

### **Qualifications:**

1. At least a high school diploma or its equivalent and have the content knowledge to effectively support students
2. Dependable, supportive, patient, and flexible
3. Inclined to relate to culturally and economically diverse individuals
4. Able to establish good rapport with students and respond to their learning needs
5. Willing to learn new information and skills
6. Able to speak, read, and write English fluently

### **Fringe Benefits:**

- Satisfaction in knowing that you are making a difference in someone's life
- Increased appreciation of the differences in people
- Improved problem-solving skills

## Program C: Tutor Job Description

### **Title:** Tutor

As a volunteer tutor, you will be teaching adult students a variety of literacy and educational skills. Tutors need a strong commitment to see students through their programs and not give up on them. You will be helping them build a ladder of positive experiences and successes one small step at a time. Program C is here to assist you with whatever you need to make the educational tutoring experience a success.

- Tutors must have a high school diploma or its equivalent and have the content knowledge to effectively support students.
- Tutors need experience in writing lesson plans or willingness to learn to write lesson plans for all tutoring/small group sessions and to work with tutor coordinators to review goals and adjust student placement, as needed.
- Tutors will participate in initial tutor training, which includes completing at least three online learning modules, and additional professional learning opportunities while working at the agency.
- All program volunteers must obtain FBI, PA State Police, and DHS child abuse clearances. Program C will provide the forms and pay for the clearances and postage.
- Tutors will need to sign a Confidentiality Statement. All student and tutor information is confidential.
- All materials and resources are free to the tutor and student.
- Tutors will be matched by the tutor/program coordinator.
- We do not recommend tutors give students rides in their vehicles.
- Tutors are expected to meet with their students (face-to-face or live online) for a minimum of three hours per week. Please be respectful of the student's needs and interests.
- Tutors will provide one-on-one or small group instruction to adult learners.
- Tutors need to keep track of all attendance and hours, including prep and professional development time, and report these on the monthly Tutor-Student Report Form. Please submit these forms by the 5th of each month.
- Tutors are expected to discuss and help update the student's long- and short-term goals at each session.

Not every student and tutor match is the right one. You always have the right to ask for a different student if the student is not keeping appointed meetings or is not a good match because of personality factors. We do ask that you try it and see if you and the student will work out well together. We are grateful to have your help, and we are here to support you. If you need supplies, resources, paperwork, or have a problem with the student or schedule, please call or stop by the office so we can assist you. We look forward to working with you.

## Appendix B: Sample Report and Evaluation Forms

### Sample Tutor Monthly Report

**Tutor Name:**

**Date:**

**Student Name(s):**

How many hours did you spend tutoring this month? Please indicate only the time that you were in actual tutoring sessions with the learner(s). If you tutor more than one learner, please indicate which learners were present for each session.

**Example:**

| Day and Date   | Time Spent                            |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Tues, Sept. 6  | 2 hrs. (all)                          |
| Thurs, Sept. 8 | 2 hrs. (C.G.& A.T.), 1.75 hrs. (A.S.) |

| Day and Date | Time Spent |
|--------------|------------|
|              |            |
|              |            |
|              |            |
|              |            |
|              |            |
|              |            |
|              |            |
|              |            |
|              |            |

1. What did you do in preparation for your tutoring time this month? Please select any activities you did to help guide your instruction and lesson planning. Choose all that apply; if you choose “Other,” please specify.

- ☐ Independent research
- ☐ Meeting with group of peers
- ☐ Meeting with coordinator, teacher, and/or mentor tutor
- ☐ Online course or webinar (Please specify):
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Include details if desired:

2. If applicable, what did you do differently as a result of any activities you completed? Choose all that apply.

- ☐ Implemented a new instructional technique or strategy
- ☐ Stopped using an instructional technique or strategy
- ☐ Started using new material(s)
- ☐ Stopped using material(s)
- ☐ Other (Please specify):

Include details if desired:

3. If there is a topic or tutoring situation about which you would like further information, please provide the details below. (**For example:** *I would like to learn more about providing reading instruction to an ESL learner who is an emergent reader in their language.*)

4. Please share your reflections on the tutoring sessions for this month. These can be highlights, low points, challenges, successes, or something else that occurred during your tutoring sessions.

5. Is there any other support you would like from your tutor coordinator? (**For example:** *We are nearing the end of our textbook and would like to know what comes next.*)



## Sample Tutor Self-Evaluation Checklist

Self-evaluation is an important aspect of your tutoring experience. You can reflect on a tutoring session and review what was good, what needed improvement, and what you plan to change next time.


The following checklist may be used as a guide for evaluating yourself.

| Criteria   | Yes | No | Comments |
|--|-----|----|----------|
| Did I have a lesson plan?  |     |    |          |
| Did the lesson have clear objectives that are relevant to the student's goals?                     |     |    |          |
| Were the materials I chose relevant to the student's goals and needs?                              |     |    |          |
| Did I use a variety of activities?   |     |    |          |
| Did I incorporate activities that used different modalities? (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic) |     |    |          |
| Was I able to assess the student's progress toward meeting the objectives?                         |     |    |          |
| Was the student able to assess their progress toward meeting the objectives?                       |     |    |          |

| Question  | Your Response |
|---|---------------|
| What was successful?  |               |
| What could I have done differently?                                       |               |
| What made the session fun and enjoyable?                                  |               |
| What will need review or additional practice?                             |               |
| What are the plans for the next session?                                  |               |
| What is something I want to learn more about so I can improve my lessons? |               |

# Sample Lesson Observation Form

Tutor Observation Forms are available from the PA Adult Education Resources website as a [Word Document](#) or a [PDF document](#). The Word Document format can be edited to meet your program's needs.



## Tutor Observation Checklist

Prior to the observation, you will meet with your tutor. During this meeting, you will ask your tutor to identify three-four focal areas for the observation. Think about the instructional components around which the tutor has questions or would like to make a change. After the observation, you and the tutor will meet again to debrief around the evidence you collected.

| Focal Areas   | Clearly evident | Mostly evident | Somewhat evident | Not evident | Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What activities are offered?</li> <li>What does the tutor/learner say?</li> <li>What does the tutor/learner do?</li> <li>What does the tutor/learner read or write?</li> </ul> |
|---|-----------------|----------------|------------------|-------------|--|
| <b>Instruction</b>  |                 |                |                  |             |  |
| 1. Tutor communicates the lesson objectives to the learner in a way he/she can understand.  |                 |                |                  |             |  |
| 2. Tutor starts the lesson with what the learner already knows, and then builds in new skills and content at an appropriate rate. |                 |                |                  |             |  |
| 3. Lesson activities require learner to do more "work" than the tutor.  |                 |                |                  |             |  |
| 4. Tutor asks questions that require the learner to engage in critical thinking.  |                 |                |                  |             |  |
| 5. Tutor models or demonstrates skills or strategies to support learner comprehension.  |                 |                |                  |             |  |

Tutor Observation Checklist  
Last revised: January 6, 2021
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## Appendix C: Recruitment Ideas

Tutor coordinators have had success recruiting volunteers at all of the following places. Depending on the location, you may be able to speak to a group, host a table at an event, post flyers, publish an advertisement, and/or leave business cards. Think flexibly and remember that many of these entities have an online presence as well. Ensure that potential volunteers who find your organization's website can get information about volunteering opportunities, including how to sign up.

1. Advocacy groups
2. Blood drives
3. PA CareerLink® sites
4. Community centers
5. Community service programs
6. Doctor's offices
7. Festivals/conferences/special events
8. Groups and clubs
  - Book clubs
  - Military/Retired military personnel
  - Parents
  - Retired executives
  - Retired teachers
  - Senior citizens
7. Libraries
8. Local news sources (consider ads, letters to the editor, community interest stories, public service announcements)
9. Pre-retirement seminars
10. Public agencies and retired personnel
11. Public transit vehicles and stops
12. Real estate agents (Ask if they have welcome packets for people moving to the area.)
13. Religious establishments
14. Speakers' bureaus
15. Supermarkets
16. United Way
17. Volunteer groups (e.g., VISTA, AmeriCorps, Peace Corps)
18. Volunteer fairs hosted by colleges, community organizations, religious groups
19. Volunteer recruitment websites such as [Volunteer Match](#)

# Appendix D: Tips for Creating Forms

In your role as tutor coordinator, you will likely need to create or revise forms frequently. The following tips will help you create forms that are easy to use and allow you to collect the information you need.

## Content

- Eliminate all unnecessary questions. Know what you will do with each piece of information.
- Keep instructions to a minimum.
- Avoid (or define) acronyms and jargon.
- Use inclusive, asset-based language.

## Format

- Use form-creation software like Google Forms or Microsoft Forms for online forms that are mobile-friendly and accessible.
- If you use paper forms, put submission instructions on the form itself.
- Use checkboxes and other “quick answer” options where possible.
- Put open-ended and optional questions at the end of the form.
- Use the size of the text field to indicate the amount of information you expect (i.e., use a small space if you expect a one-word answer and a larger space for multiple sentences).

## Distribution

- As a rule, make it as easy as possible for volunteers to find and complete forms.
- Share digital forms in email, on a website, in a newsletter, and/or via text message.
- Distribute paper forms in person, through the mail, and/or in a central office location.
- Remove outdated forms from all locations to avoid confusion.

## Test and Revise

- Test the form yourself, simulating both common and uncommon scenarios. (For example, complete a report form as a tutor with a group of six students or as a new tutor.)
- Send the form to a colleague who didn’t help create it for feedback.
- Adjust to improve ease of use; the easier a form is to use, the more likely it is that people will complete it.

## Respond

- Always thank volunteers for completing forms.
- Respond to requests and confusion promptly.
- Refer to information in reports when communicating with volunteers.