Brainstorming Guide
Creating and Sustaining a Successful Spiritual Care Volunteer Program

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Q1: Why is a volunteer program needed?

Q2: What theological, philosophical, and theoretical principles serve as the foundation of the program?

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Q4: What competencies do the volunteers need to master?

Q5: What key topics do you want the course to cover?

Q6: How many hours of training are needed?

Q7: How will the training time be divided up?

PART II. CREATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Q1: How will you partner with the Volunteer Services Department?

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Q4: How will you enlist the help of other chaplains/staff?

PART III. SUSTAINING AND MAINTAINING

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PART I:
CONCEPTUALIZATION
Question 1: Rationale - Why does my department need volunteer spiritual caregivers?

In order to establish and maintain a viable volunteer program, there has to be a substantial reason for its existence. Ask yourself and clarify very specifically the why question. You will have to clarify your rationale, but here are few to consider: increased hospital coverage when staff is limited, opportunity for chaplain professional development as they develop teaching and supervision skills, opportunity to network with local congregations by enlisting participants from their communities, etc.

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Question 2: Establish the theoretical and philosophical foundations of the program. What theology of ministry is this program based upon? What theoretical principles and philosophical assumptions set the foundation for the program (e.g. 1 Cor. 12, Theology of the Body Christ)?

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Question 3: Generating administrative support and buy-in: how can you establish strong support from your senior mission and other administrative leaders (e.g. presentations, one-on-one meetings, publicity campaign, etc.)?
Question 4: What core competencies do the volunteers need to have mastered by the end of the training? Design courses of study off of the competencies. Answer such questions as: what level of care are volunteers expected to provide? Advanced, basic?

Question 5: What topics do you want to cover in your classes?

Question 6: How many total hours of training are needed?
Question 7: How do you want to divide the time between classroom and clinical training? How many hours for classroom, how many for clinical?
PART II:
CREATION AND IMPLEMENTATION
Question 1: Identify how you need to work with your hospital’s Volunteer Department. What role will the Volunteer Department need to play and how will you establish and maintain a partnership with it?

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Question 2: How will you recruit volunteers (e.g. information sessions, communications through the volunteer department, mailings to churches, social media, etc.)?

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Question 3: What will the application process be? What components will make up the application?

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Question 4: How will you enlist other chaplains to assist you? Come up with a clear plan for how to incorporate them into the process.
PART III:

SUSTAINING AND MAINTAINING THE PROGRAM
Question 1: What data will you track and what system will you use to capture it?

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Question 2: Think about how you will continue to incentivize your volunteers to maintain their motivation and buy-in.

a. What will your continuing education plan be? What courses will you offer?
b. How will you continue to feed your volunteers intellectually and spiritually?
c. How will you provide for individual supervision of the volunteers on a regular basis?