

VOLUNTEER EMPLOYMENT AND PERSONNEL POLICY

This policy establishes general guidelines for the recruitment and selection of volunteers within the Department of Human Services (DHS) in compliance with Act 42 of 1981, Section 1. The policy applies to all volunteer services, programs, and positions within DHS.

I. Volunteer Opportunities

- (A) DHS will provide individuals an equal opportunity to participate in meaningful volunteer programs without regard to age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, creed, or gender.
- (B) Each Division/Office is authorized to develop meaningful service opportunities for volunteers and will have written policies for the recruitment, selection, orientation, training, supervision, and separation of volunteers consistent with this policy and the employment and personnel policies of DHS.

II. Volunteer Responsibilities

- (A) Volunteers are subject to the rules, regulations, and policies of DHS and of the Division/Office where they are assigned. The volunteer is responsible for knowing, understanding, and adhering to the regulations and policies.
- (B) Volunteers are subject to the confidentiality statutes and regulations governing disclosure of information concerning DHS and its clients.

III. Supervisor Responsibilities

The volunteer supervisor is responsible for informing the volunteer of all applicable rules and regulations.

IV. Recruitment

A volunteer position within DHS may be advertised without regard to the standards applied to State employment practices. Advertisements may be placed with the Office of Communications and Community Engagement (OCCE) volunteer portal. Advertisements should list major job qualifications or requirements including those which may limit particular classifications of volunteers in specific job functions (e.g., age limitations for volunteers who work with clients).

V. Applicability

For purposes of this policy, a volunteer is defined as an individual hired directly by DHS to perform a job function for an indefinite period of time. This policy does not

apply to individuals engaged through volunteer agencies or individuals brought in to perform temporary tasks.

VI. Service-Learning Programs

- (A) DHS encourages the development of service-learning volunteer programs that involve students from educational entities and programs.
- (B) Divisions may enter into agreements between faculty and administrations of educational entities for service-learning programs. These agreements should define the learning objectives, volunteer placement and activities, monitoring and evaluation methods, reimbursement and stipend arrangements (if any), and assign responsibilities to participants. Terms of such agreements should be consistent with any applicable policies.

VII. Job Descriptions

Every volunteer position will have a formal written document that describes the responsibilities, qualifications, training or preparation, time and location, length of commitment, supervision, and name and title of supervisor. The volunteer supervisor will be required to provide a copy of this job description to each volunteer.

VIII. Applications

- (A) Divisions/Offices using volunteers may develop a standard application form for volunteer service. Applicants for volunteer positions will be required to complete this form. The completed application must be filed with Divisions/Offices. Resumes may accompany the applications. The application and resume will be reviewed and evaluated in comparison with the job description to determine qualified applicants.
- (B) When an individual is accepted for a volunteer position, the Division/Office volunteer supervisor will keep this application in his or her permanent volunteer personnel file.

IX. Interviews

Interviews of prospective volunteers will be consistent with federal, state, and DHS policies and procedures.

X. Reference and Background Checks

Reference and background checks may be used to verify information which applicants submit in their volunteer applications and resumes and to learn more about the applicant. Criminal background checks are required on all volunteers working with special populations, i.e., youth, the elderly, and individuals with

disabilities, in accordance with DHS Policy 1080. Applicants will be informed on the application form that reference and background checks may be conducted, and written consent will be obtained on this form.

XI. Appointment

All prospective volunteers are subject to acceptance by the volunteer supervisor or coordinator. Prospective volunteers will be notified of their appointment or referral in writing after references have been checked and documented. Applicants accepted for volunteer work will be informed of the assignment, orientation date, time and location, and provided any other pertinent information.

XII. Training

Divisions/Offices will provide training to volunteers that allow them to fulfill their responsibilities.

XIII. Supervision

The volunteer supervisor will direct, monitor, and evaluate the volunteer. The supervisor will provide technical assistance, guidance in the performance of duties, and assistance with forming good work relationships.

XIV. Records

Records of the volunteer's work-related experiences and contribution of goods, services, and time may be used to evaluate the program. This documentation may be used to verify the volunteer's service.

XV. Evaluation

Supervisors will periodically review and evaluate each volunteer's performance of assigned duties.

XVI. Exit Interview

(A) Volunteers may terminate their association with the agency but are asked to provide two (2) weeks' notice.

(B) An exit interview also will be held when a volunteer is discharged from service. The purpose of this interview is to inform the volunteer of the reasons for terminating service and the date of termination. This interview will be documented on the DHS Form 1179.

XVII. Volunteer Benefits

- (A) Volunteers, to the extent of their services, are exempt from all State employment laws, work hours, compensation, leave time and employee benefits including salaries, payroll deductions, retirement benefits, and credit union.
- (B) Divisions/Offices using volunteers and accepting their services may provide reimbursements for expenses, including transportation, lodging, and subsistence. Reimbursement must be consistent with allowances set by law for State employees, except in circumstances where special authorizations applicable to volunteers have been issued.
- (C) Meals can be furnished without charge to volunteers provided that scheduled work assignments occur during established meal times.
- (D) At the discretion of the Division/Office, lodging can be provided temporarily at no charge to the volunteer if it is available.
- (E) Volunteers can be reimbursed for transportation expenses under applicable state travel regulations.

XVIII. Insurance

- (A) Liability insurance may be provided by the Division/Office using volunteer services to all volunteers to the same degree provided to paid employees, including vehicular, professional, and personal liability insurance. Coverage of volunteers will be provided only during the performance of their responsibilities and duties within the time scheduled or determined for service.
- (B) It is the responsibility of the Division/Office to develop a volunteer position(s) that offers the best possible services, and which affords reasonable liability protection for the volunteer. The volunteer will be informed, prior to assuming duties, of the extent of liability coverage and protection. The volunteer will be carefully oriented and trained to avoid unnecessary liability.
- (C) Volunteers delivering services are subject to all the same events that may affect paid staff and can create a condition usually protected against by insurance coverage. The determination to provide insurance coverage for volunteers is made in the same manner as if the decision were made for paid staff. The type of insurance protection provided necessarily depends on the job and work situation of each volunteer program. Not all types of insurance will be appropriate for every volunteer position, and some volunteer jobs may require specialized coverage.

XIX. Taxes and Other Miscellaneous Provisions

- (A) Volunteers are allowed deductions in computing their net income for the Arkansas Income Tax and United States Income Tax. Deductions are allowable for unreimbursed meals, lodging and transportation, or incidental expenses incurred by the volunteer in the performance of voluntary service to the Division/Office. The volunteer must not have received reimbursement from public funds and these expenses must be reimbursable if incurred by paid employees of the Division/Office. The volunteer is responsible for maintaining accurate and appropriate records of all reimbursed and non-reimbursed expenses for tax deduction purposes.
- (B) The Division/Office may verify the voluntary service record, but not the expenses used in computing tax deductions.
- (C) Volunteer service is recognized as partial fulfillment of State employment requirements for training and experience under applicable personnel rules and regulations. This volunteer service must be capable of documentation.

XX. Volunteer Records

- (A) As required by Act 42 of 1981, each Division/Office shall maintain in its files, and include in its annual report, information on and about volunteers including:
 - (1) Programs, positions, location, service hours, and number.
 - (2) Personnel files on each volunteer.
 - (3) Records that authenticate services rendered, expenses incurred, and donations appropriate for tax authorities.

XXI. Volunteer Recognition

- (A) Each Division/Office will be responsible for developing and implementing appropriate recognition events, activities, and awards that demonstrate appreciation for individual volunteers' services and for volunteerism as a whole.
- (B) Volunteer Excellence Award certificates of appreciation office can be requested at www.VolunteerAR.org as a way to recognize volunteers.
- (C) The Governor's Award for Volunteer Excellence honors unpaid volunteers who have reached 500 or more volunteer hours of service within a year. These certificates may be requested at www.VolunteerAR.org.