

March 8, 2012

# CLARK COUNTY

  

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

  

# POLICY MANUAL



proud past, promising future

CLARK COUNTY  
WASHINGTON

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## **IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERS**

Clark County strives to improve its citizens' quality of life and promotes their active participation in the community. To this end, Clark County welcomes and encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels and within all appropriate programs and activities, and recognizes that volunteers make significant contributions to these programs and activities. All County employees are encouraged to assist in the creation of meaningful and productive volunteer roles and assist in the recruitment, coordination and recognition of County volunteers. The goal of the volunteer program is to supplement and support the capabilities of regular staff through the effective involvement of volunteers, while complying with applicable laws and County requirements. Further, the volunteer program is designed to improve the quality of life in Clark County by providing meaningful opportunities for greater community involvement.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Purpose of the Volunteer Program Policy Manual**

Clark County has adopted guidelines and procedures to provide direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer program development and management efforts. These guidelines and procedures are intended for internal management guidance only. They do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement, nor do they create any rights in any third parties of any kind. The County reserves the exclusive right to change the guidelines and procedures at any time and requires compliance by all volunteers in the program. The County recognizes its responsibility to keep volunteers informed of changes that may affect them and intends to provide updates and keep information current.

The guidelines and procedures apply to all facility volunteers, as defined below, in all programs and projects undertaken on behalf of Clark County.

### **Role of the Volunteer Program Coordinator**

The productive involvement of volunteers requires a planned and organized effort. Each department is encouraged to designate a volunteer program coordinator to provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer management. The designated volunteer program coordinator may also assist in promoting volunteer opportunities, recruiting potential volunteers, and creating volunteer roles.

# THE VOLUNTEER

## **Volunteer Definitions:**

### **1. Facility Volunteer**

A facility volunteer is any person who without compensation or expectation of compensation fills a specific position or role under the direction of and on behalf of the County. A facility volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by the County prior to the onset of their volunteer duties. While facility volunteers are considered part of the organization, they are not employees of the County in any way or for any purpose.

### **2. Special Case, Short Term, and Group Volunteers**

The County also welcomes as volunteers those participating in alternative sentencing programs, rehabilitative programs, student community service, corporate events, non-paid internships and other volunteer referral programs. Clark County is host to many volunteer interests arising from local youth groups, faith-based organizations, schools and other groups providing a service to Clark County on a short term basis. This service is usually comprised of one day or other short-term period.

In each case, a special agreement with the organization, school or program from which the volunteers originate is required. The agreement must identify those responsible for management and supervision of the participating volunteers.

### **3. Employee Volunteers**

Clark County welcomes the services of its regular staff as volunteers unless otherwise restricted by labor contract. This work is accepted only if it is provided without any coercive influence, involves work which is outside the scope of normal duties and is performed after assigned working hours. All retired and former Clark County employees are welcomed to become volunteers.

### **4. “Advocates,” “Friends Of,” and “Team Member” Volunteers**

New types of volunteers are evolving to take on or enhance fundraising, support and advocacy addressing current budgetary and policy challenges. These volunteers may come from a “friends of” group or planning team, or may serve in an advisory or advocacy role. While some of these volunteers might not meet the complete definition of a volunteer, most do not receive pay for the time they contribute to the County.

### **5. Spontaneous Volunteers in Times of Disaster**

Spontaneous volunteers are essential in times of disaster to aid in community response and recovery. Typically, this service is comprised of one day or other short-term period. Most volunteers provide assistance with such activities as sandbagging and debris removal.

Spontaneous volunteers also include amateur radio operators who provide backup communications in the event of a failure of the agency systems, or may supplement the County’s response teams during large disasters and emergencies.

A special agreement is required for each participant before beginning work. This agreement must identify those responsible for spontaneous volunteer management and supervision.

Spontaneous volunteers must be 18 years or older.

### **Service at the Discretion of the Agency**

Clark County welcomes the service of all approved volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the County (e.g., "at will"). Volunteers agree that the County may at any time, with or without cause, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the County.

The volunteer may, at any time, decide to terminate the relationship with the County. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the volunteer's supervisor.

### **Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities**

Clark County values the work performed by volunteers. To the extent possible, volunteers should have meaningful assignments while afforded dignity and respect, effective supervision, and recognition for their work. Volunteers should be provided opportunities to learn and grow and to voice their ideas and concerns. In turn, volunteers should actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and adhere to the rules, standards and procedures of the agency. Volunteers must respect others, ensure their actions reflect the highest ethical standards, and above all, perform tasks only as directed by the supervisor. At all times, they must comply with applicable health and safety procedures.

Volunteers must comply with the Employment Standards of the Clark County Human Resources Policy Manual. This Manual applies to all employees and individuals engaged in work/activities on behalf of the County including regular and project employees, temporaries, contractors, volunteers and members of the public.

### **Scope of Volunteer Involvement**

Volunteers do not replace regular staff. Rather, they enhance regular staff's ability to achieve their goals in accordance with their priorities.

### **Conflict Of Interest**

Volunteers shall not serve in any position where there is a direct conflict of interest with a County activity or program. This includes financial and legal conflicts of interest.

### **Representation of the County**

Volunteers are not authorized to act as representatives of the County. Volunteers should not make public statements to the press, participate in coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or attempt to enter into any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations on behalf of the County.

**Dress**

Volunteers should present a positive image to the community and public. Volunteers should dress appropriately for the conditions and requirements of their duties. This includes wearing safety gear required for a specific task or setting, or any uniform or dress code as directed.

**Confidentiality**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information they learn while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a County staff member, community volunteer, or agency matter. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the County or other corrective action.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF SUPERVISING VOLUNTEERS**

### **Maintenance of Records**

Supervising staff will maintain records for each volunteer, including dates of service, positions held, training received, duties performed, evaluation of work and any commendations.

Volunteer personnel records are provided the same confidentiality afforded regular staff under Washington law.

### **Work Site**

The County will provide an appropriate work site for volunteers. This work site shall contain the necessary facilities, equipment and space to enable volunteers to effectively perform their duties.

### **Employee Family Members**

Family members of employees may volunteer with the County. When family members are enrolled as facility volunteers, they will not be placed under the supervision of relatives who are employees, nor placed in positions where indirect influence or an actual or perceived conflict of interest may exist.

## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

### **Application**

A volunteer must submit a complete application to the County prior to appointment. Placement should not occur until all necessary and required information for the application process is received by the County. The volunteer's signature on the bottom of his/her application is required and certifies that the information provided is accurate and complete.

### **Role Definition Form**

A volunteer role definition form is recommended prior to placement in an effort to define roles and responsibilities of the volunteer and the County department. A position description that outlines specific volunteer duties may be provided to a volunteer instead of a volunteer role form.

### **Interview Summary**

To help determine volunteer interests and suitable placement, all volunteers should engage in an interview with departmental staff. An interview summary form is available to County staff as a guide for obtaining necessary information in interviews with volunteer program applicants.

### **Induction Checklist**

The Induction Checklist confirms that all necessary and required paperwork is on file including the Criminal Background Check (if necessary), a Parental Consent form (if the volunteer is a minor), or a Vehicle Use Agreement (if the volunteer will have access to a County vehicle). If the volunteer will have use of a County vehicle, staff must verify that the volunteer is 18 years of age or older, obtain a copy of the volunteer's driver's license and proof of insurance and have the volunteer complete a Vehicle Use Agreement. This authorizes the County to acquire a copy of the volunteer's driving record by signing a "Request for Abstract of Driving Record" from the Department of Licensing. The use of County vehicles by volunteers requires the authorization of a County department head or its Equipment Services Manager. Volunteers using County vehicles are subject to the Vehicle Use and Scope section of Clark County's Human Resources Policy Manual.

### **Appointment Agreement Form**

Completion of the appointment agreement form is the final step in the volunteer application process. The appointment agreement form confirms that all volunteer information is on file, any additional requirements for the assignment are met and authorization is granted for the volunteer to begin work. The volunteer's supervisor and the volunteer must sign the appointment agreement form before the volunteer begins work.

### **Time Sheets**

Volunteers are responsible for the accurate completion and timely submission of time sheets either on-line or to their supervisor.

**Group Project Registration**

Department staff is responsible for recording the time of volunteer groups (those who are not facility volunteers), whether they are a school groups, youth organizations or others as defined in Special Case, Short Term or Group Volunteers above. A group project registration form is set up to record the nature of the work, the location and the hours completed by these groups. Staff should complete a new form for each group project or special case volunteer type.

**Bi-annual Reports**

Twice per year (6/30 and 12/31) volunteer supervisors will complete a volunteer report that presents the work performed by volunteers.

**Lines of Communication**

Volunteers are entitled to the information pertinent to the performance of their work assignments or status as volunteers. When feasible, volunteers will typically have access to all appropriate memos and materials relevant to their work assignments. To facilitate the receipt of this information on a timely basis, it is anticipated that volunteers are included on distribution lists and should have a bulletin board for receipt of information distributed in their absence.

**Knowledge of Procedures**

County staff supervising volunteers are responsible for learning and remaining up to date with the procedures for volunteer involvement as provided in this Manual or by County directive. Adherence to the procedures outlined in the Manual is expected of all staff supervising volunteers.

## **VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

### **Volunteer Role Definitions**

Volunteers expect a clear, complete and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the role they are expected to fill. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a role definition is recommended for each volunteer position. This definition will be given to each appointed volunteer and utilized in subsequent management and evaluation efforts. Role definitions should be reviewed and updated at least every two years, or whenever the work involved in the role changes substantially. If a role definition is not available, a position description should be provided to the volunteer.

### **Staff Requests for Volunteers**

Requests for volunteers shall be submitted in writing by interested staff. All parties should understand that the recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting assignments and by advance notice. A philosophy of finding the “right role for the person” rather than the “right person for the role” assures an environment of inclusion and expansion of volunteer involvement.

### **Recruitment**

Volunteers should be recruited by Clark County on a pro-active basis with the intent of broadening and expanding volunteer involvement in the community. Volunteers should be recruited without regard to gender, race, religion, age, national origin, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, disability or any other status protected by law. The primary qualification for volunteer recruitment is suitability to perform a task on behalf of the agency. Volunteers may be recruited through either an interest in specific functions or through a general interest in volunteering. No final acceptance of a volunteer should take place without a written volunteer role definition or position description.

Recruitment campaigns will be handled at the department level on as needed basis.

### **Recruitment of Minors**

Volunteers who are under eighteen years of age must have the written consent of a parent or guardian prior to volunteering. The duties assigned to a minor volunteer require a non-hazardous environment and compliance with all applicable child labor laws.

Youth volunteers should be a minimum of fourteen years old and should not be scheduled to work more than two days per week and four hours each day. Labor laws may allow for more hours during the summer months.

Volunteers thirteen years of age or younger, but in no case younger than 10 years, must have a parent or guardian present during the duration of the volunteer assignment and remain under the direct supervision of the parent or guardian at all times.

## **Interviews**

Prior to appointment to a volunteer position, all applicants will be interviewed to ascertain the qualifications and interests of the applicant, their commitment to fulfill the requirements of the volunteer position and address any questions the applicant may have about the position.

## **Criminal Background Check**

As appropriate for the protection of the County, its staff and the community, volunteers in certain assignments are required to submit to a criminal background check. Volunteers who do not agree to the background check are not eligible to continue in the application process.

Background checks are typically not required for the following volunteers:

- Volunteers under the age of sixteen
- Groups such as corporate, community, schools, scouts, and faith-based
- Episodic volunteers – volunteers that work no more than two consecutive days and are not working alone
- Volunteers serving on Boards or Committees
- Participants from alternative sentencing programs but only if they are already screened and approved by their respective program

Background checks, including criminal records, are required for various positions including, for example, but not limited to, the following volunteer duties:

- Care, custody, or control of children, elderly, persons with disabilities, or other vulnerable adults
- Access to confidential or sensitive information
- Handling money or fiduciary responsibilities

Clark County, at its discretion, will determine when duties require a criminal background check and/or or additional screening checks which may also recur on a periodic basis.

Background checks include a comprehensive records search and are conducted through a contracted service managed by the volunteer supervisors. The search will include a social security trace and national database records check for sex offenses and felonies. The County may require a fingerprint background check as well.

## **Certificate of Ability**

Potential volunteers who indicate they are under the care of a physician for either physical or psychological treatment may be asked to present a certificate from the physician as to their ability to safely perform their volunteer duties. Volunteers under a course of treatment, which might affect their volunteer work, will not be accepted without a written verification of suitability from their physician. Any volunteer who, after acceptance and appointment by Clark County, enters a course of treatment should consult with their supervisor.

## **Placement**

Priority is given to the skills and interests of the volunteer and the requirements of the role definition or position description when placing a volunteer. No placement shall be made unless the requirements of the volunteer, the supervising staff and the County are met. It is anticipated that volunteers are only assigned duties that have value, not “busy work.”

## **Staff Participation in Interviewing and Placement**

County staff scheduled to work with a volunteer should participate in the design and conduct of the interview when possible. Final assignment of a volunteer should not take place without the review and approval from the staff appointed to work with the volunteer.

## **Acceptance and Appointment**

Service as a volunteer within the County shall begin with official notice of acceptance of a volunteer position and the completion of an appointment agreement form. Notice may only be given by the volunteer’s supervisor. Volunteers should not begin performance of any duties until they are officially accepted for that position and have completed all necessary screening and paperwork. Upon final acceptance, volunteers shall sign an appointment agreement form and receive a copy of their role definition or position description and service agreement.

## **Appointment Forms and Liability**

Volunteers whose appointment agreement forms are complete and signed by the supervising staff are considered active volunteers of the County. Active volunteers are covered under the agency’s liability insurance fund only while performing their volunteer duties and while they are working within the scope of their volunteer position. If a volunteer or third party is injured as a result of a volunteer’s activity, the supervisor will notify Risk Management soon as possible. Any necessary medical attention should be sought immediately.

## **Probationary Period**

All volunteer placements should include an initial trial period. At the end of this period, a follow up interview should be conducted between the volunteer and the supervisor to determine the suitability of the placement. At that time, either the volunteer or the department may request a re-assignment of the volunteer to a different position or may determine that the volunteer is not suited to continue in a County volunteer position.

## **Re-assignment**

Volunteers who are re-assigned to a new position should first be interviewed for that position and should complete an appointment agreement form prior to beginning work or training. In addition, any screening procedures appropriate for that specific position must be completed, even if the volunteer has already been working with the County.

## **Professional Services**

Volunteers should not perform professional services for which certification or licensing is required unless currently certified or licensed to do so and specifically directed to do so by the supervisor. A current copy of such certificate or license shall be on file with the supervising staff.

**Length of Service**

Each volunteer is requested to serve a predetermined term of appointment. It is recommended that this term continue for a period no longer than one year, with an option for renewal at the discretion of both parties. All volunteer assignments shall end at the conclusion of their set term, without expectation or requirement of re-assignment of that position to the incumbent.

Volunteers are neither expected nor required to accept further service in a position at the end of their appointment, although they are welcome to do so in most cases. They may instead seek a different volunteer assignment within the County or they may retire from volunteer service.

**Leave of Absence**

Volunteers may be granted leaves of absence at the discretion of their supervisor. This will neither alter nor extend the previously agreed upon term of appointment.

**Reconnecting with Absent Volunteers**

If the volunteer supervisor has not heard from a volunteer for some time, the supervisor will attempt to connect by a note, an email or a phone call. If the volunteer has become inactive and does not plan to come back soon, then the next volunteer report should reflect their change of status.

## **VOLUNTEER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Orientation**

All volunteers will receive a general orientation to Clark County, its mission, structure, facilities and programs. The role of volunteers and function of the supervisor will be discussed. All policies and procedures affecting volunteers will be introduced. All volunteers will receive a thorough facility orientation prior to the onset of their volunteer duties. This orientation will include a walk through of the facility, an introduction to staff members and an opportunity for the volunteer to ask specific questions about the work-site. Any rules regarding smoking, telephone, emergency procedures, etc. will be covered at that time.

### **Training**

Volunteers will receive training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignments effectively. The design and delivery of this training may include on-the-job training, specific skills workshops and/or volunteer involvement in departmental in-service training. Staff charged with the supervision of volunteers will have an active role in the training process. Experienced volunteers should be included in the design and delivery of volunteer orientation and training.

### **Continuing Education**

Volunteers should attempt to improve their skills during their term of service. Additional training and educational opportunities should be made available to volunteers during their tenure with the County when feasible.

## **VOLUNTEER SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION**

### **Requirements of a Supervisor**

Each volunteer who is accepted to a position with Clark County will have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor shall be responsible for day-to-day assignment and guidance of work, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance. A volunteer may act as a supervisor of other volunteers, provided that the supervising volunteer is under the direct supervision of a regular County employee.

### **Volunteer/Staff Relationships**

Volunteers and paid staff are considered partners in implementing the mission and programs of Clark County. It is essential for the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs of the program.

### **Acceptance of Volunteers by Staff**

Since individual staff are in a better position to determine the requirements of their work and their own abilities, volunteers will not be assigned to work with a staff person without the consent of that staff person. As volunteers are a valuable resource in performing the County's work, staff are encouraged to seriously consider creative ways in which volunteers might be of service.

### **Staff Volunteer Management Training**

An orientation to the Clark County volunteer program will be provided to appropriate staff. In-service training on effective volunteer involvement will be provided for staff involved in volunteer management.

### **Volunteer Management and Staff Evaluation**

Staff charged with supervision of volunteers in a Clark County facility may have such responsibility included as a significant task/function in their performance evaluation.

### **Absenteeism**

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regularly scheduled and timely basis. Volunteers should inform their supervisor as far in advance as possible if absence from work is expected. Volunteers may be encouraged to find a substitute from a list of qualified volunteers for an upcoming absence following consultation with their supervisor.

Continual absenteeism will result in the review of the volunteer's work assignment or term of service.

### **Volunteer Evaluation**

Volunteers should receive periodic evaluations of their work. The evaluation session is used to review the performance of the volunteer, suggest any changes in work style, seek suggestions from the volunteer, convey appreciation to the volunteer and ascertain the continued interest of the volunteer in serving in that position. Evaluations should also include an opportunity for the volunteer to make suggestions concerning the position or program in which they are serving. The evaluation session is an opportunity for both the volunteer and the County to examine and improve their relationship.

### **Written Basis for Volunteer Evaluation**

The volunteer role definition or position description should form the basis of an evaluation, as well as any list of job assignments or standards of performance worked out between volunteer and supervisor. A written record of any evaluation session will be maintained by the supervisor for inclusion in the volunteer's permanent record.

### **Corrective Action**

When necessary, corrective action may be taken following an evaluation. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, re-assignment of a volunteer to a new position, suspension of a volunteer or dismissal from volunteer service with the County.

### **Dismissal of a Volunteer**

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the County or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal at the sole discretion of the County. In general, a volunteer will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for dismissal with supervisory staff.

### **Notice of Departure or Re-assignment of a Volunteer**

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to notify his/her supervisor in a timely fashion when the volunteer leaves his/her position with Clark County.

### **Resignation**

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the agency at any time. Volunteers who intend to resign should provide a minimum of two weeks advance notice of their departure and a reason for their decision to their supervisor.

### **Exit Interviews**

When possible, exit interviews of departing volunteers will be conducted by the volunteer's supervisor. The interview should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving the position, suggestions on improving the position and the possibility of involving the volunteer in some other capacity within the County.

### **Evaluation of Clark County Volunteer Utilization**

Volunteer supervisors shall conduct an annual evaluation of their department's volunteer program. The Annual Summary of Volunteerism will serve as the report of the findings of this evaluation.

## **VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION**

### **Reimbursement of Expenses**

Volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred while undertaking business for the department. Prior approval must be obtained from the volunteer's supervisor for any reimbursement. In some special cases, reimbursement of certain expenses may be included as a part of the volunteer appointment agreement. Such arrangements should be confirmed in writing at the time a volunteer position is created, and are at the discretion of the volunteer supervisor.

### **Access to Agency Property and Materials**

Volunteers will have access to County property and materials necessary to fulfill their duties, and will receive training in the operation of any equipment. Property and materials should be utilized only as required for County purposes. This policy includes access to and use of County vehicles. Access to a County vehicle will only be granted if it is specifically required by the role definition form or position description and if the volunteer has a sound driving record. A background check of the volunteer's driving record is an essential requirement, in every case, prior to the approval of any driving during the volunteer's term.

### **Insurance**

Volunteers are covered under the County's general liability insurance policy if they or a third party are injured or property damaged during performance of their assigned duties. Volunteers are encouraged to consult with their own insurance agents regarding the extension of their personal insurance to include community volunteer work.

All volunteers are required to sign a liability waiver before beginning any volunteer duties. Volunteers are NOT covered under the County Workers' Compensation Program. Staff are required to report any injury of a volunteer to Risk Management. Any injury to a third party or damage resulting from a volunteer's activity should be reported to Risk Management as soon as possible as a requirement of the coverage noted above.

### **Recognition**

A county-wide volunteer recognition event is held annually to reward and highlight the contributions of volunteers to the department. Volunteer supervisors and various staff members will cooperate in putting this event together.

### **Informal Recognition**

All staff and volunteers responsible for volunteer supervision are encouraged to undertake on-going methods of recognition of volunteer service on a regular basis throughout the year. These methods of informal recognition should range from simple "Thank Yous" to a concerted effort to include volunteers as full participants in the work program.

**Volunteer Development**

Volunteers are encouraged to grow and develop their skills while serving with the County. Opportunities for promotion to volunteer positions with additional and greater responsibilities will be provided when possible. Volunteers may request assistance from their supervisor in maintaining appropriate records of volunteer experience to aid in future career opportunities, both paid and volunteer.

**Letters of Recommendations for Volunteer Work**

At the request of a volunteer, the County may provide letters of recommendation from the volunteer supervisor for volunteers who have performed well during their term. Volunteers may also ask their supervisor to provide a reference for perspective employers.