

Board of County Commissioners Leon County, Florida

Policy No. 08-1

Title: Leon County Volunteer Center Policy and Procedures
Date Adopted: April 8, 2008
Effective Date: April 8, 2008
Reference: N/A
Policy Superseded: None

It shall be the Policy of the Board of County Commissioners of Leon County, Florida, that a policy entitled "Leon County Volunteer Center Policies and Procedures" is hereby adopted, to wit:

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the structure of the Leon County Volunteer Center and build effective volunteer management throughout the County. This policy ensures consistent and effective supervision for County volunteers, fair and professional treatment of volunteers, and the balanced use of County resources available for volunteer activities.

Authority

The Volunteer Center office will be responsible for the direction of the volunteer program and its compliance with all laws pertaining to volunteers, including the recruitment of volunteers, and the evaluation of the volunteer program. Specific Authority is provided in Section 125.9501-06, *Florida Statutes*.

Definition

"Volunteer" is a person who, of his/her free will, provides goods or services to the Board of County Commissioners (Board) without receiving monetary or material compensation. However, a member of a Board-appointed advisory committee, as that term is defined in the Board's Policy 03-15, shall not be included.

Classes of Volunteers:

- (a) "Regular-service volunteer" means a person who is engaged in specific voluntary service activities on an ongoing or continual basis.
- (b) "Occasional-service volunteer" means a person who offers to provide a one-time or an occasional voluntary service.
- (c) "Material donor" means a person who may be unable to give the time required for volunteer service, but chooses to express his/her contribution by providing funds or materials.
- (d) "Community Service Volunteer" means
 - 1. A person who is court-ordered to complete a required number of volunteer hours as part of his/her probation a/k/a court-ordered volunteer; and
 - 2. A person who needs a number of volunteer hours to meet a scholarship or class requirement for middle school, high school, or college.

Section 1: Overall County Philosophy

The primary purpose of the Leon County Volunteer Center is to augment and enhance community engagement and the delivery of County services in Leon County. Additionally, Leon County administrators recognize that volunteers are essential to the productivity, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness of government. Leon County encourages and welcomes individuals and groups who have the skill, talent, ability, and time to volunteer in County departments, divisions, and facilities.

Benefits to the County include:

- Extending the County's ability to provide services effectively and efficiently and by conserving resources;
- Building understanding of and participation in County government; and
- Strengthening community ties through collaboration and partnership.

Benefits to volunteers include:

- Developing skills and gaining experience;
- Understanding County government and positively influencing its effectiveness; and
- Helping the community.

Section 2: Volunteer Recruitment

The Volunteer Center coordinates countywide volunteer recruitment activities and materials. Recruitment targets the broadest possible community involvement representing the diverse population of Leon County.

A. Volunteer Assignments

1. Every assignment or activity for which volunteers are utilized must have a written volunteer position description. The description provides both staff and volunteers with a clear explanation of responsibilities, qualifications needed, and benefits to the volunteer.
2. Volunteer positions may include assignments or projects that are:
 - Short-term or long-term to be completed within a defined period
 - Ongoing without an identified end date
 - To be completed by an individual, or
 - Shared among a group.

B. Volunteer Qualifications

All volunteers must meet minimum qualifications for placement into any County-related assignment. The primary qualification for volunteer placement is the ability and suitability to perform a task on behalf of the County.

1. Age - The minimum age of a County volunteer is 12 years old (or entering 6th grade), unless otherwise specified in federal and state laws or in the volunteer description.
2. Background Investigations - Depending on the nature of the volunteer assignment and in accordance with federal, state, and local requirements, volunteers may be subject to criminal background checks and/or reference checks. Any volunteer who has direct contact with minors or who has supervisory or disciplinary authority of minors must obtain clearance in advance of the assignment. The County absorbs expenses for the background check.
3. Equal Opportunity Policy - For all activities related to the recruitment and retention of volunteers, Leon County will comply with all federal, state, and other applicable laws prohibiting discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age or disabled status in accordance with County policy 11.01 section 2.01. Individuals requesting accommodation or accessibility information should contact the Volunteer Center regarding a specific request.

Section 3: **Placing Volunteers**

- A. To the extent possible, volunteers are offered opportunities that match the volunteer's skills and interests and serve operational needs. Volunteers will not be assigned to displace any County employee from a paid position. A volunteer position may not replace an employee position that is vacant due to retirement, resignation, or termination.
- B. As a service to departments, the Volunteer Center conducts screening interviews for volunteers to determine the qualifications, ability, and suitability to volunteer in Leon County. The Volunteer Center then refers such volunteers to the department volunteer supervisor for interview and placement. During the screening interview, the Volunteer Center presents an orientation and overview of the County. When the volunteer supervisor in the department conducts the screening interview, this interview should also include such an overview.
- C. All volunteer placements begin on a trial basis for a period of 30 days. At the end of the trial period, the volunteer and supervisor may meet to evaluate the extent to which the objectives of both the County and the volunteer are being satisfied.
- D. Volunteers will wear the County-issued identification name badge while on assignment as a volunteer with the County. The name badge will be used only when volunteering for the County and at no other time.
- E. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they have access while serving as a volunteer including confidential information concerning personnel matters, members of the community, or related to County business.

Section 4: **Supervising Volunteers**

Each volunteer must be assigned a clearly identified supervisor in the department that is responsible for day-to-day consultation, support, and direction.

- A. The volunteer supervisor should make every attempt to contact the prospective volunteer the day the referral is received from the Volunteer Center, and no later than the following business day to arrange a placement interview. During the interview, the volunteer supervisor should inform the prospective volunteer of all requirements of the job. The volunteer supervisor is responsible for arranging any clearance or background that must be completed before placement. The volunteer supervisor makes the final decision regarding placement of a volunteer and is under no obligation to place a volunteer.

- B. The Volunteer Center will provide each new volunteer with a copy of the “Volunteer Orientation Handbook” and obtains a signed “Agreement to Serve” acknowledging receipt of the Handbook. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have the “Agreement to Serve” signed by a parent or legal guardian.
- C. The volunteer supervisors will provide volunteers the orientation, training, and supervision necessary to complete the assigned tasks successfully.
- D. Volunteer supervisors within departments are responsible for ensuring that department volunteers understand and comply with County policies and procedures.
- E. Volunteer supervisors must comply with policies and procedures identified in the Volunteer Supervisor Handbook.
- F. All volunteer supervisors must attend the Volunteer Supervisor Training class provided by the Volunteer Center. This training should be renewed every three years.

Section 5: Risk Management and Insurance

County volunteers are covered under the County’s Workers’ Compensation Program in accordance with Chapter 440, *Florida Statutes*. In the event that a volunteer reports an injury, staff should follow the same procedures that apply when an employee reports an injury. Upon learning of an injury or accident, the Volunteer Supervisor or responsible staff must notify the Volunteer Center Director and the County’s Risk Management Office.

- A. Risk Management
 - 1. Volunteers must be trained for the jobs they will perform, including safety aspects.
 - 2. When personal protection equipment is required for the position, the volunteer must either provide his/her own or be properly equipped by the department, as well as trained in the use of the equipment prior to engaging in any such work.
 - 3. Volunteers must not be knowingly exposed to any unnecessary danger or hazards in the workplace and must not perform any functions requiring a license or certification, unless they have a current license or certification to do so.
 - 4. Volunteers will be permitted to drive County vehicles, and operate County equipment, in accordance with guidelines and regulations as applied to County staff.

5. In accordance with the County's Personnel Policies and Procedures, Section II, 2.02, "Workplace Harassment", any harassment will not be tolerated in the workplace or outside the workplace. Workplace harassment is defined as "offensive or retaliatory behavior based on race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, ancestry, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation or an employee's exercise of their constitutional or statutory rights."
6. It is the policy of Leon County to provide a work environment that is safe, secure, and free from threats, intimidation, abusive behavior, and physical violence. Acts of physical violence, direct or indirect verbal threats, stalking, aggressive or intimidating behavior, or provocation, which could lead to violence, will not be tolerated.

B. Insurance

1. The volunteer must be placed in a regular volunteer position and have a completed application on file in the Volunteer Center's database or the volunteer must be volunteering at a special event.
2. The accident, injury, or occupational illness must have occurred in the course of the duties of the volunteer's position description.
3. The volunteer must have signed in on a valid time sheet documenting that he/she was volunteering during the time in question.

Section 6: Reimbursement

When directed by the Volunteer Supervisor to make a program-related purchase, the volunteer may be reimbursed for expenses. Approval for any specific purchase must be obtained in advance and all County and department purchasing policies apply. Volunteers may claim mileage reimbursement when required to use personal vehicles for County-related business and must use the standard County form. Mileage will not be paid to or from the site of volunteer service and home, but only for travel during authorized service periods.

Section 7: Recognizing Volunteers and Staff

Effective recognition is an extremely important element of volunteer management.

- A. Recognition by Staff. Volunteer supervisors, and other County staff who work directly with volunteers, are encouraged to offer appreciation and recognition to volunteers on an on-going basis. All opportunities for informal recognition should be taken.

- B. Recognition by Departments. Departments are encouraged to plan volunteer recognition celebrations for volunteers and/or invite volunteers to staff parties or get-togethers as a form of recognition for participation on the team.
- C. County-wide Recognition. The Volunteer Center may sponsor a countywide celebration for volunteers in conjunction with Florida Volunteer Month.
- D. Awards. The Volunteer Center presents Countywide Volunteer Service Awards based on hours of service or other outstanding accomplishments.
- E. Recognizing Staff. Volunteer management requires special skills and expertise. Departments should recognize and reward volunteer supervisors who demonstrate excellence in volunteer management.

Section 8: Evaluating Volunteers

- A. To enhance performance and express appreciation for volunteer contributions, the Volunteer Supervisor may evaluate the work of a volunteer. Evaluation procedures should be useful and constructive, motivating the volunteer to aim for high standards. Unsatisfactory performance should be reported to the Volunteer Center Director.
- B. Volunteer Supervisors should provide an exit survey for a departing volunteer. Exit interviews enable departments to track volunteers' satisfaction with the volunteer experience. Completed forms should be sent to the Volunteer Center.
- C. If requested, the Volunteer Supervisor or Volunteer Center staff may prepare a letter confirming the position held by the volunteer and the number of hours served. The data source will be the Volunteer Center's database.

Section 9: Ending the Volunteer Assignment

- A. A volunteer assignment may end when the project is complete, when the volunteer has completed the specific time commitment, or when the volunteer, for any reason, must end his/her service.
- B. Volunteers will work within the rules set by the responsible department supervisor. Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the department or who fail to satisfactorily perform the volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. However, no volunteer will be dismissed until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with the supervisory staff. Prior to the dismissal of a volunteer, staff should seek the consultation and assistance of the Volunteer Director.

Section 10: Roles and Responsibilities

A. The Volunteer Center

- Ensures a uniform, consistent, and efficient approach to volunteer coordination and management
- Provides training, support, and consultation to staff and departments regarding the use of volunteers
- Helps to recruit a skilled and committed corps of volunteers for County departments
- Pre-screens candidates for availability, position preferences, and relevant experience
- Refers prospective volunteers to the department for interview and possible placement. The staff volunteer supervisor makes final placement decisions and should conduct an interview to assure appropriate placement
- Advertises volunteer opportunities available within and outside of the County to the public
- Supports staff in developing volunteer recognition plans and activities
- Develops and maintains connections with outside non-profit agencies, businesses and service groups that serve the community in order to promote volunteerism, leadership development, and civic engagement

B. The Department Director

The Director provides leadership and demonstrates by example the County's commitment to volunteerism. The Director

- Incorporates Volunteer Supervisor responsibilities in the Department in job descriptions as appropriate;
- Includes resources for recognizing volunteers in the Department budget as appropriate; and
- Builds excellence in volunteer supervision into the performance evaluation of Department Volunteer Supervisors as appropriate.

C. The Volunteer Supervisor

Each department using volunteers appoints one or more Volunteer Supervisors as appropriate. The Volunteer Supervisor

- Oversees and is responsible for department volunteer activities and data
- Acts as the communication link between the Volunteer Center and the individual department;
- Maintains accurate and up to date department records including monthly volunteer hours, position descriptions, and volunteer supervisor lists;

- Coordinates volunteer recognition in cooperation with the Volunteer Center;
- Nominates volunteers for local, state, and national awards as appropriate;
- Attends the volunteer supervisor training class provided by the Volunteer Center;
- Develops the volunteer position descriptions;
- Conducts volunteer placement interviews;
- Provides orientation, training, and on-going supervision to the volunteer; and
- Ensures that volunteers comply with County policy and procedures.

D. The Volunteer

Volunteers will work within the rules set by the responsible department supervisor. Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the department or who fail to satisfactorily perform the volunteer assignment(s) are subject to dismissal. However, no volunteer will be dismissed until the volunteer has an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with supervisory staff. Prior to dismissal of a volunteer, staff should seek the consultation and assistance of the Volunteer Director.

The Volunteer

- May perform any task adhering to prior assessment of risk and liability issues assigned by the supervisor and approved by the responsible administrators;
- Will maintain strict confidentiality of any information to which they may have access within the volunteer jobs;
- Are prohibited from using information or materials not generally available to the public and obtained by reason of the volunteer position for the personal benefit of his/her self or others. Volunteers will follow the County's Code of Ethics policy in regard to conflict of interest in accordance with regulations specified in Section 112.311-43, *Florida Statutes*;
- Will sign in and out in the Volunteer Log. A Volunteer Log will be maintained by all departments or facilities and will contain volunteer names, dates, hours of service, and tasks assigned. Volunteers will use only the space, equipment, and materials authorized during the volunteer's assignment.
- Will receive a name badge following 10 days of regular service and must wear it while volunteering; and,
- Volunteers who are public officers/employees will not be permitted to voluntarily perform services which are the same as or are similar to duties for which the volunteer is paid to perform by the same public agency.