



*State of North Carolina  
Department of Correction  
Division of Prisons*

Chapter: F  
Section: .0604  
Title: **Community Volunteer  
Program**  
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**POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

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**.0604 GENERAL**

The purpose of this policy is to describe the Community Volunteer Program by which citizens are identified and approved to provide volunteer services to the staff and the inmate population. The Division of Prisons has designated a senior staff member responsible for managing, coordinating and compiling an annual assessment of the agency's Community Volunteer Program.

- (a) It is recognized that private citizens serving as community volunteers can be a valuable resource for the Department of Correction and the Division of Prisons. Community volunteers can obtain firsthand knowledge of the many challenges and responsibilities confronting both the staff and offender population. As concerned "credible witnesses," volunteers can aid significantly in developing public support for adequate correctional facilities and staff. Volunteers represent a unique resource for working with the offender population by supplementing staff, providing goods and services not otherwise available, and bridging the gap between correctional facilities and communities.
- (b) Eligibility.

Each Facility Head shall designate a staff member responsible for coordinating the involvement and supervision of the Community Volunteer Program. The Coordinator shall be responsible for recruiting, screening, interviewing, training, placement and the supervision of all approved volunteers. The Coordinator shall also evaluate each volunteer annually to confirm their continuing eligibility to provide services. Annual Assessments of the facility's approved volunteer programs will be conducted and submitted to the Division senior staff member. A copy shall be maintained on file at the facility.

- (1) A volunteer is any person who provides goods or services to the Division of Prisons of his/her own free will and does so for no financial gain.
- (2) Any citizen at least 21 years of age who is of good character and sufficiently mature to handle the responsibilities involved is eligible for consideration to become a community volunteer.
- (3) A Community Volunteer Program Application (DC-345) must be completed by each individual who wishes to provide an ongoing service as a volunteer at a correctional facility. Persons who provide a one time service either individually or as a member of a group may not be required to complete an application. Individuals and group

leaders will sign the DC-345A covering this one time activity.

- (4) A background investigation will be conducted on each potential volunteer. This investigation will follow the same general procedure used for applicants for employment. The Criminal Justice Forms, physical exams and fingerprints will not be completed for volunteers. The investigation must be completed before the certification process is completed and an identification card is issued. Background checks must be conducted annually to confirm the volunteers continuing eligibility to provide services. Signed verification of the background check will be kept on file in a secure location at the facility and shall be confidential.
- (5) Individuals with criminal records may be considered to serve as volunteers after one year of unsupervised involvement in the community with no additional arrests. Individuals who have been convicted of sexually related offenses are prohibited from serving as Community Volunteers for the Division of Prisons. This also applies to all individuals identified as sex offenders.
- (6) An immediate relative of an inmate may not provide services as a volunteer for the inmate nor can they provide volunteer services at the facility where an immediate relative is housed. Immediate relative is defined as parent, child, step-parent, step-child, siblings, grandparents, aunt/uncle, spouse (married or common law), nephew/niece or in-laws.
- (7) Persons who have or have had an intimate, romantic or unduly familiar personal relationship with an inmate including, but not limited to intimate, romantic or unduly familiar physical contact, conversation or correspondence may not provide volunteer services for that inmate nor may they provide volunteer services at the facility the inmate is housed.
- (8) Department of Correction employees are eligible to be considered as on-site volunteers only in the Division of Prisons. The following requirements shall apply when employees make application and/or they are being considered to provide on-site volunteer service in the Division:
  - (A) Employees shall clearly identify themselves as an employee of the Department of Correction at the time the volunteer application is submitted. Employees of the Division of Prisons shall not serve as volunteers at the facility where they are employed. Each employee is required to acknowledge in their application that they have read and understand the requirements of this section and they accept the terms thereof.
  - (B) In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, employees will not perform the same type of duties as a volunteer that they perform as part of their Department of Correction job responsibilities.

- (C) Employees approved as volunteers shall be restricted from program involvement that may lead to undue familiarity with inmates. Employees will not serve as Community Leave Sponsors.
- (D) Former employees are eligible to serve as volunteers in any available volunteer capacity including Community Leave Sponsors unless the employee resigned under circumstances listed below.
  - (i) engaging in undue familiarity with an inmate;
  - (ii) writing or discussing his or her personal affairs with an inmate;
  - (iii) borrowing anything from or lending anything to, or accepting gifts or personal services from, or barter or trade with any inmate to include cards, letters and telephone calls;
  - (iv) bringing in drugs or contraband;
  - (v) using their knowledge of the prison system to circumvent policy;
  - (vi) other acts or misconduct or personal behavior that undermines security or corrective treatment.
- (E) Failure to adhere to the above listed requirements and guidelines may result in the employee's immediate dismissal as a volunteer, without recourse, and disciplinary action in accordance with the Department of Correction Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.
- (9) Immediate family members of Department of Correction employees may be considered eligible to serve as volunteers in the Division of Prisons. Immediate family members are defined as parent, spouse, step-parent, child, step-child, siblings, in-laws, aunt/uncle, niece/nephew, or grandparents. The following requirements shall apply:
  - (A) Persons shall clearly identify themselves as relatives of an employee at the time the application is submitted. They will not serve as a volunteer at the facility where their relative is employed.
  - (B) Relatives approved as volunteers shall be restricted from any program involvement that may lead to undue familiarity with inmates. They will not serve as Community Leave Sponsors.
- (10) The approving authority for community volunteers is the Facility Head or designee except for (b) (6).

- (11) Volunteers may perform professional services only when they are certified or licensed to do so. Volunteers who wish to offer professional services are required to provide to the facility coordinator, a copy of their credentials and or certificate status in their initial application. Tutoring or sponsorship of a craft or hobby program is not considered a professional service.
- (c) Recruiting:
- (1) The facility's Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for recruiting of volunteers and providing guidance and direction to other staff in recruiting volunteers.
  - (2) Recruiting efforts may include the media, civic organizations, appropriate educational institutions, public agencies and individuals.
  - (3) Active volunteers and members of the facility's Community Resource Council may be used in recruiting efforts.
- (d) Interviewing and Screening
- (1) A personal interview will be conducted for each prospective volunteer. This provides an opportunity to assess the potential volunteer's skills and interests.
  - (2) The volunteer application and other information are reviewed, confirmed and evaluated.
  - (3) The volunteer application, job descriptions and knowledge of facility's needs, are used to determine if the applicant is acceptable as a volunteer and to determine their placement.
- (e) Training
- (1) Each applicant who has been approved as a volunteer will be provided with adequate orientation and training by the Volunteer Coordinator or designee in accordance with the A Community Volunteer Program Training Program prior to assignment.
  - (2) Training should be offered on a continuing basis to help volunteers function with maximum effectiveness within the facility.
  - (3) A Volunteers Make A Difference Handbook will be provided to each volunteer.
  - (4) Each Volunteer shall sign guidelines pertaining to the Rules and Regulations concerning the handling of their identification card, signing in and out of the prison facility, the expectations of his or her role, dress codes, what may be taken in or out of the facility, undue familiarity with inmates, PREA, how to respond if the facility goes into an emergency mode of operation, security practices, confidentiality of

information and any other information deemed pertinent to the volunteers role. The completion of the orientation is to be documented and maintained on file at the facility. The Community Volunteer Program Application (DC-345), criminal record check, and PREA training are to be updated annually.

- (5) Volunteers shall be afforded the opportunity to evaluate their own progress and development and contribute suggestions regarding the Community Volunteer Program policy and procedures.
  - (6) Upon completing the required training program, a volunteer who will be providing a service on an ongoing basis at a facility will be certified and issued a blue identification card.
  - (7) After completing the required training program and a minimum of a one month probationary period of providing service on-site, a volunteer who has completed requirements to serve as a Community Leave Sponsor will be certified and issued a salmon color identification card. The Facility Head may require a volunteer to serve a two-month probationary period before certification as a Community Leave Sponsor and being issued an identification card.
  - (8) Each facility coordinator shall ensure that a current listing of all approved, terminated and restricted volunteers is on file at the facility and is utilized by appropriate staff to verify approved entrance into the facility.
- (f) Placement
- (1) Volunteers will be placed on approved assignments according to their interests, capabilities, and needs of the facility in accordance with the security requirements of the facility.

Examples of possible placements include:

- (A) Counseling (individual, group, family)
- (B) Staff assistance (clerical, administrative)
- (C) Education related (tutoring, teaching classes, vocational)
- (D) Religious related (church services, scripture study)
- (E) Substance Abuse Programs
- (F) Arts and Crafts
- (G) Recreation
- (H) Transportation
- (I) Pre-release training
- (J) Library assistance
- (K) Community Leave Sponsor
- (L) Community Resource Council
- (M) Special Events

- (2) It is essential that job descriptions be written for volunteer assignments available in the correctional facility. The job description should include job duties, frequency and duration of the volunteer service. Both the volunteer and the staff person who will supervise the volunteer should review and sign a copy of the job description to indicate their understanding of the job description.
- (g) Supervision
- (1) Each volunteer will be assigned a staff person as their immediate supervisor.
  - (2) It will be the responsibility of the staff supervisor to guide, direct and support the volunteer in carrying out assigned responsibilities.
  - (3) Facility staff will conduct on site visits of at least 25% of inmate's community leave passes. Every inmate on community leave passes is checked a minimum of once every four months. Results of the site checks are documented in OPUS on the IP61 screen, as a Community Based Program note.
- (h) Volunteer Dismissal
- (1) There is no right to serve as a Community Volunteer at any time and at any prison facility. The Facility Head may at his/her discretion withdraw the certification of a volunteer.
  - (2) The reason for the action must be documented in writing to the volunteer being dismissed. A copy of the documentation will be sent to the Region Director, Office of Citizen Participation and one copy retained in the facility file. A Volunteer Dismissal Notification Form and copy of documentation must be completed and submitted to the Division's Office of Citizen Participation. Included in the dismissal letter to the volunteer will be their appeal rights. The volunteer is instructed that if they wish to appeal, they must appeal in writing to the Assistant Director of Support Services within 30 days from the date of their dismissal as a volunteer.
- (i) Community Leave Sponsorship
- (1) When a volunteer is certified as a Community Leave Sponsor, they may be authorized to take eligible minimum custody inmates into the community for pre-approved activities. While on Community Leave Pass inmates will not have any contact with relatives, unless the Facility Head or designee authorizes an exception for a special event such as a graduation ceremony of an immediate family member. Immediate family is defined as father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, child, foster parents, or other persons who have acted in the place of parents where such relationships can be verified." Volunteers must report all violations to appropriate facility staff.

- (2) Outside activities that are approved should be limited to those that improve the skills of the eligible inmate, develop more responsible behavior, or prepare them for successful reentry into the community.
- (3) Assignment to the required minimum custody level should not be the sole criteria for approval of inmates to participate in outside activities through the Community Volunteer Program. The inmate's overall behavior and adjustment to prison should be considered prior to authorizing any leave.
- (4) Prior to final approval for Community Volunteer Program participation, the IM06 screen (Victim County Conflict Screen) will be reviewed to ensure that if there are victim conflicts relating to housing and community based program participation that those factors will be considered during the review. For additional information, refer to the DOP Victim policy section D.0909.
- (5) The immediate supervisor will thoroughly orient the community volunteer sponsor and the inmate to the conditions of the leave before an outside activity is approved.
- (6) Form DC-142 (Agreement for Extension of Limits of Confinement) must be completed by each volunteer and each inmate who is involved in community leaves.
- (7) A file copy of DC-142 (Agreement for Extension of Limits of Confinement) will be retained in the Volunteer Coordinator's files. The original DC-142 will be retained in the inmate's facility file.
- (8) When an outside activity for an inmate is approved, Community Volunteer Leave Passbook, Form DC-260, must be completed. The Passbook will be issued to inmates at the time of their departure. It must be kept on their person during the period of the activity and returned to staff when the activity is concluded.
- (9) The maximum number of hours authorized for any leave may not exceed six hours. Time may be extended to a maximum of ten hours for special activities with approval of the respective Facility Head or designee. An inmate may be allowed a maximum of three leaves per week.
- (10) Community leaves must terminate no later than 10:00 p.m. unless special permission is granted by the approving authority.
- (11) A community leave will be authorized on a one volunteer to one inmate ratio. Exceptions may be approved by the respective Facility Head or designee for inmates in level III only. This should be permitted only in the case of organized activities. However, no certified volunteer shall be allowed to supervise more than three inmates at any given time.

- (12) All leaves must be explicit as to event, location and time.
  - (13) The volunteer must agree to refrain from using any alcoholic beverages, narcotics, or other drugs except those lawfully prescribed for them, while sponsoring an inmate on any outside activity. If any impairment results from lawful prescribed medication, the volunteer must refrain from any volunteer activities.
  - (14) The community volunteer must agree to return the inmate to the facility or to report by telephone to the facility if a condition of the leave is broken.
  - (15) Female volunteers will not sponsor male inmates on outside activities; male volunteers will not sponsor female inmates on outside activities.
  - (16) The community volunteer must remain with the inmate at all times during the outside activity.
- (j) Violations
- (1) Inmates participating in outside activities are subject to rules and regulations of the Division of Prisons, conditions specified on the DC-142 (Agreement for Extension of Limits of Confinement), and any special conditions that may be imposed by the approving authority.
  - (2) Any violations of rules and regulations or conditions of the leave will be handled through disciplinary procedure. Form DC-142 (Agreement for Extension of Limits of Confinement), for the purpose of disciplinary actions, shall be considered a direct order specifying in writing the conditions of the community leave.
- (k) Suspension of Community Volunteer Leave Privileges
- (1) Outside activities of an inmate under the community volunteer program may be suspended by the approving authority at the discretion of the approving authority.
- (l) Program Documentation
- (1) A Community Volunteer Program Application (DC-345) must be on file for each individual who performs ongoing volunteer activity.
  - (2) Groups or persons who provide a one-time special volunteer service, such as a church group, do not have to complete individual applications. The group leader will sign a statement for a one-time activity (DC-345A). Staff will record the date of activity, the name of group or organization, number of members, and approximate number of inmates in attendance during the activity. The leader of the group will be responsible for orientation the group on the rules and regulations before entering the facility. Even under the direction of a new coordinator, the group will only be allowed a one

time visit during that year. Approval for entrance during the following year will require that the new coordinator signs the DC-345A. Special attention should be given to Groups using the Visitation policy, sections: B.0204, B.0205 and B.0206.

- (3) Documented volunteer services will be recognized as partial fulfillment of training and experience requirements for state employment, pursuant to policies adopted by the State Personnel Commission. Staff members are encouraged to provide letters of documented volunteer services when requested by a volunteer.

(m) Recognition of Volunteers

- (1) Facilities should have an annual event to show appreciation to volunteers for the services they provided during the preceding year. Examples of recognition activities include presentation of certificates of appreciation and an informal reception at the facility or in the community.
- (2) Efforts will be made by the Department of Correction to recognize outstanding volunteers.

(n) Special Provisions

- (1) A person who is certified as a volunteer at one facility is not automatically certified as a volunteer at all facilities in the Division of Prisons. A person who wishes to serve at more than one facility must be certified at each facility or request a waiver of this requirement. The request for a waiver must be submitted through the established chain of command for the facility(ies) where they wish to serve. The final decision on a waiver will be made by the Director of Support Services.
- (2) A volunteer who violates the policies and procedures and is dismissed by a facility is no longer eligible to be a volunteer in any facility in the Division of Prisons. They may submit an application to be reinstated after a three-year period. This application will be processed as a new application, but past violation(s) may be reviewed during the review process. A volunteer who is dismissed may appeal through the Division's Chain of Command with the final decision coming from the Director of Support Services.
- (3) Only employees of the Division of Prisons are authorized to certify and issue an identification card to a volunteer.
- (4) Renewable identification cards will be valid for a maximum period of one year.
- (5) Identification cards are the property of the Department of Correction. They must be surrendered upon request of the Department or when they expire.
- (6) Volunteers shall be exempt from the provision of the State Personnel Act and other

provisions of law and regulations. They must, however, comply with all Department of Correction and Division of Prisons' Policies and Procedures.

- (7) Certified volunteers are covered under Article 31 and 31A of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes governing tort claims against State Department and Agencies and the Defense of State Employees. They are not entitled to benefits under the laws governing Worker's Compensation Act, Chapter 97 of the General Statutes.

  
Director of Prisons      Date

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