

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM GUIDELINES



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Chapter 1 - The Volunteer Program

1.1 Overall Volunteer Policy

El Paso County's Volunteer Program provides opportunities for the people of El Paso County to serve their community by sharing their time and talents. Volunteers work with departmental teams to assist the county in delivering efficient and responsive governmental services. Volunteers are given the opportunity to help others and are reminded of their value and relevance. The County and our community benefit from the increased resources and services made possible by the volunteer efforts. The County accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels and within all appropriate programs and activities. All staff members are encouraged to assist in the creation of meaningful and productive volunteer roles and in the recruitment of volunteers from the community.

1.2 Purpose of Volunteer Policies

Volunteer policies are provided as guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer programs. These policies are intended for guidance only and do not constitute a binding contractual or personnel agreement. The County reserves the exclusive right to change any of these policies at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy. Areas not specifically covered by these policies shall be determined by the department volunteer supervisor overseeing the volunteer activity. A department may establish additional rules, guidelines, and regulations for their departmental volunteer program that are not specifically addressed in this handbook. Additions to departmental volunteer documents may not conflict with the existing standards provided within these guidelines.

1.3 Scope of Volunteer Policies

Unless specifically stated otherwise, these policies apply to all non-elected volunteers in all volunteer programs and projects undertaken on or on behalf of the county.

1.4 Role of the County's Volunteer Coordinator

The productive engagement of volunteers requires a planned, organized, and unified effort. The function of the County's Volunteer Coordinator is to provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer management county-wide. The County's Volunteer Coordinator should serve as a unifying liaison with other departmental volunteer supervisors and assist in the promotion and recognition of programs throughout the county.

1.5 Role of the Volunteer Supervisor

The volunteer supervisor is responsible for assisting department, division, or program staff in identifying volunteer opportunities, recruitment, tracking, evaluations, and appreciation. The volunteer supervisor provides a central coordinating point for effective volunteer management throughout that department, division, or program. The volunteer supervisor should also serve as

a liaison with other volunteer programs in the county and assist in county efforts to recognize and promote volunteering. *Note: A Volunteer Supervisor shall not be an official title, but rather a role or responsibility within the organization.*

1.6 Definition of Volunteer

A volunteer is anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the county. A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by the department prior to performance of the task.

1.7 Classification of Volunteers

Volunteers are classified as:

Credentialed Volunteers – These are volunteers who have passed the county background check and have been given an ID badge.

General Volunteers – These are volunteers who are not working with vulnerable populations and are likely special event or short-term volunteers.

Court-Mandated Workers – People who are completing court-ordered community service or restitution work are not considered volunteers but court-mandated workers.

Interns - Trainees who work at the County for a discrete period of time to gain work experience and knowledge about a particular field or position are not considered volunteers but are classified as unpaid interns.

1.8 Employees who wish to Volunteer

County employees are permitted to volunteer their personal time outside of normal working hours. County employees who decide to volunteer will do so freely, without any pressure or coercion, and will work on assignments outside the scope of their regularly assigned duties as employees in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Volunteer hours performed by County employees are not considered hours worked. Family members of County employees are also eligible for volunteer service.

1.9 Service at the Discretion of the County

The County accepts the service of volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the residing department of the volunteer opportunity. Volunteers agree that the department may at any time, for whatever reason, terminate the volunteer's relationship with the department and potentially the county. A volunteer may be reassigned to another department at the discretion of the county volunteer coordinator and the newly assigned departmental supervisor.

The volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to sever the relationship with the county. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the volunteer's supervisor and the county volunteer coordinator.

1.10 Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers are considered a valuable resource to the county, its staff, and its customers. This program is designed to allow volunteers to:

- Be assigned meaningful work.
- Be given a fully defined position description and explanation of expectations.
- Be treated with respect as members of the department team and receive effective supervision.
- Be recognized for work done.

In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to work in accordance with the goals and procedures of the department and county.

1.11 Scope of Volunteer Involvement

Volunteers may be appointed in all programs and activities of the county and serve at all levels of skill and decision-making as appropriate. Volunteers should not, however, be used to displace any paid employees from their positions.

Chapter 2 - Volunteer Management Procedures

2.1 Maintenance of Records

An electronic volunteer management system will be maintained by the County to store volunteer records, including addresses, phone numbers, emergency contact information, dates of service, positions held, duties performed, evaluation of work, and awards received. Volunteers and designated staff shall be responsible for updating all appropriate records and information in a timely and accurate fashion. Volunteer records are subject to the Public Information Act.

2.2 Representation of the County

Volunteers shall not take any action or make any statement which might significantly affect or obligate the county. These actions may include, but are not limited to, public statements to the press, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations. Volunteers are not authorized to act as representatives of the county except to the extent as specifically indicated within their activity descriptions and only to the extent of such written specifications.

2.3 Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves staff, volunteers, customers, clients, or other persons or involves overall county business. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in corrective action or termination of the volunteer's relationship with the County.

2.4 Worksite

An appropriate worksite shall be established prior to the enrollment of any volunteer. This worksite shall contain necessary facilities, equipment, and space for the designated activities to be performed effectively.

2.5 Dress Code

As representatives of the County, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a professional image to customers, clients, and the general community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties, as defined in the County's Attire, Hygiene, and Grooming Policy.

2.6 Logging Hours

Individual volunteers are responsible for the accurate completion and timely submission of their hours served. Volunteers are asked to log their hours online or submit their hours to their supervisors monthly, at a minimum.

2.7 Identification

Volunteers who are given a County name badge shall display their name badge while on duty. Volunteers shall not use their County name badge as identification for the solicitation of special consideration. Volunteers shall surrender their County name badge upon termination of volunteer service.

2.8 Health and Wellness

Volunteers who are not feeling well, should remain at home and contact their volunteer supervisor. Volunteers who are injured while on duty should notify their supervisor as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours. Volunteers are responsible for arranging for recommended vaccinations and necessary testing & follow-up, according to the occupation-specific exposure risk.

2.9 Unauthorized Activities

Volunteers may be assigned to locations with rules about what volunteers are authorized to do. Supervisors will inform volunteers about site-specific restricted activities.

Chapter 3 - Volunteer Recruitment and Appointment

3.1 Position Descriptions

Volunteer opportunities require clear, complete, and current descriptions of the duties and responsibilities. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment efforts, a position description must be developed for each volunteer activity. This position description will be made available to each accepted volunteer and referenced in subsequent management and evaluation efforts. Position descriptions should be reviewed and updated whenever the work involved in the position changes substantially. All position descriptions shall include a description of the purpose and duties of the position, a designated supervisor and worksite, a timeframe for the performance of the activity, a listing of qualifications and a description of position benefits. The county volunteer coordinator will assist staff in the development of volunteer position descriptions.

3.2 Staff Requests for Volunteers

Requests for volunteers shall be submitted to the department volunteer supervisor by interested staff. Requests should include a draft of the purpose and duties of the position and a requested timeframe. All parties should understand that the recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting activities and by advance notice. Upon departmental approval, the volunteer request shall be submitted to the county volunteer coordinator for posting and recruitment.

3.3 Recruitment

Volunteers shall be recruited by the county/department on a proactive basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding the volunteer involvement of the community. Volunteers shall be recruited without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, veteran status, genetic information, or any other protected category under federal, state and local law. The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment shall be suitability to perform a task on behalf of the department. Volunteers may be recruited through either an interest in specific functions or through a general interest in volunteering which will later be matched with a specific function.

3.4 Screening

Prior to being assigned or appointed to a position, volunteers will be screened to determine their suitability for and interest in that position. The screening should establish the basic qualifications of the volunteer and their commitment to fulfill the requirements of the position and should answer any questions that the volunteer might have about the position. The screening may also include a background investigation as determined by the volunteer activity. *For more information about volunteer background screening policies and procedures, please see the County's Volunteer Background Screening policy.*

3.5 Professional Services

Volunteers shall not perform professional services for which certification or licensing is required unless currently certified or licensed to do so. A copy of such certificate or license should be maintained by the department volunteer supervisor and included in the volunteer's record.

3.6 Length of Service

All volunteer positions shall have a set term of duration. It is highly recommended that this term shall not be 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 reassignment of that position to the incumbent. Also, as stated in Section 1.9, volunteer service is provided on an at-will basis and may be terminated by the county/department at any time, with or without cause.

Volunteers are neither expected nor required to accept further service in a position at the end of their set term. However, they are welcome to do so or may instead seek a different volunteer assignment within the county/department or retire from volunteer service.

3.7 Leave of Absence

At the discretion of the supervisor, leaves of absence may be granted to volunteers. This leave of absence shall not alter or extend the previously agreed upon ending date of the volunteer's term of service.

Chapter 4 - Volunteer Training and Development

4.1 Orientation

All volunteers will be provided a general orientation on the county's mission, vision and values, an orientation on the department/division for which they are recruited, and a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of the position which they are accepting.

4.2 On-the-Job Training

Volunteers will receive specific on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. The timing and methods for delivery of such training should be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.

4.3 Staff Involvement in Orientation and Training

Staff members with responsibility over delivery of services should have an active role in the design and delivery of both orientation and training of volunteers. General orientation to the county's mission, vision, and values and to overall county volunteer requirements and policies will be provided by the county volunteer coordinator. Those staff who will be in a supervisory role to volunteers shall have primary responsibility for design and delivery of on-the-job training to volunteers assigned to them.

4.4 Continuing Education

Additional training and educational opportunities should be made available to volunteers during their connection with the county/department. This continuing education may include both additional information on performance of their current volunteer assignment as well as more general information. Educational opportunities might be provided either by the county/department or by connecting the volunteer to educational programs provided by other groups.

Chapter 5 - Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation

5.1 Requirement of a Supervisor

Each volunteer who is appointed to a position with the county must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor shall be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

5.2 Volunteers as Volunteer Supervisors

A volunteer may act as a supervisor of other volunteers provided that the supervising volunteer is under the responsibility of a paid staff member.

5.3 Volunteer Staff Relationships

Volunteers and staff are partners in implementing the mission and programs of the county. It is essential that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.

5.4 Staff Volunteer Management Training

An orientation on working with volunteers will be provided to all staff, as necessary, by the county volunteer coordinator. In-service training on effective volunteer engagement will be provided on request to staff members who are highly involved in volunteer management.

5.5 Volunteer Involvement in Program Evaluation

Examination of effective volunteer engagement may be a component in the evaluation of volunteer programs. Supervisors should ask for the input and participation of volunteers in evaluating program performance. Evaluations will be submitted to the department volunteer coordinator and the County Volunteer Coordinator for review and will be used to assess the volunteer management program.

5.6 Staff Involvement in Volunteer Evaluation

Staff should be involved in all evaluation and work assignments of volunteers with whom they are connected, providing input to the supervisor in the evaluation process.

5.7 Lines of Communication

Volunteers are entitled to information pertinent to the performance of their work assignments. Accordingly, volunteers should be included in appropriate memos, materials, and meetings

relevant to the work assignments. To facilitate receipt of this information on a timely basis, volunteers should be included on the distribution schedule for receipt of information distributed in their absence. Primary responsibility for ensuring that the volunteer receives such information will rest with the direct supervisor of the volunteer.

5.8 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 when anticipating an absence to allow alternate arrangements to be made. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer's work assignment or term of service.

5.9 Substitution

Volunteers may be encouraged to find a substitute for any upcoming absences which could be filled by another volunteer. Such substitution should only take place following consultation with a supervisor. Care should be taken to find a substitute who is qualified for the position. Substitutes may only be recruited from those who are currently enrolled as volunteers in the same position.

5.10 Evaluations

Volunteers shall receive periodic evaluations to review their work. The evaluation session is used to review the performance of the volunteer, to recommend any changes in work style, to seek suggestions from the volunteer, to convey appreciation to the volunteer, and to ascertain the volunteer's continued interest in serving in that position. Evaluations should include both an examination of the volunteer's performance and a discussion of any suggestions the volunteer may have regarding the position or project with which the volunteer is connected. The evaluation session is an opportunity for both the volunteer and the department to examine and improve their relationship.

The position description and standards of volunteer performance should form the basis of the evaluation. A written record should be kept of each evaluation session and forwarded to the County's Volunteer Coordinator for official record keeping once completed.

5.11 Staff Responsibility for Evaluation

It shall be the responsibility of each staff person in a supervisory relationship with a volunteer to schedule and perform a periodic evaluation, at least annually, and to maintain records of each evaluation.

5.12 Corrective Action

In appropriate situations, corrective action may be taken following an evaluation. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, reassignment of a volunteer to a new position, suspension of the volunteer, or dismissal from volunteer service. A written record should be kept of any corrective action and forwarded to the County's Volunteer Coordinator for official record keeping once completed. Prior to corrective action of a volunteer, staff should seek the consultation and assistance of the County's Volunteer Coordinator.

5.13 Dismissal of a Volunteer

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the department or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. The volunteer may be given an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with the supervisor. If, after the volunteer has received specific feedback from the supervisor, the problem is not eliminated and there are no reasonable options for reassignment, the volunteer should be dismissed. Prior to dismissal of a volunteer, staff should seek the consultation and assistance of the County's Volunteer Coordinator.

5.14 Reasons for Dismissal

A volunteer may be dismissed at any time, with or without cause. If dismissed for cause, possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of department equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of co-workers or other individuals, failure to abide by departmental policies and procedures and/or failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

5.15 Concerns

To file a concern, the affected volunteer shall contact their supervisor or, when appropriate, the County's Volunteer Coordinator.

5.16 Notice of Departure or Re-Assignment of a Volunteer

If a volunteer leaves the department, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, or is reassigned to a new position, it shall be the responsibility of the department volunteer supervisor to inform those affected staff and clients that the volunteer is no longer assigned to work with them. In cases of dismissal for cause, this notification should be given in writing and should clearly indicate that any further contact with the volunteer is outside any scope of relationship with the department.

5.17 Resignation

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the department at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice in writing of their departure and a reason for their decision.

5.18 Communication with the Volunteer Coordinator

Staff members who supervise volunteers are responsible for maintaining regular communication with the department volunteer supervisor and the County's Volunteer Coordinator. Communications should include the status of volunteers and the timely provision of all necessary information in the county's volunteer management system (i.e., volunteer applications, hours, status, qualifications, etc.). The County's Volunteer Coordinator should be informed immediately of any substantial change in the work or status of a volunteer and should be notified before any corrective action is taken.

5.19 Annual Volunteer Report

An annual volunteer report will be produced by the County's Volunteer Coordinator. Each department volunteer supervisor shall assist in gathering information from within their respective departments from volunteers, staff, and customers to include data such as hours served, success stories, goals for improvement, etc. This report shall be presented annually to the county commissioner's court.

Chapter 6 - Volunteer Support and Recognition

6.1 Reimbursement of Expenses

In extremely rare instances, volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred while undertaking business for the department. However, it is essential that prior approval be sought for any expenditure.

Additionally, if departmental funds are available, volunteers serving in departments within the county courthouse may have their parking tickets stamped in accordance with the county volunteer parking policy.

6.2 Access to Departmental Property and Materials

As appropriate, volunteers shall have access to county property and materials necessary to fulfill their duties and shall receive training in the operation of any equipment deemed necessary. Volunteers are bound to the same standards as employees involved in the operation of equipment (i.e., trainings, licenses, etc.). Property and materials shall be utilized only when directly required for county purposes. *See appendix for information on gaining volunteer access to the internet or county computer systems.*

6.3 Insurance

Liability insurance, accident insurance, or any other benefit provided to County employees is not provided for volunteers engaged in county business. Volunteers are encouraged to consult with their own insurance providers regarding the extension of their personal insurance to include community volunteer work.

6.4 Informal Recognition

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

6.5 Volunteer Career Paths

Volunteers are encouraged to grow and develop their skills while serving with the county and are to be assisted through promotion to new volunteer jobs to assume additional and greater responsibilities as positions are available. If so desired by the volunteer, the department will assist the volunteer in maintaining appropriate records of volunteer experience that would assist the volunteer in future career opportunities, both paid and volunteer. However, acceptance as a volunteer is in no way an implied promise to the volunteer by the County for future employment as a County employee.

Appendix

1. Internet and/or Network Access

For a volunteer to be given network access, please submit the ITD Request to Add, Change, or Delete User Access form to the IT Helpdesk ([security_form.pdf](#)). Please indicate in your submittal the type of access needed (i.e., network, email, internet only, etc.).

Volunteer Personnel Limited Access Acknowledgment

Thank you for choosing to be a volunteer for the County of El Paso!

As you assist customers and citizens of the county, your role may require access to the county's computer systems, data, and networks. If you require access to the network, you will be provided a unique user ID and password. With your personal user ID comes certain responsibilities outlined in this **Limited Access Acknowledgement ("Acknowledgement")**.

By signing below, you acknowledge the following:

I understand and acknowledge that it is my responsibility to comply with the **County of El Paso ("County") Electronic Communications Systems, Services and Resources ("Network") and the Cybersecurity Awareness Training Policy**. Electronic Communications Resources subject to this Acknowledgement are the property of the County of El Paso and are generally to be used for business purposes only. I agree that:

- I will protect my password and will not share it with anyone.
- I will allow no one else to use my personal user ID to gain access to the Network.
- I will not engage in prohibited conduct or inappropriate use of Electronic Communications Resources as described in county policies.
- Any document or information I create is considered the property of the County of El Paso and is subject to applicable state regulation pertaining to the public's right of access to such information.
- I will not copy or duplicate electronic information for use with any non-county computer except as necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of my role as a volunteer.
- All Network activity may be monitored for any reason deemed necessary by the County.
- My Network user ID will be deactivated if my volunteer duties and responsibilities no longer require Network access.
- A breach of any of the foregoing provisions may result in the revocation of Network access privileges and/or termination of my volunteer status.

The County may terminate access at any time and for any reason with or without notice and without penalty to the County. As long as access is provided, this Acknowledgment must be renewed annually.

Acknowledge and Assigned: Department: _____

Volunteer Name: _____
Printed

County Sponsor Name: _____
Printed

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____