

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
PAROLE DIVISION**



**POLICY AND OPERATING
PROCEDURE**

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SUPERSEDES: 06/21/13

SUBJECT: VOLUNTEER SERVICES PROGRAM

AUTHORITY: TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE ANN. §§ 493.005, 493.0053, 501.009, 535.001, 2109.003, AND 2109.004.

PURPOSE: To establish policies and procedures for the administration and supervision of the Volunteer Services Program in district parole offices (DPO) and District Reentry Centers (DRC) operated by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice-Parole Division (TDCJ-PD).

To actively encourage volunteer organizations to provide assistance and programs for clients.

PROCEDURE:

I. VOLUNTEER SERVICE DEFINITIONS

- A. Approved Volunteer: An individual who has been approved through the TDCJ-Rehabilitation Program Division (TDCJ-RPD) application process, completed volunteer training and orientation, and participates in a program, service, or volunteer activity on a regular basis.
- B. Client: An individual convicted and sentenced for any crime, excluding traffic violations, and is currently on community supervision, deferred adjudication, parole or mandatory supervision.
- C. Employee Volunteer: An individual who has been approved by the TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services and has completed training as a volunteer, but is also employed by the TDCJ-PD and donates time and services outside of his normal job function(s) and required working hours. Employee volunteers shall not serve at the DPO to which they are currently assigned, unless approved by the Region Director or designee. The parole supervisor shall have final approval of an employee's volunteer assignment at the DPO they wish to volunteer. Participation shall be within the guidelines of the TDCJ-Personnel Directive 22, *General Rules of Conduct and Disciplinary Action Guidelines for Employees*. Employee volunteers are considered "Approved Volunteers" for recordkeeping purposes.

- D. Ex-offender: An individual convicted of any crime, excluding traffic violations, and has discharged his sentence (e.g., no longer incarcerated or has completed parole, community supervision, or mandatory supervision) and all requirements under the law.
- E. Office Volunteer Coordinator (OVC): An individual who is employed by the TDCJ-PD and designated by the parole supervisor of his DPO. The OVC shall coordinate the volunteer activities with the Region Volunteer Coordinator (RVC) and the Volunteer Program Supervisor (VPS). The OVC shall ensure the Volunteer Participation Log (Appendix J) is completed, maintained and forwarded to the RVC and VPS on a weekly basis. Appendix J is a log the volunteer will sign each time he participates in a volunteer activity or service.
- F. Practicum Student Intern Volunteer: A student enrolled in a Chemical Dependency Counseling Program in a career school, university or community college who desires to volunteer in a 300 hour practicum experience with a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor or Qualified Credentialed Counselor employed with the TDCJ-PD. Practicum student interns must complete and submit the Student Intern Memorandum of Agreement forms (Appendix K1-K3) to the TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services prior to beginning their internship, and they must fulfill the requirements as noted in Section I.A of this policy.
- G. Region Volunteer Coordinator (RVC): A TDCJ-PD Region Chaplain who is responsible for recruiting and processing applicants, and coordinating the TDCJ-PD's goals and objectives regarding volunteer programs. The RVC shall be responsible for reviewing volunteer programs within his region to ensure maximum utilization of appropriate programs according to the specific needs of the population. In addition, the RVC or designee completes, maintains, and updates the Volunteer Assignment Description Forms (Appendix N).
- H. Special Volunteer: Any individual who provides a service or participates in a volunteer activity no more than four (4) times or has not established a pattern of regular, scheduled participation. After the fourth (4th) visit as a special volunteer, the individual shall be required to become an approved volunteer for future visits. Special volunteers do not complete a Volunteer Application and are not typically subject to a criminal history check, unless deemed necessary. Clients are eligible to participate as a special volunteer 12 months after their release from incarceration, and they must fulfill the requirements as noted in Section III.B.7 of this policy.
- I. Student Intern Volunteer: A student enrolled in a university or community college who desires to volunteer for limited periods of time and is taking course work which requires "internship" experience for course credit, pre-professional training, or work experience. Student interns must complete and submit Appendices K1-K3 to the TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services prior to beginning their internship, and they must fulfill the requirements as noted in Section I.A of this policy.
- J. Student Intern Volunteer Coordinator (SIVC): An individual who is employed by the TDCJ-PD and designated by the parole supervisor of his DPO. The SIVC shall coordinate the student intern activities with the RVC and the VPS.

The SIVC shall ensure the intern signs in on Appendix J each time the intern participates in a volunteer activity or service. Appendix J is a log the volunteers will sign each time they volunteer at the DPO.

- K. Volunteer Coordination Committee (VCC): A committee made up of members representing TDCJ divisions and departments that utilize volunteers. In accordance with the Volunteer Services Plan, the VCC serves as the reporting entity for and provides oversight of volunteer activities for the agency. The Director of the TDCJ-RPD will serve as the chairperson for the VCC.
- L. Volunteer Program Supervisor (VPS): A Program Supervisor III (PS III), Specialized Programs, who is responsible for overseeing the TDCJ-PD volunteer services program.
- M. Volunteer Review Committee (VRC): A committee that includes the chairperson of the VCC, the Director of the TDCJ-PD, and a designee of the appropriate volunteer program. In accordance with the Volunteer Services Plan, the VRC convenes as needed to review matters regarding volunteers.
- N. Volunteer Services: A department within the TDCJ-RPD that serves as the coordinator of the agency's volunteer program.

II. OVERSITE OF THE TDCJ-PD VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The VCC is responsible for the development of the Volunteer Services Program. The policy shall be a guide to implementing a comprehensive Volunteer Services Program and consist of written procedures that shall include the types of volunteers, approval process, monitoring, and evaluation.

- A. The VPS and the RVC shall develop strategies to promote public awareness of the TDCJ-PD Volunteer Services Program. Programs and services include:
 - 1. Literacy and education programs;
 - 2. Life skills programs;
 - 3. Job skills programs;
 - 4. Parent training programs;
 - 5. Drugs and alcohol rehabilitation;
 - 6. Support groups;
 - 7. Program monitoring, assisting in groups, and setting up classrooms;
 - 8. Clerical duties at the DPOs, such as answering phones, signing in clients, shredding, etc.; and

9. Other programs as determined by the TDCJ-PD to aid in the transition between incarceration and society, in an attempt to reduce recidivism.

B. Program Goals and Objectives

1. The VCC is responsible for the development of the division-wide volunteer program goals and objectives. Goals and objectives shall be consistent with the mission of the TDCJ.
2. The VCC shall meet quarterly to assess the capability of the agency to utilize volunteers and determine the areas where volunteers are needed.
3. The VCC shall seek input from TDCJ-PD staff, volunteers and clients, via the Volunteer Program Assessment/Suggestion Form (Appendix G). This assessment shall be the basis for establishing volunteer services objectives and needs for the upcoming year.

III. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. Volunteer Application Process

1. The applicant must complete and submit a Volunteer Application (Appendix A) located on the TDCJ-RPD website at http://tdcj.state.tx.us/documents/Volunteer_Application_English.pdf, and upon notification, attend an approved volunteer training and orientation session.
2. The TDCJ Human Resources Department conducts a criminal background check on each applicant through the Texas Crime Information Center (TCIC) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). A criminal record or specific offense on record does not exclude a volunteer applicant; however, the criminal record may be used to determine placement or denial of the applicant. Thereafter, background checks shall be conducted on an as needed basis. TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services will notify the PS III, Specialized Programs, if a volunteer acquires changes to his criminal background.

B. Process for approval or denial of volunteer applicants

1. The TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services forwards a spreadsheet list of all approved TDCJ-PD volunteer applicants to the PS III.
2. The PS III will verify the locations of each applicant and forward a spreadsheet to each Region Director for final approval.
3. The Region Director shall review the applicants with the TDCJ-PD Region Chaplain and then return the spreadsheet to the PS III with their decisions indicated on the spreadsheet. Approvals and the reasons for denials shall be documented on the spreadsheet that was provided to the Region Director.

4. The final decision spreadsheet shall be forwarded to the TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services and the Chaplain.
5. The PS III shall send a denial letter to all TDCJ-PD denied applicants.
6. Applicants with a clear criminal history report shall be processed in 20 business days, and applicants with a criminal history shall be processed in 25 business days.
7. Additional processing requirements:
 - a. Applicants with previous sexual charges and/or who have gang affiliations must provide a letter from their supervising parole or probation officer for additional clearance.
 - b. Applicants who are current or former TDCJ employees may require additional processing time.
 - c. All supporting documentation must be originals, dated, and on official letterhead.
8. Clients currently on parole and ex-offenders may be accepted as approved volunteers with the following stipulations:
 - a. Clients may serve as volunteers, provided they have a clear criminal background for the previous 18 months after release; a satisfactory report from the supervising officer while on parole, mandatory supervision, or community supervision; and the supervising officer concurs with the client's participation in the volunteer program.

A letter from the supervising officer concurring with the client's participation in the volunteer program shall be requested. The supervising officer shall be notified when the client has been approved or denied as a volunteer.

The supervising officer shall report all violations of supervision to the director of the TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services. Violations committed while on supervision may result in removal from the Volunteer Services Program.

Note: Clients on Super-Intensive Supervision Program (SISP), Electronic Monitoring (EM), Sex Offender caseload, or having a high supervision level, will not be accepted as approved volunteers.

 - b. Ex-offenders who have discharged their sentences may serve as a volunteer, provided they have a clear criminal background for the previous 18 months and demonstrated successful reentry into the community since discharging their sentence.

9. The Region Director shall refer the applicant to another office, if the applicant requests a volunteer position at an office where a relative or friend is supervised.
10. All volunteer applications and files shall be retained by the TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services office.
11. Security Threat Group (STG) Gang Affiliation
 - a. All ex-offenders and client applicants shall be screened for a gang affiliation through the TDCJ Security Threat Group Management Office (STGMO) and/or the Texas Anti-Gang Information Tracking (TAGIT) System.
 - b. Applicants who are confirmed gang members, but have completed the Gang Renunciation and Disassociation (GRAD) process, shall not be excluded from the TDCJ volunteer program, unless there is evidence that placement of the individual would affect the safety and security of the office, employees, volunteers, and clients.
 - c. Any individual who is confirmed as a member of a STG while incarcerated, and who did not complete the GRAD process, shall require the approval of the TDCJ-VRC.
12. Employee and Ex-employee Applicants
 - a. Applicants who are currently or previously employed by the TDCJ will undergo an employment check through the TDCJ-PD Human Resources Office for disciplinary history and rehire eligibility. The applicant's disciplinary history shall be considered when approving the volunteer applicant. Applicants ineligible for rehire shall not be approved as volunteers, unless the Region Director disagrees, and a decision is staffed with the TDCJ-PD Deputy Director, Field Operations.
 - b. An employee shall not be eligible to serve at a DPO or DRC where he is currently assigned, unless the parole supervisor approves the employee's volunteer assignment. Approval must be in writing and placed in the employee's volunteer file.

IV. VOLUNTEER TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

- A. Applicants are not considered approved until they attend a volunteer training and orientation session. Volunteer training shall be conducted in accordance with the Volunteer Services Plan and TDCJ AD-07.35, *Administration of Volunteer Services*. The orientation session, similar to on-the-job training, shall be provided at the DPOs, DRCs, or other areas of the TDCJ-PD.
- B. On-the-job training that is essential to perform assigned tasks shall be the responsibility of the OVC or the RVC. Supplemental training shall be encouraged.

The OVC or the RVC shall guide volunteers to appropriate volunteer placement. During the orientation session, the RVC shall complete and provide the applicants with the Volunteer Assignment Description form (Appendix N) detailing responsibilities and duties.

V. GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

A. Supervision and Monitoring of Volunteers

1. The OVC or the RVC shall arrange for the supervision of volunteers and consult on a regular basis with the Region Director or designee regarding evaluation, monitoring, and issues of mutual concern. The OVC or the RVC shall encourage the volunteer to complete the Volunteer Program Assessment Suggestion Form (Appendix G) annually.
2. TDCJ-PD staff shall provide direct supervision of volunteer programs. Direct supervision shall not necessarily imply that the supervisory staff person be physically present while the volunteer activity is being performed.
3. Volunteers are required to complete Appendix J. The completion of the participation log shall be monitored by departmental designated staff.
4. The OVC shall complete the Volunteer Services Monthly Statistical Report for his DPO and submit completed forms monthly to the Region Director or designee by the fifth (5th) business day of each month.

B. Reassignment, Suspension, and Termination of Volunteers

1. Volunteer eligibility shall be reviewed annually by the OVC and RVC. Individual volunteers may be removed or terminated based upon the TDCJ-PD needs or poor performance.
2. The RVC, in coordination with office staff, shall arrange for appropriate action in the event a volunteer violates office rules or does not perform responsibilities in accordance with the assignment description or the expectations of the parole supervisor. The RVC shall complete a Violation of Policy Form (Appendix O) when a volunteer violates office rules, regulations, or fails to perform responsibilities in accordance with the assignment description or expectations. Serious or unusual incidents involving volunteers shall be reported to the appropriate authorities and the Region Director.
3. The RVC shall contact the TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services office within five (5) business days of the date of the charge and or incident to change the approval status of the volunteer to "pending" on the TDCJ mainframe volunteer database, VS00. The volunteer will not be allowed to continue until an investigation has been completed and a decision is made regarding action to be taken, if any. Violations that result in a letter of instruction do not require placing the volunteer on pending status.

4. The RVC shall initiate an investigation into the allegations of improper behavior to include witness statements and a statement from the volunteer, if required.
5. Sanctions will be progressive in nature, but determined by the seriousness of the violations, results of the investigations, previous violations, and history of the volunteer. Sanctions shall include, but are not limited to, a letter of instruction, verbal reprimand, suspension, restriction(s), reassignment, retraining, removal from the program, or any combination of the above.
6. The RVC shall consult with the VPS, prior to notifying the Director of TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services of final disposition of sanctions.
7. The RVC shall contact the volunteer to discuss the results of the investigation and provide sanctions, if any. An entry into the VS00 will be made documenting the sanction(s) and any changes to the volunteer's status within 15 business days after the volunteer is notified. The volunteer may appeal the decision to the appropriate Region Director. In the event of termination, the RVC shall submit a copy of the Appendix O and the results of the investigation to the VPS and the Region Director or designee.
8. The RVC shall send a copy of Appendix O and supporting documentation to the VPS. The VPS will review and submit the documentation to the Director of TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services.
9. For volunteers whose status is terminated, an electronic message will be sent to the VPS.
10. Appendix O will be placed in the volunteer's permanent file.

VI. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- A. The Region Director shall delegate VS00 data entry to the RVC. Data entry in VS00 includes adding new volunteers, updating the status of current volunteers, and entry of all volunteer hours worked.
- B. Appendix J shall be sent to the VPS and the RVC on a weekly basis.
- C. The RVC shall enter all volunteer hours worked within three (3) business days of receiving Appendix J.
- D. The Region Director or designee shall consolidate the volunteer participation statistics, notate them on the Volunteer Services Monthly Statistical Report, and submit by email to the VPS, by the fifth (5th) business day of every month.
- E. The VPS or designee shall submit a Volunteer Services Monthly Statistical Report to the TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services by the ninth (9th) business day of each month.

A fiscal year summary of all monthly statistical reports shall be submitted to the TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services within fifteen (15) business days of the previous fiscal year's end.

VII. VOLUNTEER FILES

- A. The TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services shall maintain a file on approved volunteers and activities to contain the following information:
 - 1. TDCJ Volunteer Application (Appendix A);
 - 2. Acknowledgement of Volunteer Training/Orientation (Appendix F);
 - 3. Criminal History (NCIC/TCIC);
 - 4. Volunteer Assignment Description Form (Appendix N); and
 - 5. Other pertinent information.
- B. All volunteer files shall be maintained by the TDCJ-RPD Volunteer Services department on a fiscal year basis and during the volunteer's tenure with the TDCJ. Files shall be maintained for three (3) years after the volunteer becomes inactive.

VIII. RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS

Recognizing the valuable contributions of volunteers is an important part of the Volunteer Services Program. The OVC and the RVC shall ensure volunteers receive adequate recognition, both formal and informal, for their contribution.

- A. Volunteers shall be recognized annually for their contribution. This may range from a formal event that may include a program, presentation and food, or an informal recognition such as a letter and certificate of appreciation.
- B. Local or regional events shall be coordinated with the appropriate Parole Division volunteer administrator or designee. The RVC and the VPS shall be included in the planning phase.
- C. A calendar of award or recognition programs for the calendar year shall be established for reporting and tracking purposes.
- D. An annual agency-wide volunteer awards ceremony will be coordinated by the VCC and its chairperson in cooperation with the Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ). In all cases, awards, events, or ceremonies provided by the agency shall adhere to the financial limits set forth in the Texas Government Code, Section 2109.004.

IX. TDCJ VOLUNTEER SERVICES PROGRAM APPENDIX OF FORMS

The following forms can be obtained from the Volunteer Services Program—Rehabilitation Programs Division.

- Appendix A—TDCJ Volunteer Application
- Appendix B—Monthly Volunteer Application Summary
- Appendix C—Devotional/Worship Items Inventory List
- Appendix D—Volunteer Training Letter
- Appendix E—Volunteer Training Sign-In Roster
- Appendix F—Acknowledgment of Volunteer Training/Orientation Form
- Appendix G—Volunteer Program Assessment/Suggestion Form
- Appendix H—Special Volunteer Approval Form
- Appendix I—Letter of Orientation for Special Volunteers
- Appendix J—Volunteer Participation Log
- Appendices K1–K3—Student Intern Memorandum of Agreement forms
- Appendix L—Partners Program Application
- Appendix M—Affidavit of Computer Broadband Capability
- Appendix N—Volunteer Assignment Description
- Appendix O—Violation of Policy Form
- Appendix P—Volunteer Review Committee (VRC) Form
- Appendix Q—Volunteer File Audit Checklist

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