

## **Volunteers in Probation (VIP)**

### **702.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

It is the policy of this Department to use qualified volunteers for specified tasks and duties in order to create efficiencies for the Department and improve services to the community. Volunteers are intended to supplement and support, rather than supplant, sworn officers and civilian personnel. Volunteers can be an important part of any organization and are proven to be a valuable asset to law enforcement agencies. Volunteers help to increase Departmental responsiveness, delivery of services and information input, and provide new program opportunities. In addition, volunteers bring new skills and expertise to the Department and prompt enthusiasm.

#### **702.1.1 DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEER**

Volunteers in Probation (VIP) are individuals who perform a service for the Department without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered.

### **702.2 APPLICABILITY**

This policy shall be applicable to all Department employees.

### **702.3 VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT**

#### **702.3.1 RESPONSIBILITY**

The volunteer program is overseen by Department of Human Resources (DHR) staff.

Supervising Probation Officers are responsible for requesting the services of and supervising the work of volunteers.

#### **702.3.2 BACKGROUND CHECK**

All prospective volunteers will be subject to a background check as a condition of volunteering. The Background Investigation staff should conduct a face-to-face interview with an applicant under consideration.

A documented background investigation shall be completed on each volunteer applicant and shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- (a) Traffic and criminal background check;
- (b) Driver's License and automobile insurance;
- (c) Personal references; and
- (d) Employment references.

Fingerprinting and record checks may be waived for individuals who are officers of the court and who have already submitted themselves to a background investigation as part of their court duties. These individuals will be issued a VIP volunteer identification card following completion of appropriate forms, interview, and the signing of volunteer agreement(s).

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#### **702.4 CONFIDENTIALITY**

With appropriate security clearance, volunteers may have access to confidential information, such as criminal histories or investigative files. Unless otherwise directed by a Supervisor or Departmental policy, all information shall be considered confidential. Only that information specifically identified and approved by authorized personnel shall be released. Confidential information shall be given only to persons who have a need and a right to know as determined by Departmental policy and Supervisory personnel.

Each volunteer will be required to sign a confidentiality statement before being given an assignment with the Department. Unauthorized disclosure of any confidential information by the volunteer, verbally, in writing or by any other means, are grounds for immediate dismissal and possible criminal prosecution.

Volunteers shall not address public gatherings, appear on radio or television, prepare any article for publication, act as correspondents to a newspaper or other periodical, release or divulge any information concerning the activities of the Department, or maintain that they represent the Department in such matters without permission from the proper department personnel.

#### **702.5 VOLUNTEER STATUS**

Any volunteer work performed by non-exempt FLSA covered County employees must be separate from their paid work responsibilities and must be outside of their regular, paid job classification.

A Volunteer Status Agreement form will be signed by volunteers and kept in the volunteer's file. This agreement explains that the volunteer is a non-paid employee.

#### **702.6 USING VOLUNTEER WORKERS**

Volunteers shall be used to enhance, enrich, amplify and supplement existing services. Volunteer assignments shall not be used to replace the specific job functions of employees.

All activities and assignments of volunteers must be consistent with the policies, procedures, mission, and philosophy of the Probation Department to ensure continuity and consistency of services.

Volunteers must conform to the highest standards of ethics and conduct consistent with the requirements of law enforcement and of the Probation Department.

Any volunteer who, at any time, is asked to surrender his or her volunteer identification must do so.

#### **702.7 SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS**

Unit Supervisors, after obtaining approval from their Division Chief, may request the services of volunteers by forwarding a memo to the Department of Human Resources. Each volunteer who is accepted to a position with the Department must have a clearly identified Supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This Supervisor will be responsible for the orientation, day-to-day management and guidance of the volunteer's work and should be available for consultation and assistance. The orientation shall include at a minimum a description of the

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unit's function, the volunteer's responsibilities and duties and any safety and security information specific to the site and the offenders being served.

The Supervisor is responsible for ongoing oversight of the volunteer and must monitor and review their work. They are also required to report volunteer work hours to Department of Human Resources staff, and notification when a volunteer is no longer providing services.

#### **702.8 WORKER'S COMPENSATION COVERAGE FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers are covered by Worker's Compensation. If a volunteer is injured while volunteering for the Probation Department, the volunteer and his/her on-site Supervisor shall follow the Worker's Compensation claim filing procedures for County employees.

In the event of an on-the-job accident or injury, the volunteer and his/her on-site Supervisor shall follow the same guidelines and procedures used for County employees. Immediate action must be taken by the volunteer's Probation Supervisor by completing a Supervisor Accident Investigation Report. The injured volunteer should be seen by a physician at a County-approved medical provider.

#### **702.9 PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT**

Volunteers will be issued an Identification Card that must be worn at all times while on-duty. Any fixed and portable equipment issued by the Department shall be for official and authorized use only. Any property or equipment issued to a volunteer shall remain the property of the Department and shall be returned at the termination of service.

##### **702.9.1 AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY COVERAGE FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers who drive their own vehicles on County business are required by law to maintain automobile liability insurance coverage.

If a volunteer is involved in an accident while on County business, they are subject to the same accident reporting requirements as Probation employees.

##### **702.9.2 MILEAGE**

If the Department requires a volunteer to drive in the course of their duties, they are encouraged to use their private vehicle. Mileage reimbursement for a VIP volunteer may be approved by the Supervisor.

#### **702.10 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES/TERMINATION**

Volunteer privileges may be suspended or revoked whenever it is deemed in the best interest of the Probation Department.

Minor issues such as tardiness, dressing inappropriately for the assigned setting, unknowingly using poor judgment in a particular situation involving staff or offenders, or failure to complete assigned tasks in a timely manner should be addressed by the Supervisor immediately. If the behavior is not corrected the volunteer should be relieved of their volunteer status.

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A volunteer's status will be revoked immediately for serious infractions such as substance abuse, physical and/or verbal abuse, criminal activity, inability to work professionally with staff or offenders, behavior or conduct incompatible with Department goals, objectives or mission, or misrepresenting themselves or the Department.

When a volunteer's privileges are suspended or revoked, the volunteer must relinquish their ID badge to their Supervisor, who must immediately advise the Department of Human Resources coordinator of the status.

All allegations of criminal conduct will be reported to the District Attorney's Office.