

Volunteer Services

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Overview

The Iowa Department of Human Services Volunteer Services Program exists to enhance the delivery of services to Iowans in need. Volunteers under the supervision of paid staff assist in providing compassionate and caring service far beyond the services which could be provided by staff alone. In all cases, Department volunteers supplement paid staff rather than replacing staff. This staff volunteer team approach results in extended services to clients and is an essential component in the broad delivery of services.

Legal Basis

The legal basis for implementation of the Department's volunteer services program is Iowa Code Chapter 234, which gives the Department the responsibility to provide services to children and families. At times these services are provided or supplemented by volunteers.

Iowa Code Section 217.13 further delineates the Department's responsibility to establish volunteer programs, including, but not limited to, parent aides, friendly visitors, clerical assistants, medical transporters, conservators, and guardians.

Chapter 12 of the Iowa Administrative Code 441 specifies Department policy regarding volunteers and Chapter 8, Section E defines performance and accountable government spending and 11—IAC-118 also defines contacting requirements.

Rule 441 IAC 153(234) specifies Department policy for contracts used for the purchase of volunteer coordination.

Federal laws governance includes the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973(42 U.S.C. 4950 et seq) and 42 U.S. Code, Chapter 66

Definitions

"Client" means an Iowan served by or receiving services provided under the programs administered by the Department.

"Contact person" means the staff person designated to coordinate the volunteer services program at the Service Delivery Area (Area) level. This person functions at the direction of the service area manager and with the advice and support of the volunteer program administrator.

"Contractor" means the person or agency with whom the Department has a contract for coordination of volunteer services. The contract language identifies the specific services to be provided by the contractor.

"Volunteer" means a person or group serving at the direction of paid staff to perform services for the Department without primary or immediate expectation of financial gain. This includes persons who may receive a nominal allowance which is considered to be less than market value for the services performed, and persons or organizations who provide in-kind goods or services. Also included are students who may be fulfilling a practicum or community service curriculum requirement.

"Volunteer coordinator" is the working title of a person or agency with whom the Department has a contract for coordination of volunteer services or person appointed within the Area to coordinate services.

"Volunteer program administrator" is the staff person in central office who administers the Department's volunteer services program statewide and is responsible for the provision of advice and support to field and institution staff.

"Volunteer services director" refers to the staff person responsible for the administration of volunteer services in a Department facility. This person functions with the advice and support of the volunteer program administrator as needed.

Program Structure

The volunteer services program structure within the Department is comprised of a volunteer program administrator housed in central office, a volunteer contact person in each of the five Areas and, where applicable, a volunteer services director in each of the DHS facilities where applicable.

Areas and Counties

Service Area Managers, in conjunction with their respective management teams, may determine the locations and scope of their volunteer services program. In the counties, administrative support contracts are generated with individuals or agencies to provide volunteer recruitment, screening, referral to staff, and initial orientation of volunteers

Facilities

Each institution superintendent determines the scope of the volunteer services program within the institution. A fulltime or part-time staff person may be designated to manage the volunteer services program. This person recruits, screens, refers to staff, and does initial orientation of volunteers. This person generally is also responsible for recognition of volunteers, reporting of volunteer activity, and other volunteer services management functions.

Other Departmental Units

Other administrative units of the Department may encourage the recruitment of volunteers to assist in the performance of their functions.

Resources

Funding for the volunteer services program is possible through federal Social Service Block Grant funds and state appropriated funds. Costs incurred in providing volunteer services in the facilities are state appropriated funds included in the facilities' budgets.

Administration

Following are various roles and responsibilities expected of persons involved in volunteer services. Whether these roles are assumed full time or part time, and whether one or more persons share responsibilities is left to the discretion of the appointing authority.

Volunteer Program Administrator: The person in this position is responsible for the administration of the Department's volunteer services program statewide. This person is in a support role in relation to field and institution volunteer services staff.

Volunteer Services Director: This position or role exists primarily in the Department's facilities but can exist in Areas as well. The person assigned may function full time or part time and may be assisted by others.

Area Contact Person: This position or role exists in each of the Department's Areas. The person assigned may enlist the assistance of others in performance of some functions.

Volunteer Coordinator: This role exists in counties and Area offices. The role may be a DHS staff person, a contract based position or an agency whose role is to provide volunteer program coordination services. When applicable, the contract language defines the specific tasks to be performed.

Contracts for Volunteer Coordinator Services

The Areas enter into personal service contracts for volunteer coordination with individuals or agencies to recruit, screen, orient, and refer potential volunteers to requesting staff. Contracts shall be between the contractor and the Department of Human Services. Parties to the contract may include the contractor, the Department, the Area, and the county or multicounty area.

All volunteer contracts must comply with departmental, state and federal guidelines.

Volunteer Services

Volunteer assignments within the Department vary considerably from location to location. They are divided basically into two types: direct service and indirect service. Direct service involves situations in which volunteers interact directly with clients or residents either one to one or in groups. Indirect service involves situations in which volunteers provide services that do not bring them into contact with clients or residents except incidentally in passing.

Example assignments are listed here to provide an overview:

Direct Service

- ◆ Transporting clients to medical and other appointments
- ◆ Visitor and companion service
- ◆ Guardians, conservators, and protective payees
- ◆ Monitoring of visitation with children
- ◆ Client assistance in completion of forms
- ◆ Role modeling
- ◆ Child care
- ◆ Chore services and shopping assistance
- ◆ One-to-one resident assistance including reading aloud, writing letters, escorting to community events, taking walks, and similar activities
- ◆ Wheelchair escort within an institution
- ◆ Teaching/tutoring in a variety of activities, personal and social skills, crafts and leisure skills, occupational therapy, and life skills

Indirect Service

- ◆ Clerical and support activities, such as typing, filing, paper shredding, telephone answering, reception, and numerous other office and administrative tasks
- ◆ Library services, bulletin boards, scrapbooks
- ◆ Sewing, mending and similar tasks
- ◆ Special projects, such as filling holiday food baskets or collecting clothing, toys, and other items for distribution

- ◆ Serving on advisory committees and boards
- ◆ Public speaking and advocacy activities
- ◆ Special events and entertainment
- ◆ In-kind contributions, such as professional services, bookkeeping, journalism and graphic arts, printing, and other similar services

Staff Requests for Volunteers

Department staff who wish to request the services of a volunteer must follow the process defined by the local area or institution. Request may be directed to supervisors, to the Area contact or to the Coordinator as appropriate.

Prospective volunteers recruited shall be referred to staff for interviews and placement decisions. Upon acceptance and placement of a volunteer.

Refusal of Volunteer Requests

Each Department volunteer coordinator, volunteer contact person, and volunteer services director shall, in consultation with local administration and the volunteer program administrator, have the latitude to refuse a staff request for volunteer assistance.

Employees as Volunteers

Employees who wish to volunteer their services in Department activities during network time may do so when:

- a. The services are offered freely and without pressure or coercion from the department, either direct or implied.
- b. The person is not employed by the Department to perform the same type of services as those for which the person proposes to volunteer.

Any employee who is eligible for overtime compensation and who wishes to volunteer his or her time and talent in Department activities undertaken for civic, charitable, or humanitarian purposes during hours not scheduled as work time is covered by this policy.

Conflict of Interest

Department employees who are interested in serving as a volunteer guardian or conservator for Department clients in need of such services are permitted to do so in limited circumstances.

Interviewing and Placing

Volunteer Applications

Individuals and groups who wish to volunteer with the Department shall be afforded an opportunity to complete a Volunteer Application and to be interviewed. Prospective volunteers must agree to have the references they list on the application checked by the Department.

Prospective volunteers shall follow a consistent procedure which is the same for all persons. This procedure shall consist of the following:

- ◆ Individual Volunteer Application: Individuals shall complete a Volunteer Application. The form is designed to provide basic information regarding the individual's interests, skills, and experience.
- ◆ Group Volunteer Application: A person who is representing a group shall complete a Volunteer Group Application and Registration. It is not necessary for each member of the group to complete an application.
- ◆ Transportation Volunteer Questionnaire: Volunteers who are willing to provide transportation for DHS clients shall complete the Questionnaire for Transportation Volunteer.

All volunteer drivers must have a valid Iowa driver's license and proof of a safe driving record

Services and benefits

Volunteers are entitled to the same liability protection as state employees under Iowa Code chapter 669.24 and may be entitled to some benefits provide to state employees. Eligibility for benefits, such as parking, are determined at the local level.

Volunteer Interviews

Once a prospective volunteer has completed a Volunteer Application, he or she shall be given an interview to determine his or her suitability for available volunteer assignments. This initial interview together with the information given on the Volunteer Application should enable the volunteer coordinator or volunteer services director to make an appropriate referral to staff who have requested volunteer services.

Initial screening of volunteers shall consist of both a face-to-face interview and checking of references provided by the prospective volunteer.

Departmental facilities shall conduct criminal and child abuse record checks for volunteers who have access to a resident or child when the resident or child is alone.

Departmental facilities shall check criminal and child abuse records for volunteers in accordance with procedures established for employees.

Volunteer Referral to Staff

Following application and initial screening, prospective volunteers are referred to requesting staff persons for final selection and placement decisions.

Volunteer coordinators or volunteer services directors may refer one or more prospective volunteers to the staff person who has requested volunteer services. The staff person will conduct the final interview and determine the suitability of the volunteer for placement in the volunteer assignment.

When a volunteer is accepted and placed in a volunteer assignment, the volunteer shall complete a Volunteer Registration.. This completed form shall be returned to the volunteer coordinator or volunteer services director for inclusion in the volunteer's file.

Training and Monitoring

The preference for the orientation and training volunteers are the paid DHS staff who will supervisor or work with the volunteer to assure the work is done at the Department's level of expectation. In specialized situations, volunteer orientation and training may also be completed by the volunteer coordinator.

Orientation

General orientation to the Department shall be provided to all Department volunteers.

Volunteer Job Training

All volunteers with the Department shall receive training consistent with their assigned duties and the skills, knowledge's, and abilities of the individual volunteers including training on confidentiality

Supervision of Volunteers

Supervision of volunteers shall be provided by Department staff.

Staff who request the services of a volunteer are expected to direct the activities of the assigned volunteer and to supervise the volunteer's performance. Supervision shall include training, assignment of duties, performance monitoring, attendance monitoring, evaluation, recordkeeping, and participation in volunteer recognition.

Evaluation

Volunteer Program Evaluation

It shall be the responsibility of management in each Departmental organizational unit having a volunteer program (institution, area, county) to evaluate that program. It shall be the responsibility of the volunteer program administrator to review and assist as needed in this evaluation.

The purpose of volunteer program evaluation is the same as for any service delivery component of the Department. Since the volunteer program encompasses the expenditure of both federal and state funds, the effective utilization of staff and volunteers, and the enhanced delivery of service to clients

Volunteer Coordinator Evaluation

It shall be the responsibility of Area volunteer contact persons in conjunction with area administrators to formally evaluate the performance of contractual volunteer coordinators on an annual basis and/or as defined in the contract terms. Evaluation of performance and compliance with contract terms must be done before the subsequent renewal or re-issuance of contract in accordance with Departmental and State policies.

Volunteer Evaluation

It shall be the responsibility of Department staff who supervise volunteers to formally evaluate the volunteer's performance.

For a long-term volunteer, this shall be done at least annually. In shorter-term situations, evaluations should be done quarterly or at the end of a special project.

Volunteer Termination

Volunteers who terminate their services with the Department, either voluntarily or involuntarily, shall be afforded an opportunity to discuss the reasons for their termination and as appropriate, complete an exit interview.

Volunteer Referral

Volunteers who leave the Department may wish to be referred to another agency or organization who might be better able to take advantage of their skills or whose mission may be more in keeping with the volunteer's interests.

Volunteer References

Volunteer experience is sometimes viewed as positive work experience by volunteers who are seeking employment or by students who are completing academic requirements. Staff should complete such references upon request.

Recognition

Volunteers who offer their time, talent, and commitment to the mission of the Department shall be recognized both formally and informally for their contributions.

Recognition of volunteers can be done formally or informally. Examples include:

- ◆ The Governor's annual volunteer awards: This is a recognition of volunteer services coordinated by the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service. Each year there are recognition ceremonies held in key locations across the state for volunteers who serve state agencies. The Department has an opportunity to nominate volunteers for this award. Detailed information on making these nominations is provided to volunteer contact persons.
- ◆ Local recognition events. Most county offices and facilities conduct at least one annual recognition event. These vary in type according to local preference
- ◆ Certificates, awards and other small recognition are appropriate for volunteers and Departmental staff, but must fall within the guidelines of IAC 68B.22.

Reporting

It is the responsibility of each volunteer contact person and volunteer director to compile and report statistics regarding the volunteer activity in their respective location.

A. Monthly Report

- ◆ In the Areas, each county having a volunteer program submits monthly report data on the designated report intranet site by the fifteenth of the subsequent month.
- ◆ In the facilities, the volunteer services director compiles this report and maintains as appropriate.

B. Annual Report

- ◆ The annual reporting for Social Service Block Grant expenditures and data for the annual budget planning is compiled from the data submitted monthly on the designated intranet site.
- ◆ In the facilities, the volunteer services director compiles this data and maintains as appropriate.