



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Volunteer Coordinator's Procedures Manual

Office of Human Resource Development

Volunteer Services

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3	Orientation	11
The Volunteer Coordinator	3	On-The-Job Training	12
Definitions of Volunteers	4	Identification Badges	12
Qualifications of Volunteers	5	Liability	12
Volunteer Needs Assessment	5	Termination of Volunteers	13
Recruitment	6	Volunteer Files	13
Cultural Competency	6	Volunteer Coordinator Monthly Report	14
Volunteer Job Descriptions	7	Program Maintenance	15
Interviewing the Volunteer	7	Assessment and Evaluation	15
Volunteer Applications	8	Citizen's Involvement Council	16
Background Investigations	9		
Tuberculosis Testing	10		
Certification	10		
Placement/Supervision of Volunteers	10		

Introduction

Why use volunteers?

The use of community volunteer programs and citizen involvement councils will increase both the quality and quantity of all DCS services and programs. It is essential that volunteers be involved in DCS services and programs to provide additional resources, enhance programs, and help provide timely, and appropriate services for children/youth in state custody and at risk of custody, so these children/youth can reach their full potential as productive competent and healthy adults.

Volunteers bring with them a wide range of talents and interests that can be used in a DCS volunteer program. While working, they learn about the Department of Children’s Services goals and objectives and may become an important liaison within the community to help children/youth reach their goals.



Volunteers may perform services in any area of the program where there are identified needs. Although volunteers will not supplant DCS staff in taking primary responsibility for providing essential direct-service or management responsibilities, they can augment existing programs and contribute to mentoring, recreation, counseling, tutoring and other programs. The success of volunteer involvement will depend directly upon: the willingness to integrate volunteers into the operations of DCS programs; the removal of barriers to involvement; and the rewards provided for their services. Volunteers, “people helping people,” gain satisfaction for their efforts.

The potential roles for volunteers in this agency are limitless. Initially, it will take time to plan for and manage volunteers, but the time spent in the beginning is an investment toward keeping volunteers interested and involved.

The Volunteer Coordinator

Each DCS facility administrator/regional administrator will appoint a staff member designated as the “Volunteer Coordinator” to manage and oversee the recruitment of volunteers and monitor the implementation of the program. The staff member’s job performance plan must reflect responsibility and accountability for the volunteer program.

The volunteer coordinator will be responsible for:

1. Planning volunteer positions and activities
2. Recruiting volunteers
3. Interviewing and screening potential volunteers

4. Orientation and training of volunteers
5. Maintaining volunteer records
6. Act as liaison between the community, staff and volunteers and children/youth

The volunteer coordinator will be responsible for assigning volunteers to staff, monitoring the assignments, and must be available to volunteers and staff to answer questions and hear suggestions or problems that the volunteer or staff may be experiencing.

In the event that a Volunteer Coordinator is not appointed, then the volunteer's supervisor will act in the capacity of the Volunteer Coordinator.

Definitions of Volunteers

A. In-Service Volunteers

An in-service volunteer is any individual participating directly in the operation of DCS facilities and programs under the supervision of paid DCS staff and who may have direct contact with children/youth.

1. **Regular in-service volunteer**-An individual whose service to the agency is regularly (more than three times per year) provided and whose commitment is depended upon for the provision of services (i.e., clerical volunteer, case manager).
2. **Occasional in-service volunteer** - Any individual or group whose services to the facility occurs temporarily or irregularly (three times or less per year) and under supervision of a volunteer or staff member (i.e., visiting church groups, entertainment, participants in sporting events).

B. Support Volunteers

A support volunteer is any individual or group providing indirect service or assistance to DCS facilities or programs without actual contact with children/youth, programs or operations. Their responsibilities fall into the advisory or consulting category, and direct supervision is not required for the accomplishment of their duties.

C. Interns

College students participating in internship programs with local colleges and universities will be supervised according to the Department of Children's Services policy [8.1, Department of Children's Services Volunteer Services Program](#) and the sponsoring college or university guidelines.

D. Stipend Students

Undergraduate Students pursuing a degree in Social Work by way of the Statewide Consortium Program will be certified to work for the agency and supervised according to the Department of Children's Services policy [8.1, Department of Children's Services Volunteer Services Program](#) and the sponsoring college or university guidelines.

These students will also be supervised preferably by a DCS employee with a MSW or MSSW, otherwise by DCS staff with a BSW. (All stipend students must have complete background checks upon being accepted into the Stipend Student Program---as outlined in 8.1 Volunteer Services policies and procedures.)

E. AmeriCorps VISTA Members

VISTA Members have the distinct purpose of capacity building projects on behalf of youth in state custody as well as young adults who are in foster care. Their goals are to build and support the development of statewide and regional youth boards advocating on behalf of youth in foster care, to create partnerships with regionally based community members to support and sustain the efforts of youth board and to develop and implement a self-sustaining system to recruit and support mentors.

The VISTA Members will be approved, certified and trained as volunteers via the policies and procedures of Volunteer Services, which will enable them to have access to the Department's children and their families.

Qualifications of Volunteers

Any person, who is 18 years of age, may provide positive support and encouragement for DCS children/youth. Volunteers that are needed to work directly with children/youth must be representative of all social, economic and educational levels and possess skills and personal qualities adequately to fulfill the volunteer assignment.

Volunteers must be residents of the State of Tennessee. Non- Tennessee residents are prohibited from volunteering at the Department of Children's Services unless special permission is obtained from the Regional Administrator [RA] of the region in which the individual is to volunteer. The decision of the RA must be sanctioned by the DCS Commissioner or the Commissioner's designee.

Relatives of children/youth must not serve as a volunteer in a facility or program where an immediate relative is housed or located. Immediate relatives are defined as parents, siblings, in-laws, aunts, uncles or grandparents.

Department of Children's Services employees cannot serve as a volunteer at their job site.

Volunteer Needs Assessment

The volunteer coordinator should assess the facility or program volunteer needs on a quarterly basis. This can be achieved by:

- A. A memorandum to all employees advising them of the availability of volunteers and surveying staff needs for volunteers.
- B. Meeting with staff, administration and when appropriate, the children/youth to discuss the volunteer program.

Recruitment

The volunteer coordinator is responsible for recruitment of volunteers as determined by the quarterly needs assessment or upon request by staff.



The recruitment of volunteers will begin only after specific needs have been identified and will be for specific jobs reflected in detailed job descriptions. Qualified volunteers will be recruited from all cultural and socioeconomic segments of the community to fill designated volunteer positions.

Word-of-mouth is the best recruitment tool that exists. Talk to groups and clubs; attend meetings. Visibility in the community makes people aware of Department of Children's Services facilities/programs and their needs. After some volunteers have been recruited, they will become the voice for a DCS facility/program.

Volunteers who like what they are doing are the best advertisement of volunteer services. Their enthusiasm may spread spontaneously or may be directed specifically to reach friends who may be interested in volunteering. Whether in a one-to-one conversation, over the telephone to a friend, getting together in a social situation or in a speech to a group, there is no substitute for personal contact between recruiters and potential volunteers.

Cultural Competency

The level of cultural awareness in an agency directly impacts both the quality of work in individual cases with children and families and young adults and the effectiveness of the agency in working with the communities and other institutions to improve outcomes for them. DCS will provide cultural competence training to all volunteers, which will set standards for volunteers to deliver culturally appropriate services-expected of all DCS staff-to individuals from a multitude of racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds served by DCS to improve the ability of volunteers and the agency's to work effectively in cross-cultural settings.

DCS is committed to soliciting and forming partnerships with volunteers from diverse neighborhoods and communities to foster and strengthen culturally responsive services and programs that authentically reflect the diversity of every region in the State of Tennessee.

Volunteer Job Descriptions or Job Plans

Prior to assigning a volunteer position, the volunteer coordinator must develop a job description using form [CS-0551, Volunteer Job Description](#). The job description or job plan must be clearly tied to the volunteer's services on behalf of the agency. The job description will specifically define:

1. Job Title
2. Contact Person (Person supervising volunteer)

3. Job objective
4. Job activities (Duties to be performed)
5. Time required
6. Training required
7. Qualifications

When selecting areas where volunteers are needed, volunteers like to feel they are making a contribution and want interesting jobs. To ensure a long-term involvement on the volunteer's part, do not give the volunteer a trivial or meaningless task. Keep in mind that the volunteer's reward is not monetary but lies in job satisfaction.

The volunteer coordinator will review the job description with the volunteer and obtain their signature on the job description during orientation. The volunteer should receive a copy of the job description and the original must be maintained in the volunteer file.

Interviewing the Volunteer



Once the initial contact has been made with a prospective volunteer, the volunteer coordinator or designee will conduct a formal screening interview.

The interview will serve to accomplish the following:

1. Collect information pertaining to the volunteer's interests and motivation for wanting to volunteer with the Department of Children's Services;
2. Determine the amount of time that the volunteer is available;
3. Discuss available positions;
4. Document certification or licensing; (volunteers may perform professional services only when they are licensed or certified to do so).
5. Determine the suitability of the potential volunteer for the position.

The date of the interview will be documented on the volunteer application. All applicants must be notified in writing by the volunteer coordinator of their acceptance or rejection as a volunteer.

Volunteer Applications

Regular Volunteer

Before being considered for a position, the prospective volunteer must complete form [CS-0319, Application for Service as a Volunteer](#) and the confidentiality form **CS-0322, Proof of Training/Confidentiality/Volunteer Policy Agreement**. The application provides information and background material necessary to determine qualifications for service to the DCS facility or program. The volunteer application is the initial screening tool and all questions should be answered completely by the volunteer.

Resource Parents as Volunteers

A prospective volunteer that has already been approved as a resource parent will not have to submit to a complete background check, but he/she will again have the current child welfare information data base check, SSMS, Sex Offender Registry and Methamphetamine checks completed. A volunteer file will also be maintained on the resource parent volunteer with a job plan specific to his/her role as a volunteer, and the information required in all volunteer files. Verified information in the resource parent's file such as that which supports that the volunteer has a valid driver license and car insurance as well as a properly registered vehicle (in the counties that require emissions tests) as well as his/her fingerprint results may be copied and placed in the volunteer file. The resource parent must be supervised by the staff member for whom he/she is volunteering as long as that staff member is not also his/her Resource Family Support Worker.

Occasional Volunteer

The group leader of any group planning to present a one-time event at a DCS facility or program must meet with the volunteer coordinator at least thirty (30) days prior to the event. The group leader must be required to submit a list of all participants to the volunteer coordinator at least three (3) working days prior to the event. The list must include:

1. Name of participants
2. Complete street address
3. City, State and Zip
4. Contact phone numbers (work and/or home) with area codes
5. Drivers license number or other identification

Background Investigations

The volunteer coordinator must complete a thorough background investigation prior to approval and placement of each prospective volunteer. The background investigation must be completed within sixty-one

(61) calendar days from the date the application is received. The minimum requirements for a background investigation include:

1. Fingerprint check
2. A local criminal record check
3. Sex offender registry check
4. SSMS and the current child welfare database checks
5. Methamphetamine check
6. Verification of present employment (if employed)
7. At least two (2) reference checks- (in writing or via telephone)
8. Driver's License Verification
9. Auto Insurance Verification

The volunteer coordinator or designee must document the results of the background investigations on the volunteer application as well as the date the information was obtained.

Provisional Approval

1. Provisional approval of all volunteers may be granted prior to receiving the fingerprint investigation results. Guidelines for provisional approval are listed below:
 - A. The prospective volunteer must have a five-year history of residing in their present community.
 - B. A criminal record check of the last 5 years must be completed.
 - C. Present employment must be verified.
 - D. All reference checks must be completed and verified
 - E. The approved volunteer must be certified by the State of Tennessee, Division of Claims prior to performing services for the Department.
2. The regional administrator or facility administrator may grant provisional approval if all of the above has been completed and no criminal record is discovered.
3. Volunteers receiving provisional approval will be issued only in situations where their activities are supervised by DCS staff.
4. Provisional approval will be granted up to a period of 90 days and may be renewed at the end of 90 days until the results of finger print checks are received.

Tuberculosis Screening

Volunteers who serve at a DCS Youth Development Center and have routine contact with youth must be screened for tuberculosis prior to service and annually thereafter. Volunteers shall present to the designated volunteer coordinator or designee their evidence of freedom from infectious tuberculosis prior to service and annually thereafter. .

Volunteers for the Youth Development Centers, DCS Residential Programs, and regional offices will go to their local health department for TB screening. Volunteers requesting TB screenings from their local health departments must inform staff there that they will be working in group home or congregate settings with four or more unrelated individuals to establish both cause and eligibility to obtain the TB screenings. The health care worker may determine that a chest x-ray is needed as well.

If the volunteer chooses a private physician, they must bring a written statement from the physician stating they have been tested or examined and found to be free of infectious tuberculosis. Cost of testing by a private physician shall be borne by the volunteer.

Certification

Upon completion of background investigations and approval of a new volunteer, the volunteer coordinator or designee must submit a photocopy of the approved [Volunteer Application](#) and the [Volunteer Certification Letter](#) to the Director of Volunteer Services.

The Director of Volunteer Services must submit the volunteer's name, date of birth and social security number to the State of Tennessee, Division of Claims for certification.

Placement and Supervision of Volunteers

The volunteer coordinator will be responsible for the placement of volunteers according to identified need. The volunteer coordinator will assign volunteers to DCS staff that will be responsible for direct supervision of the volunteer's activities. DCS staff responsible for the supervision of the volunteer will include that

individual in the count of the number of staff that he/she is allowed to supervise:

1. Job specific training
2. Assigning and monitoring duties of the volunteer.
3. Forwarding form [CS-0320, Volunteer Activity Report](#) to the volunteer coordinator.

The volunteer coordinator must be informed immediately by assigned staff of any problems or situations with supervising the volunteer.

Orientation

The volunteer coordinator will be responsible for conducting the orientation and general on-the-job training of all volunteers.

The volunteer orientation includes:

1. An explanation of the program (goals and objectives);
2. An introduction to staff (persons who will be supervising the volunteers should attend);
3. An introduction to the DCS facility's/programs (tour of the building, location of fire extinguishers and safety exits, information on location of programs in the facility);
4. An overview of the Department of Children's Services including types and locations of programs;
5. A discussion of the volunteer's role (explain what the volunteer will be doing and who or what will benefit);
6. To whom the volunteer is responsible (who is the immediate supervisor and where he/she is located);
7. Guidelines governing volunteers (DCS policies on confidentiality, sexual harassment, personnel policies, conflicts of interest, courses on volunteer safety and security issues such as those that may arise with volunteers conducting home visits and interacting with clients that have behavioral-management issues, reporting child abuse, medical guidelines and safety issues volunteers may face when engaging clients with communicable diseases, working on cases that involve methamphetamine or sustaining bite marks.)

Upon completion of orientation and training, the volunteer must sign form ***CS-0322, Proof of Training/Confidentiality/Volunteer Policy Agreement***. This form will be maintained in the volunteer's permanent file. Training provided to Volunteers will be documented and logged in their files with the volunteers signing the logs to substantiate the courses or curriculum on which they have been trained.

On-The-Job-Training

The DCS staff assigned to supervise the volunteer must be responsible for providing all job-specific training. Job specific training will also include a review and explanation of all appropriate policies and procedures.

Identification Badges

Identification [I.D.] badges will be issued to volunteers working at DCS locations where I.D. badges are required for DCS staff. I.D. badges will also be issued to volunteers at other locations as they are necessary, required and useful in the performance of their assigned duties. All I.D. badges will be numbered.

In DCS youth development centers, all volunteer I.D. badges must be available and controlled through a central location. Each DCS youth development center is accountable for its badges. Badges are the permanent property of the youth development center, and must not be removed from the premises.

Upon arrival at the youth development center, the volunteer must provide a photo I.D. (i.e., driver's license) for identification. The volunteer will be issued their volunteer badge before entering the facility and upon leaving the facility, must surrender the badge to the security officer.

All I.D. badges issued to volunteers must be surrendered by them to their appointed supervisor, contact person or volunteer coordinator upon terminating their services to the agency.

Liability

While performing duties at the direction of the Department of Children's Services, volunteers are considered to be employees of the State of Tennessee and are entitled to the privileges and immunities conveyed therein.

Volunteers, whose services are offered to and received by the Department of Children's Services without consideration of payment, are not covered under the Worker's Compensation Insurance. They are, however, covered by the Tennessee Claims Commission upon registration with the Commission.

Volunteers will be advised during their interview to contact independent insurance sources if extra liability insurance is desired.

Termination of Volunteers

If there is evidence of inappropriate conduct or negligence on behalf of the volunteer, the assigned staff supervising the volunteer must contact the volunteer coordinator regarding the situation. The volunteer coordinator must contact the regional administrator or facility administrator and at their request, conduct a full investigation and report the results back to them.

If allegations of child abuse or neglect involving the volunteer arise, the volunteer coordinator must contact the appropriate regional administrator or facility administrator and a referral must be made immediately to DCS Central Intake for a possible investigation.

Volunteer Files

A volunteer file must be maintained on each active volunteer by the volunteer coordinator or the volunteer's supervisor. The file will include:



1. The volunteer application
2. Reference letters
3. Training documents
4. Background investigation results
5. Job description or job plan
6. Confidentiality form
7. Emergency Contact Sheet
8. Substitute W-9 form, if needed
9. Correspondence
10. Monthly hours
11. Verification and proof of valid driver's license, auto insurance, registration and proper vehicle maintenance (in counties that require emission tests) by any volunteers operating any motor vehicles.
12. Volunteer Certification Letter
13. Volunteer Approval or Rejection Letter
14. Verification of Policy Understanding Volunteer Form
15. Written Annual Performance Evaluation
16. Letter of termination—for both the voluntary and involuntary end of a volunteer's service

Files on volunteers for regions and counties will be housed in the regional office or work location of the Regional Volunteer Coordinator or DCS assigned to oversee the volunteer services program in that region. Skeletal files with emergency contact information, copies of job plans and annual performance evaluations will be housed in the volunteer's county of service. Youth Development Centers on volunteers will be maintained in their respective facilities. *(Please refer to Volunteer File Order.)*

Files must be closed if the volunteer has not been active for six (6) consecutive months. Inactive files should be maintained for two (2) years and then destroyed. The file for any volunteer who has been dismissed or denied from service should be archived.

Information and files pertaining to an individual volunteer or to a group of volunteers will be maintained according to all applicable DCS and State of Tennessee policies and procedures governing files and records.

Volunteer Coordinator Monthly Report

Each volunteer coordinator is responsible for developing a system for the collection of the volunteer activity report on a monthly basis and should use the information submitted on the activity reports to compile the monthly activity report.

After completing the monthly report, the forms must be filed in each volunteer's permanent file. A copy of the monthly report must be forwarded to the Director of Volunteer Services by the 10th of each month.

The monthly report must include:

1. Names and last four digits of the social security numbers of all active volunteers
2. Number of hours of service for each volunteer
3. List of any donations received
4. List of all special events

The volunteer coordinator must maintain a monthly calendar of events. In youth development centers, the volunteer coordinator must provide a copy of the monthly calendar to the Director of CSM-Security prior to the first day of each month. The volunteer coordinator will also provide the CSM of Security with a list of active volunteers. For other DCS offices and programs, copies must be provided to the supervisor or administrative management of the office or program.

Program Maintenance

The volunteer program maintenance is directly related to the success of the program and whether volunteers can be retained or chooses to drop out. The volunteer coordinator has the responsibility to see that the program is working toward the desired goals, and help to make the process a positive experience for staff and volunteers.

Assessment and Evaluation

The volunteer program will be assessed and evaluated annually to ensure that volunteers are receiving adequate support and that the program is promoting positive outcomes for children and families.

Every part-time and full-time volunteer will receive a written annual performance evaluation using form [CS-0933, Volunteer Annual Assessment](#), within twelve (12) months of their initial approval and at least annually thereafter until the file is closed. The evaluation will be conducted by the volunteer coordinator, supervisor or the contact person to whom the volunteer reports. Performance evaluations and all documents pertaining to the volunteer's performance will be maintained in the volunteer's file.

Citizen Involvement Council

Purpose

The purpose of the Citizen Involvement Council (CIC) is to provide assistance in stimulating positive citizen and community involvement and promoting volunteerism at each DCS Youth Development Center and Residential Program facility throughout the State. Activities of the CIC must comply with the Department of Children's Services rules, regulations, policies, procedures and statutes of the State of Tennessee.

Objectives

1. Work closely with the volunteer coordinators and community resources to coordinate a statewide network of Citizen Involvement Councils (CIC);
2. Advise the Director of Volunteer Services and DCS staff of program and practices that would enhance local involvement with DCS;
3. Make recommendations to DCS concerning pilot programs;
4. Promote collaboration between DCS and institutions of higher learning;
5. Serve as community liaison, informing the community of pertinent information concerning the nature and intent of the programs and enlisting community support.
6. Assist in the development and management of the local volunteer programs;
7. Provide leadership in development of local volunteers and community resources to promote recreational, cultural, religious, social and education activities;
8. Advise the Director of Volunteer Services and DCS staff on matters of public interest and concern;
9. Assist DCS staff in planning and implementing methods of involvement in community activities.

Appointment

Members of the CIC will be appointed by either the Commissioner/designee, Youth Development Center (YDC) Superintendents. Subsequent vacancies will be filled by the CIC members with the approval of the Commissioner/designee, YDC Superintendent, or Regional Executive Director. All Volunteer Coordinators at these facilities will serve as members of the CIC.

Qualifications

Each member must:

- ◆ Be at least eighteen (18) years of age;
- ◆ Have service as a volunteer in a Juvenile Justice system, Criminal Justice system, or Child Welfare system;
- ◆ Be in good standing in the community, and;
- ◆ Be willing to be actively involved in the support of children, youth and DCS staff;

No member of a CIC will be a paid employee of DCS.

Term of Office

Members of the CIC will serve for two (2) years.

Training

Each CIC member will receive orientation to specific DCS programs, regional offices, juvenile justice system and programs or DCS facilities and offices, in addition to training for the role of CIC member.

Responsibilities

Each CIC member will attend the quarterly scheduled and specially called meetings, work closely with the DCS volunteer coordinator, maintain confidentiality of individual children, youth and families and develop community resources.

Duties and Authority

Each CIC may organize as a nonprofit corporation under Tennessee laws. CIC must have access to the Commissioner/designee, YDC Superintendent, Regional Administrator, or Regional Executive Director.

Compensation

Members of CIC will be reimbursed for travel according to the rules and regulations established by the State of Tennessee, Department of Finance and Administration, Comprehensive Travel Regulations.

Reports

Minutes from all CIC meetings held must be submitted to the Director of Volunteer Services ten days after the meeting date. These minutes should include the names of the CIC board members, who attended the meeting and the contents of the discussions at the meeting. A copy of the agenda should also be attached to the minutes.