

1027.0 VOLUNTEER EMPLOYMENT AND PERSONNEL POLICY

This policy establishes general guidelines for the recruitment and selection of volunteers within the Department of Human Services (DHS) in compliance with Act 42 of 1981, Section 1. The policy applies to all volunteer services, programs and positions within DHS.

1027.1.0 Volunteer Opportunities

- 1027.1.1 DHS will provide individuals an equal opportunity to participate in meaningful volunteer programs without regard to age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, creed, or gender.
- 1027.1.2 Each division/office is authorized to develop meaningful service opportunities for volunteers and will have written policies for the recruitment, selection, orientation, training, supervision and separation of volunteers consistent with this policy and the employment and personnel policies of DHS.

1027.2.0 Volunteer Responsibilities

- 1027.2.1 Volunteers are subject to the rules, regulations and policies of DHS and of the division/office where they are assigned. The volunteer is responsible for knowing, understanding and adhering to the regulations and policies.
- 1027.2.2 Volunteers are subject to the confidentiality statutes and regulations governing disclosure of information concerning DHS and its clients.

1027.3.0 Supervisor Responsibilities

The volunteer supervisor is responsible for informing the volunteer of all applicable rules and regulations.

1027.4.0 Recruitment

A volunteer position within DHS may be advertised without regard to the standards applied to State employment practices. Advertisements may be placed with the Division of Community Service and Nonprofit Support (DCSNS), posted in appropriate locations, and announced elsewhere as appropriate. Advertisements should list major job qualifications or requirements including those which may limit particular classifications of volunteers in specific job functions (e.g., age limitations for volunteers who work with clients).

1027.5.0 Agreements with Volunteer Agencies

- 1027.5.1 Divisions/offices may enter agreements with volunteer agencies for the fulfillment of particular job functions by volunteers (e.g., addressing and stamping envelopes for

bulk mailings or church choirs performing for Human Development Center residents). Such volunteers will be considered under the supervision of the agency/division and employed on an occasional or one-time basis.

- 1027.5.2 The agreement should define the job function(s) to be fulfilled, times and location, and the name of the employee coordinating the job activities. For such occasional volunteers the only necessary records are the number of volunteers, number of contributed hours, and the job function completed. Terms of such agreements should be consistent with any applicable division policies.

1027.6.0 Service Learning Programs

- 1027.6.1 DHS encourages the development of service-learning volunteer programs that involve students from educational entities and programs. Service-learning provides direct knowledge and skills through volunteer experience. Combining learning and community service is beneficial to all involved: students are afforded opportunities for practical experience and development of skills; faculty is offered a method for reinforcing classroom instruction; and DHS divisions/offices are provided effective volunteers to fulfill particular needs. The goal of service-learning programs is to blend educational concepts with significant service activities in such a way that the two reinforce each other while fulfilling a need.

- 1027.6.2 Divisions may enter into agreements between faculty and administrations of educational entities for service-learning programs. These agreements should define the learning objectives, volunteer placement and activities, monitoring and evaluation methods, reimbursement and stipend arrangements (if any), and assign responsibilities to participants. Terms of such agreements should be consistent with any applicable division policies.

1027.7.0 Job Descriptions

Every volunteer position will have a formal written document that describes the responsibilities, qualifications, training or preparation, time and location, length of commitment, supervision, and name and title of supervisor. The volunteer supervisor will be required to provide a copy of this job description to each volunteer.

1027.8.0 Applications

- 1027.8.1 Divisions/offices using volunteers will develop a standard application form for volunteer service. Applicants for volunteer positions will be required to complete this form. The completed application must be filed with divisions and DCSNS. Resumes may accompany the applications. This application will be used initially for screening purposes and to provide the information necessary for selection and placement. The application and resume will be reviewed and evaluated in comparison with the job description to determine qualified applicants.

1027.8.2 When an individual is accepted for a volunteer position, the division/office volunteer supervisor will keep this application in his or her permanent volunteer personnel file.

1027.9.0 Interviews

Interviews of prospective volunteers will be consistent with federal, state and DHS policies and procedures. Information obtained from interviews should be evaluated with the volunteer applicant's background information. The types of questions asked during an interview will be carefully considered prior to the interview and the interview results, especially applicant responses, clearly documented.

1027.10.0 Reference and Background Checks

Reference and background checks may be used to verify information which applicants submit in their volunteer application and resume, and to learn more about the applicant. Criminal background checks are required on all volunteers working with special populations, i.e., youth, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities, in accordance with DHS Policy 1080, Employee Criminal Record Check. Applicants will be informed on the application form that reference and background checks may be conducted and written consent will be obtained on this form.

1027.11.0 Selection and Placement

Selection and placement are those processes for volunteer applications being accepted, referred to other agencies, or transferred. The primary objective of selection and placement is to find the individual volunteer best suited for a specific vacancy based upon education, experience, knowledge, interest and enthusiasm.

1027.12.0 Appointment

All prospective volunteers are subject to acceptance by the volunteer supervisor or coordinator. Prospective volunteers will be notified of their appointment or referral in writing after all references have been checked and documented. Applicants accepted for volunteer work will be informed of the assignment, orientation date, time and location, and provided any other pertinent information. Applicants not accepted for the volunteer position will be referred to other agencies or programs, including DCSNS. Applicant information should be forwarded to DCSNS Volunteer Clearinghouse for registration.

1027.13.0 Orientation

Divisions/offices will initiate orientation procedures for new volunteers consistent with new paid employee orientations. Divisions/offices are responsible for the initial introduction of volunteers to the work environment; to applicable policies,

regulations and procedures; to paid employees and volunteers; and to job duties and responsibilities.

1027.14.0 Training

Divisions/offices will provide training to volunteers that allow them to fulfill their responsibilities. Training may be prior to beginning work, on-the-job, in-service, or a combination of the three. The manner of training will be appropriate to the needs of the volunteer(s) and the program.

1027.15.0 Observation Period

1027.15.1 Volunteers will serve an observation period determined by the volunteer coordinator. During the observation period the volunteer can expect, and will receive from the volunteer supervisor, orientation and guidance in an effort to assure the volunteer's success in the job assignment.

1027.15.2 Supervisors will document orientations, training, commendations and disciplinary actions during the observation period as appropriate.

1027.15.3 The observation period may be extended by mutual agreement between supervisor and volunteer.

1027.16.0 Supervision

The volunteer supervisor will direct, monitor and evaluate the volunteer. Supervision will provide technical assistance, guidance in the performance of duties, and assistance with forming good interstaff relationships.

1027.17.0 Records

Records of the volunteer's work-related experiences and contribution of goods, services and time may be used to evaluate the program. This documentation may be used to verify the volunteer's service credit for income tax and work experience and to provide information for recognition activities.

1027.18.0 Evaluation

1027.18.1 Volunteer supervisors will periodically review and evaluate each volunteer's performance of assigned duties. The purposes of evaluation are to measure the performance of the volunteer against established standards and program goals, identify successes and problems, and determine volunteer needs and methods of correcting problems.

1027.18.2 At least once a year an evaluation will be performed, documented, and the results placed in the volunteer's personnel file. An oral interview with the volunteer will be

done to provide the opportunity for discussion, feedback, and the exchange of information.

1027.19.0 Discipline

If rules are violated, supervisors, managers, and administrators will follow the principles of progressive discipline to ensure objective and uniform treatment of all volunteers consistent with treatment of paid State employees in accordance with DHS Policy 1084, Employee Discipline: Conduct/Performance. DHS Policy 1086, DHS Mediation/Grievance Policy, however, applies only to employees and does not include volunteers among those eligible to grieve.

Originating Section/Department Contact

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1027.20.0 Exit Interview

- 1027.20.1 Volunteers may terminate their association with the agency but are asked to provide two (2) weeks notice. Upon notification volunteer supervisors will make arrangements for an exit interview.
- 1027.20.2 An exit interview will also be held when a volunteer is discharged from service. The purpose of this interview is to inform the volunteer of the reasons for terminating employment, the date of termination, and of the appeal process. This interview will be documented on the standard interview form and in a letter to the volunteer.

1027.21.0 Volunteer Benefits

- 1027.21.1 Volunteers, to the extent of their services, are exempt from all State employment laws, work hours, compensation, leave time and employee benefits including salaries, payroll deductions, retirement benefits, and credit union.
- 1027.21.2 Divisions/offices using volunteers and accepting their services may provide reimbursements for expenses, including transportation, lodging, and subsistence. Reimbursement must be consistent with allowances set by law for State employees, except in circumstances where special authorizations applicable to volunteers have been issued.
- 1027.21.3 Meals can be furnished without charge to volunteers provided that scheduled work assignments occur during established meal times. DHS Travel Policy restricts meal reimbursements without overnight stay; this limitation does not apply to volunteers. To be eligible for lunch, the volunteer work time should begin prior to established mealtime and extend through the end of the same period.

1027.21.4 Lodging can be provided temporarily at no charge to the volunteer if it is available and at the discretion of the division/office.

1027.21.5 Volunteers can be reimbursed for transportation expenses under applicable state travel regulations. Volunteers may use division/office vehicles in the performance of their duties. Use of vehicles is subject to availability and those rules and regulations governing use of State vehicles by paid staff.

1027.22.0 Insurance

1027.22.1 Liability insurance may be provided by the division/office using volunteer services to all volunteers to the same degree provided to paid employees, including vehicular, professional and personal liability insurance. Coverage to volunteers will be provided only during the performance of their responsibilities and duties within the time scheduled or determined for service.

1027.22.2 It is the responsibility of the division/office to develop a volunteer position(s) that offers the best possible services and which affords reasonable liability protection for the volunteer. The volunteer will be informed, prior to assuming duties, of the extent of liability coverage and protection. The volunteer will be carefully oriented and trained to avoid unnecessary liability.

1027.22.3 Volunteers delivering services are subject to all of the same events that may affect paid staff and can create a condition usually protected against by insurance coverage. Protection through insurance is therefore as natural for volunteer staff as for paid staff. The determination to provide insurance coverage for volunteers is made in the same manner as if the decision were made for paid staff. The type of insurance protection provided necessarily depends on the precise job and work situation of each volunteer program. Not all types of insurance will be appropriate for every volunteer position, and some volunteer jobs may require specialized coverage.

1027.23.0 Worker's Compensation (i.e., medical and death benefits), by Act 511 of 1973

1027.23.1 Worker's Compensation may be provided to duly qualify and registered emergency service volunteers as state employees. Act 408 of 1977 provides for a determination of compensation rate.

1027.23.2 According to the state's Attorney General's office, "a strong argument could be made in a case where other eligibility criteria are met to entitle" volunteers to Worker's Compensation. Other criteria would include job descriptions, training, supervision, and evaluation. Coverage would be provided only during the volunteer's performance of duties and scheduled work hours.

1027.23.3 Each division/office is responsible for establishing appropriate and necessary safeguards for eligibility for benefits and for determining sufficient funds are

available to the Department to defray the cost of such benefits. Nothing in this policy shall provide a lawful claim or right of volunteers to meals, lodging, transportation, or liability insurance unless the respective division/office has made provision for such benefits.

- 1027.23.4 By Act 42 of 1981, sovereign immunity is extended to volunteers. Volunteers acting within the scope of their duties are generally protected from personal liability to the same extent as paid employees.
- 1027.23.5 Volunteers are, by state and federal laws, allowed deductions in computing their net income for the Arkansas Income Tax and United States Income Tax. Deductions are allowable for unreimbursed meals, lodging and transportation, or incidental expenses incurred by the volunteer in the performance of voluntary service to the division/office. The volunteer must not have received reimbursement from public funds and these expenses must be reimbursable if incurred by paid employees of the division/office. The volunteer is responsible for maintaining accurate and appropriate records of all reimbursed and non-reimbursed expenses for tax deduction purposes.
- 1027.23.6 The division/office may verify the voluntary service record, but not the expenses used in computing tax deductions.
- 1027.23.7 When job vacancies occur the division must look for applicants. DHS generally advocates open competition for job vacancies. However, the Department's right to seek qualified applicants from its present work force is retained. Volunteers are an integral part of this workforce and will be considered for hire (paid employment) in keeping with State personnel policies and procedures.
- 1027.23.8 Volunteer service is recognized as partial fulfillment of State employment requirements for training and experience under applicable personnel rules and regulations. This volunteer service must be capable of documentation.
- 1027.23.9 The Department of Finance and Administration has made provision for the listing of volunteer service and experience on personnel forms and other records so that appropriate credit can be given in evaluating work history and making position evaluations.
- 1027.23.10 Personnel Administrators will make provision for the listing of volunteer service experience on records reflecting work history so that appropriate credit may be given in evaluating work history and in making position evaluations.

1027.24.0 Volunteer Records

- 1027.24.1 As required by Act 42 of 1981, each division/office shall maintain in its files, and include in its annual report, information on and about volunteers including:

- A. Programs, positions, location, service hours, and number.
- B. Personnel files on each volunteer.
- C. Records that authenticate services rendered, expenses incurred, and donations appropriate for tax authorities.

1027.25.0 Volunteer Recognition

- 1027.25.1 Each division/office will be responsible for developing and implementing appropriate recognition events, activities and awards that demonstrate appreciation for individual volunteers' services and for volunteerism as a whole.
- 1027.25.2 Standard certificates of appreciation may be developed for presentation to individuals or groups meeting specific written criteria developed by each division/office.
- 1027.25.3 The State of Arkansas award, specifically reserved for recognition of State volunteers, may be presented to individuals, organizations, or businesses whose service, dedication, support and continued efforts are evidence of outstanding volunteer endeavors. These certificates may be requested from DCSNS and will be provided consistent with qualification guidelines.
- 1027.25.4 The Governor's Award for Volunteer Excellence is for outstanding volunteer endeavors by individuals, organizations or businesses whose service, dedication, support, and loyalty are of statewide significance. These certificates may be requested from DCSNS and will be provided consistent with qualification guidelines.

1027.26.0 Originating Section/Department Contact

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Replacement Notation: This policy replaces DHS Policy 1027, previously issued effective December 1, 1988, and June 29, 2001.