

**ALLEGAN COUNTY
POLICY**



TITLE: Volunteers
POLICY NUMBER: 212

APPROVED BY: Board of Commissioners

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 27, 2021

1. **GENERAL:** Volunteers are recognized as a valued component of Allegan County Government operations.
2. **VOLUNTEER DEFINITION:** A volunteer is anyone who without compensation or expectation of compensation, beyond allowable reimbursement of direct expenses, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of Allegan County (County). A volunteer must apply to, and be officially approved by, the County prior to performance of tasks. Volunteers shall not be considered “employees”.
3. **EMPLOYEES AS VOLUNTEERS:** The County accepts the services of staff/employees as volunteers. This service is accepted provided that the volunteer service is provided totally without any coercive nature, involves work which is outside the scope of normal staff duties, and is provided outside of usual working hours. Family members of staff are allowed to volunteer with the County. When family members are enrolled as volunteers, to the degree practicable, they will not be placed under the direct supervision of the family member who is an employee.
4. **SERVICE AT THE DISCRETION OF COUNTY:** The County accepts the service of all volunteers at the sole discretion of the County. The County may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer’s relationship with the County. The volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to sever the volunteer’s relationship with the County. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the volunteer’s supervisor.
5. **VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Volunteers shall be given meaningful assignments, treated with equality, provided effective supervision, and be recognized for work performed. Volunteers shall actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities, consistent with the goals and procedures of the County.
6. **POSITION DESCRIPTIONS:** Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a clear, complete, and current position description outlining the duties and responsibilities must be provided to Human Resources. The position description will be given to each accepted volunteer and utilized in subsequent management and evaluation efforts. Position descriptions should be reviewed and updated at least every two years, or whenever the work involved in the position changes substantially.
7. **SUPERVISION:** Each volunteer who is accepted to a position with the County must have a clearly identified employee who is responsible for direct supervision and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.
8. **MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS:** Official volunteer personnel records shall be confidentially stored in the Human Resources Department. At a minimum, records shall include volunteer application and background check authorization with the corresponding results.

9. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all non-public information (examples of such information include, but are not limited to, information related to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, Law Enforcement Information Network, and Protected Personal Information) whether this information involves a single staff, volunteer, client or other person, or involves overall County business.
10. **DRESS CODE:** As a representative of the County, volunteers are responsible for presenting a good image to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Dress code will be established by the Volunteer's supervisor. County Volunteers may be provided with a shirt (or other necessary articles of identification which may include badge, uniform, or ID card) for the purpose of identification when providing services. Such articles shall clearly display "Allegan County", "Volunteer" and the County logo (and/or sheriff or court logo, if responsibilities fall within the jurisdiction of law enforcement or justice). Articles must be purchased consistent with County policy including but not limited to the Purchasing Policy and Budget Policy.
11. **SERVICE LOGS:** Each department, with the assistance of the volunteer, shall keep a service log for each volunteer providing services. This log shall include:
 - 11.1 Date of service
 - 11.2 Start / Stop Time of service
 - 11.3 Service activity performed
12. **LIABILITY:** Volunteers are not employees of the County, and provide such services at their own risk. As volunteers are not employees, they are not entitled to any compensation or benefits from the County, including but not limited to worker's compensation, medical insurance, or unemployment compensation unless otherwise provided through law or County policy. The County shall not defend or indemnify the volunteers against liability for the following:
 - 12.1 Intentional, grossly negligent or unlawful acts or allegations thereof,
 - 12.2 Providing false and/or inaccurate information on the County Application for Volunteer Services form.
13. **RECRUITMENT:** Volunteers shall be recruited on a proactive basis, with the intent of expanding the volunteer involvement of the community. Volunteers shall be recruited without regard to gender, handicap, age, race or other condition. The sole qualification shall be the ability to perform tasks on behalf of the County consistent with the applicable position description.
14. **APPLICATION PROCESS & BACKGROUND/HEALTH SCREENING:** Volunteers shall complete a Volunteer Application and agree to a criminal background check. Volunteers who do not agree may be refused assignment. In cases where volunteers will be working with clients with health difficulties, a health screening may be required prior to volunteer assignment. In addition, if there are physical requirements necessary for performance of a volunteer task, a screening or testing procedure may be required to ascertain the ability of the volunteer to safely perform the task.
15. **VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE:** While volunteers may participate in operational meetings as necessary, it is recognized that the time and availability of volunteers may be limited. In an effort to manage an effective volunteer program, it is necessary for the County to provide information and training to volunteers and receive input from them. As such, the County may conduct a volunteer conference once per year either collectively for all County volunteers or by group of related function and may provide modest meal accommodations for attendance which may include up to one guest per volunteer or employee. Total meal expenditures (venue, services, food, gratuity, etc.) provided by the County shall not exceed the amount allowable for meal reimbursement for an employee as outlined in the Budget policy. Example for calculation: 100 volunteers, employees or guests attending a dinner

volunteer conference shall not exceed \$1,900 which is 100 times the current dinner rate of \$19. Donations received consistent with section 16 “Recognition of Volunteers” shall be utilized first for any expenses in this section prior to expenditure of County funds.

15.1 The County may plan a single combined event by extending invitation to all County volunteers.

15.2 If it is determined to conduct individual events, trainings etc. for specific workgroups, the County will strive for consistency in areas such as recognition certificates, awards, food, etc.

16. **RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS:** A simple “thank you” means so much. A thank you says, “We appreciate you.” The County also may administer, and supply all materials for volunteer recognition certificates for specific achievements or general participation in conjunction with or separate from the volunteer conference. Recognition may come in different forms and the related expenses of such likely exceeds the County’s ability to expend public funds. As such, in accordance with the County’s donation section of the Budget Policy, a program is authorized to receive donations and permit the expenditure or distribution of such donations to the extent they assist the County in providing reasonable, non-monetary recognition of volunteers. (Examples include, covering expenses for a guest of a volunteer at a volunteer conference, plaques, awards, modest give-a-ways/prizes pertaining to team building during or outside the volunteer conference.) In general, the program shall be administered consistent with the standards of the County’s Employee Engagement program and employee recognition program.

17. **ENGAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS:** The most meaningful forms of engagement should:

17.1 Include volunteers in planning, especially in the development of goals.

17.2 Enable volunteers to work side-by-side with staff and receive ongoing direction.

17.3 Show appreciation toward the achievements of volunteers when contributing to the successful completion of tasks that support the plan and specific goals.