

**STANISLAUS COUNTY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**  
**PROGRAM INFORMATION**  
**April 17, 2007**

Stanislaus County prides itself in community partnerships, one such partnership is the Stanislaus County Volunteer Program. This program matches community members interests with Department's needs. Volunteer opportunities range from annual one-time events such as Animal Services Four Footed Fun Fair to long-term volunteer opportunities such as providing library materials to homebound individuals at the Library and assisting patients at the Health Services Agency.

**Who is a Volunteer?**

1. Individuals interested in giving freely of their time (non-paid) on a regular or one-time event basis;
2. Individuals interested in gaining experience in an area they are interested in studying;
3. Individuals performing community service as part of a court order;
4. Individuals wanting to assist the local community during times of a declared disaster;
5. Individuals who may need more experience in order to gain employment; and,
6. Individuals who may need to fill a community service requirement (High School students mandated by a class is a good example).

Excluded from the volunteer program:

- Preceptorships;
- Internships/externships where the Department has a contractual relationship with the College/University. The contractual relationship should state that the educational institution will be responsible for all liability and workers compensation costs for the student as well as addressing other legal, risk management and operational considerations; and
- Individuals performing job duties in order to receive benefits through another program (for example, to receive food stamps).

**Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities**

Volunteers are a valuable resource to the County, its staff and its residents. Volunteers shall be extended the right to:

- Be provided with meaningful and appropriate assignments according to skill, interests, availability and training,
- Receive a clear and specific position description,
- Be treated and respected as a "co-worker",
- Receive orientation, training, and effective supervision for the jobs accepted;

- Not have time wasted by lack of planning and coordination on the County's part,
- Receive feedback on performance; and,
- Receive formal and informal recognition for accomplishments.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Adhere to the same rules, regulations and standards as regular County employees,
- Be prompt and reliable in reporting for duty; attendance is expected to be dependable,
- Complete timesheets in order to keep an accurate record of the hours served,
- Attend orientations and trainings as provided,
- Treat the public and fellow co-workers professionally at all times,
- Protect confidential information,
- Consult with the supervisor or Training Coordinator before assuming any new assignments, and
- Exercise good judgement, remembering that volunteers are representatives of Stanislaus County.

Whatever the volunteer position is, the volunteer has an important assignment: to perform every task to the best of his/her ability. The result will be greater personal satisfaction in for the volunteer and improved services to the customers of our County.

### **The County's Responsibility to its Volunteers**

To recognize the importance of volunteers to the mission of Stanislaus County, the County is responsible for:

- Providing adequate orientation and training to prepare the volunteer for a successful service experience,
- Provide clear and consistent job descriptions,
- Be prepared for the volunteer to work, including proper supervision, supplies and workspace,
- Treat the volunteer as a respected member of the work team,
- Keep volunteers informed of any changes in policy or procedures,
- Maintain accurate records of service; and,
- Provide formal and informal recognition and appreciation of the volunteer's contributions.

### **Steps to become a Volunteer**

All volunteers must be registered through the Volunteer Center of the United Way of Stanislaus County. The paperwork and/or orientation can be done either at the individual County department with the Volunteer Coordinator or at the United Way's Office located at 422 Mc Henry Avenue.

If the individual department completes the application paperwork, it will be forwarded to the Volunteer Center within **48 hours** of processing.

- **On-Going Volunteer Assignments:** Volunteers assigned to on-going assignments will be fingerprinted and participate in the designated Department's background process. The volunteer will also participate in an orientation with the Department's Volunteer Coordinator, review the County's personnel policies annually, and receive evaluations.
- **Onetime Event Volunteer Assignments:** Volunteers accepting one-time assignments will complete the One-time Event Form and are not required to participate in the extensive background process. Examples of onetime events include Animal Service's Annual Four-Footed Fun Fair and the Health Services Agency's annual Flu Clinics.
- **Emergency Response Volunteers:** One-time event assignments related to declared disasters in the community. Emergency Response Volunteers will complete the Emergency Response Volunteer Form and are not required to participate in the extensive background process.

### **County Policies**

All volunteers will be held to the same behavior standards as County employees. During the volunteer's orientation and annually thereafter the volunteer will review applicable County and Departmental policies. The volunteer will sign the "Volunteer Conduct/Behavior Expectations Policy Acknowledgement" form indicating that he/she has read and understands the behavior expectations including Code of Ethics, Harassment Policy, Drug Free Workplace Policy and Security and Violence in the Workplace.

### **Volunteer Recruitment**

Volunteers shall be recruited on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding volunteer involvement in the County. Volunteers shall be recruited without regard to any individual's sex, race, color, religion, national origin, pregnancy, age, marital status, medical condition, disability, or any other basis prohibited by local, state or federal law. Volunteers may be recruited either through an interest in a specific function or through a general interest in volunteering. The County will use its normal recruitment methods to recruit volunteers, including the website and public outreach. Additionally, the County will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified, disabled volunteers.

Once a Department has indicated a need for a service to be performed by a volunteer, the existing volunteer job specifications shall be reviewed to determine which specification is the appropriate level to recruit for. The Volunteer Center can assist in this process if needed.

## **Special Types of Volunteers**

### **◆ Minors as Volunteers**

Stanislaus County encourages minors to volunteer to learn about future job opportunities and the skills needed for these positions. It is the Department Head's discretion whether to allow minors to volunteer within a Department and the age the minor must be to volunteer at a Department. County Departments must follow the State of California Division of Labor Child Labor Laws with volunteer minors. The Division of Labor defines a minor as, "any person under the age of 18 years who is required to attend school under the provisions of the Education Code."

The Division of Labor Child Labor law outlines the hours a minor may work (depending on age) and the type of work a minor may perform. For example, 14 and 15 year olds may only work until 7 p.m. during the school year. Please visit the DOL's website at <http://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/ChildLaborPamphlet2000.html#17> for further information.

Minor volunteers will complete the Stanislaus County Minor Authorization Form including the parent/guardian signature. Minors do not need a work permit to volunteer for the County. However, minors do need to participate in the fingerprint process if performing more than 20 hours of volunteer service. Minors completing 20 hours or less for a school project or community service project are not required to be fingerprinted. However, if after completion of the 20 hours the minor and the Department decide to continue the volunteer relationship fingerprints need to be completed at that time.

### **◆ Stanislaus County Employee's as Volunteers**

As a public agency, the County encourages employees to volunteer in the community. The County also recognizes that at times, employees may also want to volunteer for the County. This service is accepted provided the volunteer service is:

- Provided totally without coercive nature,
- Involves tasks that are outside of the scope of normal staff duties (see FLSA information below); and,
- Is provided outside of the employee's usual working hours.

Employees who volunteer must adhere to the Fair Labor Standards Act which states that, "an individual shall not be considered a volunteer if the individual is otherwise employed by the same public agency to perform the same type of services as those for which the individual proposes to volunteer."

An example of same type of services would be a Public Health Nurse who wishes to volunteer at a County clinic. However, a Code Enforcement Officer who wishes to walk dogs for Animal Services would not be considered "same type of services" and would be eligible to volunteer.

◆ **Court Ordered Volunteers**

◆ **Emergency Response Volunteers**

All volunteers activated or servicing during an emergency or disaster will be required to work within the framework of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the State Emergency Management System (SEMS). NIMS Training will be provided as required by the Stanislaus County Office of Emergency Services.

**Spontaneous Volunteers:** an individual who comes forward following a disaster to assist with disaster related activities during the response or recovery phase. These volunteers are not affiliated with a response or relief agency or pre-registered with an accredited disaster council.

**Disaster Service Worker (DSW):** an individual person registered with an accredited Disaster Council for the purpose of engaging in disaster service without pay or consideration.

Any interested party in disaster response may come forward at any time to register through the United Way or the Department of Emergency Services (Stanislaus County Chief Executive Office). Information will be stored in volunteer database to call upon the interested party in times of a declared disaster.

**Volunteer Job Descriptions**

Each volunteer should receive a clear and concise job description upon starting an individual work assignment. The Stanislaus County Chief Executive Office and the Volunteer Center will identify job descriptions that meet countywide standards and needs (for example, Office Assistant, Accounting Assistant, Driver). If a department has an individual, specific volunteer service, the Volunteer Center will work with the department to identify the specific job duties and create a job description to fit the position (for example, Substance Abuse Counselor, Dog Obedience Trainer). Volunteer job descriptions will be reviewed annually for any job task or minimum qualifications changes.

**Volunteer Evaluations**

Volunteers similar to employees should be provided with job expectations and annual evaluations using the Stanislaus County Volunteer Evaluation Form. Volunteers should have an evaluation on file prior to their last day as a volunteer. This will provide the volunteer with something to use as a reference when seeking new employment. During the evaluation review the following things will be considered:

- ◆ Attendance, initiative, and effort,
- ◆ Quality of work,
- ◆ Personal Relations; and,
- ◆ Adaptability.

Evaluations are to be used to identify strengths and areas of growth in order to reinforce good habits and develop ways for improvement. The evaluation is also the time to review how the volunteer's work compares to the goals of the volunteer and the County.

Reference letters should not be provided, if volunteer requests a reference while pursuing new opportunities please provide the volunteer with an evaluation. If a volunteer needs a letter referencing hours or assignment(s), the volunteer may contact the United Way Volunteer Center. The Volunteer Center will supply the volunteer with the necessary documentation.

### **Termination/Resignation of Volunteer Service**

The County and/or the Volunteer may terminate the volunteer's service at any time.

### **Re-hiring a Former Volunteer**

If a Department determines to re-hire a former volunteer the following forms need to be completed by the Volunteer and returned to the Volunteer Center:

- Volunteer Application Form,
- Policy Acknowledgement Form (if prior completion of form is over 1 year old),
- Job Certification Form, and;
- Fingerprints (if resignation of former volunteer was more than 30 days ago).

### **Role of the Department's Volunteer Coordinator**

Each Department will have an assigned Volunteer Coordinator(s). The Volunteer Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing the Department's volunteer program, volunteer orientation, and attending quarterly County/United Way volunteer meetings and trainings. Each Department will also have a designated representative responsible for coordinating with the United Way Volunteer Center any volunteer paperwork/volunteer files and entering volunteer's time logs into the 1-800-volunteer system. This may or may not be the Volunteer Coordinator depending on the Department's size and structure.

### **Volunteer Documentation/Files**

The United Way Volunteer Center is responsible for the oversight of the official volunteer file. Files will be kept for three (3) years after the volunteer completes his/her volunteer assignment as consistent with County policy. Departmental Volunteer Coordinators may update the information and forms at the individual department and forward the necessary information to the Volunteer Center.

**Each official file will include original documents of the following:**

- Volunteer Application,
- Volunteer Conduct/Behavioral Expectations Policy Acknowledgement Form,
- Training Logs- specific training provided and training results; and,
- Minor authorization form (if needed)
- Annual Evaluation forms; and
- Status update form (if needed)

Each Department may keep a file on the Volunteer as well. **Time logs will be included in the departmental file.**

**Volunteer Identification/Badges**

**Department Volunteers:** Each Department will supply the volunteer with a badge/pin to identify the volunteer as such. The badges/pins will need to be returned upon completion of the volunteer's assignment. Only badges/pins shall be provided not proximity cards or keys to County facilities.

**Emergency Response Volunteers: (still in draft)**

**Volunteer Concern's/Grievances**

If a volunteer has a concern or grievance related to the work performed by the volunteer for Stanislaus County, the volunteer is first to report it and discuss the issue with his/her supervisor. If the volunteer does not feel the issue has been properly addressed by his/her supervisor, he/she is to report it to the Department's Volunteer Coordinator. If the volunteer still does not feel the concern has been addressed or is not able to address it with the supervisor/Volunteer Coordinator the volunteer is to use the County's Ethics Concern procedures or the County's Whistleblower procedures (located in the County's Personnel Manual) to report the concern/grievance.