



ARAPAHOE COUNTY

Arapahoe County
Commissioners' Office

Volunteer Policy

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Owner: Commissioners' Office

I. Overview:

Volunteers are a tremendous resource to the County and community. These valued residents serve the County by supporting the County in many capacities. The many hours and vital energy provided by volunteers strengthens interpersonal bonds, increases county awareness, and deepens community connections. The County strives to make the volunteer experience positive for everyone involved, and County employees are encouraged to assist in the creation of meaningful and productive roles for volunteers.

II. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide overall guidance, structure and direction to staff and volunteers throughout the volunteer process. The policy, however, is *not* intended to grant any contractual rights or obligations and should *not* be interpreted as doing so.

III. Definition of "Volunteer"

A "volunteer" is any person who donates time and/or services to the County without any promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation. A "volunteer" must be officially registered and/or enrolled by the County prior to performance of a one-time or ongoing task. A "volunteer" is not considered an employee of Arapahoe County.

IV. Employees as volunteers

Arapahoe County employees may occasionally volunteer in another County department or office with prior approval from the employee's supervisor and the Human Resources Department. To ensure compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA"), employees may *not* volunteer within their own department, volunteer to perform the "same type of services" for which they are paid as employees, or volunteer during their usual working hours. Employees are not paid for volunteer hours but may utilize the County's volunteer time benefit in alignment with County policy.

V. Special Considerations for Minors/Youth Volunteers (under the age of 18)

The minimum age of volunteers for volunteer positions is 16 years old, unless accompanied by a parent/guardian.

The FLSA and the Colorado Youth Employment Opportunity Act limit the types and scope of work, including volunteer work, that minors can perform.¹ The greatest restrictions on work times and duties apply to individuals under 16 years old. Driving is prohibited under County policy for anyone under 18.

Minor/youth volunteers must complete the volunteer application and waiver. Minor/youth volunteers do not require background screening.

VI. Scope of Volunteer Involvement

Volunteers may be used in a variety of County programs and activities. Volunteers should not be used to displace any paid employees from their positions. Each department/elected office should prepare a written position/duty description for its volunteer positions, outlining the general responsibilities and expectations. Risk Management shall review position descriptions to assess any hazards associated with the volunteer position prior to recruitment.

Volunteers shall be informed of the responsibility of each position, along with any liability the position entails prior to placement. Volunteers may decline a proposed placement or request a change of placement.

VII. Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

The County uses an online volunteer management system to recruit, select, and track volunteers throughout the organization. Volunteer opportunities are posted on the County's website for individuals and groups to review and apply for if interested.

Interested parties shall complete the application process, which includes a required background screen that aligns with program requirements. The primary purpose of the screening is to identify individuals with prior records that may indicate an increased risk of placing the volunteer with vulnerable populations or in certain positions, such as driving on behalf of the County. Individuals that refuse to undergo a background check will not be considered for volunteer positions.

Returning volunteers shall provide a signed release to complete annual background checks. Those applying for a driving position also have an annual review of their motor vehicle records.

The Volunteer Coordinator will notify applicants and departments/offices upon completion of the background check process and next steps.

Departments are encouraged to talk to the Volunteer Coordinator and Human Resources about background check conditions that would not pose a concern for their specific program.

Group Volunteers

When a nonprofit or corporate organization donates time and services for one-time projects - such as bringing a group to support activities at an event – and depending upon the

¹ State of Colorado: <https://cdle.colorado.gov/youth-law> and U.S. Department of Labor: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/43-child-labor-non-agriculture>.

circumstances of the project, the organization may provide documentation that background checks were completed for all representatives from their group.

VIII. Volunteer Management and Performance

Oversight

The Volunteer Coordinator will transition successful volunteers to the department/elected office point of contact for management based on established position descriptions.

Volunteer oversight and training may operate differently across departments. The County will endeavor to provide current and timely training to volunteers to meet the objectives of their volunteer role. County staff shall provide volunteers with a supervisor/manager who is available for consultation, support, and direction. The County department or office should monitor and evaluate volunteer positions and performance and report to the Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers are encouraged to give and receive constructive feedback on positions to inform ongoing strategy, safety, and program outcomes.

Volunteers may access or view sensitive client/resident data, secure building areas, and other potentially confidential information only with appropriate screenings, trainings, and employee/management supervision while following all applicable state guidelines, regulations, and laws. It is the responsibility of the Department/Office to manage these requirements within their programs.

Time Commitment and Tracking

Most volunteer positions are for a defined time period, and volunteers are asked to honor that time commitment. Volunteers may “resign” for any reason and at any time. Volunteers who fail to satisfactorily perform their position assignment are subject to release from their assignments. Arapahoe County retains the right to terminate a volunteer’s service at any time and for any reason.

It is the responsibility of the volunteer and the County to track participation and volunteer hours to support reporting and communication with County leadership, meet funder requirements, and provide data to support strategic program planning.

Performance Recognition

The County recognizes volunteer service through recognition and rewards, consistent with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Rewards may acknowledge contributions but are not compensation. Examples of permissible rewards may include:

- Nominal fees paid, such as training expenses or admission to an event.
- Branded T-shirt, hat or other promotional item.
- An annual volunteer recognition event.
- A thank you note describing their impact.
- Offering community service hours to fulfill school or club requirements.

Contact the Volunteer Coordinator and Human Resources prior to making any compensation/reward offers or decisions.

IX. Exceptions

Departments and Offices may operate with additional security and screening requirements or role provisions depending on the roles and requirements of their programs. Departments and Offices may have additional policies and procedures to follow in their volunteer programs to ensure appropriate oversight, adherence to laws and regulations, and successful integration of volunteers.

Court-Ordered Volunteers

Courts may order community service as part of sentencing, diversion, or probation. Court-ordered volunteers require supervision and documentation for the courts. This type of volunteer service may require additional oversight and policy considerations. Arapahoe County's Judicial Services team manages Court-Ordered Volunteer requests.

X. Insurance Related to Volunteers

Subject to annual budget considerations, Risk Management will make best efforts to ensure that liability and medical insurance are available on an annual basis for volunteers who perform acts for the County's benefit at the request of and subject to the control of the County. To the extent possible, the policy may provide limited medical, dental, and death/dismemberment coverage for injuries or illnesses resulting from the assigned work performed for the County. The County does not provide workers' compensation to volunteers.

The County and its representatives and volunteers are generally afforded liability protection under the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act. However, negligent acts or omissions outside of the scope of duties and/or willful/wanton behavior by a volunteer may result in the volunteer losing liability protections.

If a volunteer uses their personal vehicle while conducting volunteer County business and is involved in an accident that causes damage to another vehicle or other property, or physical injury to any person, primary coverage will be from the volunteer's personal automobile insurance policy. The volunteer should notify local law enforcement, the volunteer's supervisor, and their vehicle insurer of any accident as soon as possible.

XI. Volunteer Guidelines & Expectations

Alcohol and Drug Use

Arapahoe County strives to provide a safe and healthy environment for workers, volunteers, and citizens free from the effects of alcohol or illegal and non-prescribed drugs. Volunteers should abstain from the use of alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs while volunteering.

Anti-Violence

Arapahoe County strives to maintain an environment free from intimidation, threats, hostile behaviors, and acts of violence. The County strictly prohibits weapons and the use of weapons on County property and in County buildings. Any such behavior should be immediately reported to a supervisor/manager and the Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers should also contact law enforcement directly if they believe there is an imminent threat to their health and safety, the health and safety of others around them, or to life or property.

Compensating Volunteers

Compensating or rewarding a volunteer may inadvertently cause a volunteer to be considered an employee and trigger unintended regulatory requirements. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator prior to making any compensation/reward decisions.

Dress/Appearance

While volunteering on behalf of the County, volunteers should maintain a neat and clean appearance, appropriate for the volunteer position held and nature of the volunteer's work.

Protection for Children and Vulnerable Others

It is the County's important responsibility to protect our young and vulnerable residents and clients. Employees and volunteers should report any potential concerns about the well-being of children or vulnerable residents to their supervisor/manager as soon as possible.

XII. Record Keeping

The County maintains electronic volunteer records for a period of three years from the date the volunteer's duties conclude or the volunteer's services with the County are terminated. Records should be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. These records include name, address, email address, phone, skills, position assignment, dates of service, hours contributed, training received, and recognition. Individual departments or divisions may maintain hard copies of volunteer information, performance accomplishments, etc., if they deem it necessary.

Records for volunteers that applied to work as a volunteer but never actually performed volunteer work should be maintained for six months from the time the application was received.

XIII. Program Management

The County has adopted a distributed management approach for its volunteer program. The County's Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for ensuring volunteer positions are appropriately prepared and volunteers complete application materials and background screens in accordance with County policy. Departments and Elected Offices that utilize volunteers are responsible for volunteer position preparation, oversight, training, and management in accordance with County policy. Refer to the County's Volunteer Management Guide and any department's specific volunteer procedures for additional information.