



Jackson County Volunteer Policy

I. Purpose.

Jackson County recognizes the valuable contribution of volunteers in its provision of programs and services. Volunteers bring specific skill sets, community perspective, and enhance diversity in the workplace. Volunteer opportunities range from one-time assignments to those that are ongoing in nature. The County welcomes and encourages citizen interest in local government, and has provided a policy to standardize procedures and provide guidance to County staff and volunteers.

II. Definitions.

Volunteer: An individual who performs a task or service freely in a County department without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation for service rendered. All volunteers must be approved by the assigned department or agency, and adhere to all provisions set forth in this policy.

Jackson County complies with the regulations set forth in the Fair Labor Standards Act for individuals performing volunteer services.

III. Policy.

The Jackson County Volunteer Policy establishes recruitment and selection procedures, eligibility requirements, and standards of service. In an effort to minimize volunteer risk, this policy outlines the rights and responsibilities of the County and the volunteer. General administration of the volunteer policy is the responsibility of the department for which the volunteer works. Any change or amendment to the volunteer policy is the exclusive right of the Board of Commissioners.

All volunteers will be held to the same behavior standards as County employees. Applicable County and departmental policies will be reviewed with each volunteer during the department's orientation.

Current Jackson County employees who wish to volunteer in another department must obtain approval from his/her supervisor and the Human Resources

Department in order to ensure compliance with applicable wage and hour law. Individuals may not volunteer for assignments in which a paid job classification exists, and Jackson County will not replace current employees with volunteers.

Violations of this policy may be reported to the volunteer's Department Head or to the Human Resources Director for investigation and resolution.

IV. Procedures.

A. Eligibility

Any individual is eligible to volunteer with the County, subject to the following restrictions:

- An individual under the age of eighteen must obtain written, parental or legal guardian consent in order to volunteer.
- A volunteer must have the appropriate training and experience for the tasks he or she is to be performing.
- A volunteer should not displace any employee from his or her position.
- Prior to volunteering, all prospective volunteers must consent to and have a satisfactory background screening.

B. Background Screening Process

Volunteers of Jackson County must consent to and are subject to background screening initially upon appointment and annually thereafter. Background screening may include:

- Driving records check;
- Criminal background check to verify no past history of abuse and/or sexual deviant behavior or other crimes of violence and crimes of embezzlement or fraud;
- Sex Offender Registry check; and
- Employment and/or prior volunteer service reference checks.

Such inquiries and more thorough screenings are allowable for volunteers who:

- Interact with youth, individuals with disabilities, elderly, or patients in any clinical setting;
- Provide service without the direct supervision and/or oversight of a County employee;
- Are approved to operate County owned vehicles or machine equipment; or
- Are involved in cash handling or monetary collection on behalf of the County.

C. Volunteer Assignments

- **On-going:** A department may assign a volunteer to perform services on a regular, recurring basis. An individual performing volunteer services as an on-going assignment is required to complete a Jackson County Volunteer Application.
- **One-time event:** A department may have a need for a volunteer to perform services for a specific event. Examples of one-time events are: manning a booth for a block of time at the Healthy Living Festival, addressing a group as a guest speaker, emergency management duties to include but not limited to Emergency Operations Center work in the event of a local, state or federal declared emergency, etc. One-time event volunteers are not required to submit a Volunteer Application or undergo orientation other than what the department may require for their effective participation at a specific event.

D. Recruitment and Selection

Departments that need to utilize volunteers will recruit and select potential volunteers in a consistent manner by the standardized use of the application form and pre-volunteer screening. Departments can recruit for volunteers independently or request volunteers through the Human Resources Department. The Human Resources Department will maintain a pool of potential volunteers to match with departmental needs.

Potential volunteers must submit the Jackson County Volunteer Application form, provided by Human Resources or the supervising department or agency, consenting to background screening and verification of references. Selection of volunteers is made solely on the basis of merit, satisfactory background and reference checks, and without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, handicap or age.

E. Separation

All volunteers serve at the pleasure of the County. The County may, at any time, terminate the volunteer's relationship with the County. Volunteers not adhering to the rules and procedures outlined in the volunteer policy are subject to dismissal.

F. Maintenance of Records & Volunteer Hours

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer within each County department, including copy of application, position(s) held, and volunteer services performed. Volunteer records will be kept for a minimum of three

(3) years in accordance with retention and disposition schedules set forth by the Department of Cultural Resources (reference G.S. §121-5 (c) and G.S. §132-8). Volunteer personnel records shall be afforded the same confidentiality as Jackson County employment records.

Verification of volunteer hours is to be completed by the supervising employee.

V. Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

- **Position Descriptions:** All volunteers will be provided with a description of their duties and responsibilities for his or her volunteer assignment. Position descriptions shall also include a supervisor designation and a timeline for the length of service. Position descriptions are the responsibility of the supervising staff member.
- **Periodic Evaluation:** Performance standards will be determined by the supervising employee, and volunteer performance may be evaluated by the supervising staff member.
- **Training and Orientation:** Volunteers shall be provided adequate training and orientation to their positions. Volunteers will receive appropriate placement based on their skills and abilities.
- **Confidentiality:** Volunteers are expected to maintain the confidentiality of privileged information, with regard to individual staff members, clients, and general business of the County. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in a termination of the volunteer's relationship with the County.
- **Reporting Criminal Convictions:** Volunteers are required to inform the county within five (5) days after he or she is convicted for violation of any federal or state law. Such convictions are to be reported to his/her supervising staff member.

A. Prohibited Activities

All volunteers will be held to the same standards of behavior as County employees. Volunteers are prohibited from the following activities:

- The act of entering into any contract on behalf of the County;
- Engagement in any activity considered inappropriate for County employees; and
- The handling of money without direct supervision of a County employee.

B. Volunteer Liability

Workers' Compensation

Jackson County volunteers are covered by the County's workers' compensation coverage. Injuries or illnesses that arise out of or occur during

the performance of a volunteer's services for the County must be reported immediately to the volunteer's supervisor; the volunteer's supervisor must report the incident to the Human Resources Department. If the incident is deemed compensable, workers' compensation benefits may include payment of medical expenses, and reimbursement for travel to and from medical facilities.

Liability Insurance

Jackson County volunteers are covered by the County for liability claims. In the event private or other property is damaged by an individual serving in an authorized volunteer position, the County will initiate the claims reporting process through its Risk Management Property and Liability Policy as appropriate.

ADOPTED the 4 day of November, 2013.



Patsy C. Parris
Clerk to Board



W. J. Debnam, Chairman
Jackson County Board of Commissioners

