

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

VOLUNTEER SERVICES PLAN

Texas Department of Criminal Justice

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FOREWORD

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) encourages volunteers and volunteer organizations to provide services and activities for offenders incarcerated, those transitioning between confinement and society, and those on supervision, to reduce incidence of recidivism. TDCJ policy, Administrative Directive (AD)-07.35, "Administration of Volunteer Services" directs the Agency to develop a Volunteer Services Plan which establishes uniform rules and regulations to guide staff in both the conditions and procedures relating to volunteers in the TDCJ.

The TDCJ is fully committed to abide by and enforce the provisions outlined herein, and all volunteers and employees are expected to comply with its requirements.


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5/7/10
Date

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Volunteer Services Plan

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ or agency) Volunteer Services Plan is to establish consistent, standard operating procedures throughout all divisions of the TDCJ for the administration, coordination, and reporting of volunteer services. This plan shall be an overall policy guide for each division of the agency in implementing and operating their individual volunteer services programs.

II. DEFINITIONS

Approved Volunteer - A person who has been approved through an application process, completed volunteer training and orientation, and participates in a program/service or participates in volunteer activities on a regular basis.

Certified Volunteer Chaplain's Assistant (CVCA) - An approved Chaplaincy program volunteer that has received additional security and Chaplaincy policy training. The CVCA assists the chaplain on the unit in accordance with the TDCJ/Rehabilitation Programs Division (RPD) Chaplaincy Manual. (Refer to Chaplaincy Department Manual, policy 14.05)

Community Partner Program Volunteer - An individual employed by any Community Outreach Program, state, federal or law enforcement agency, and is being compensated to perform an official duty.

Contraband – Any item not permitted in the secured perimeter of a unit or in some cases, at any TDCJ facility. Also, any item brought into, or taken out of a facility, or in the possession of an offender, visitor or employee as defined in the Texas Penal Code, Section 38.11, or is prohibited by the rules and regulations of the TDCJ.

Correspondence – Communication by letter or memo.

Data - A representation of facts, concepts, or instructions in a formalized manner suitable for communication, interpretation, or processing by human or automatic means.

Employee Volunteer - An individual who has been approved and completed training as a volunteer but is also employed by the TDCJ and donates time and services outside of his/her normal job function(s) and required working hours. Employee volunteers shall not serve on the facility to which they are currently assigned, unless approved by the facility administrator; they may not serve as mentors; and may not correspond with offenders. The facility administrator shall have final approval of an employee's volunteer assignment on the facility they wish to volunteer.

Enemy – One who is identified as a member of an opposing gang; has been antagonistic or has had conflict with another in the past.

Ex-offender - An individual convicted of any crime (excluding traffic violations) and has discharged their sentence (i.e., no longer incarcerated; has completed parole, community supervision, or mandatory supervision and all requirements under the law). (Also see definition for Releasee).

Fiscal Year – Agency reporting period that begins September 1st and ends August 31st of the following year.

Mentor - an approved volunteer, who meets agency-approved mentor criteria, is recommended by the TDCJ program staff, and has completed on-line mentor training or training provided by authorized personnel. Approved employee volunteers may not serve as mentors. (Refer to AD-07.38 Mentor Guidelines).

Mentoring - A one-to-one (same gender) relationship that focuses on the rehabilitative needs of the mentored offender. The mentor fosters care and support, encourages personal development, and assists with re-entry into the community upon release. Programs using husband and wife teams may be allowed to mentor individual offenders.

Offender - An individual in the custody of or under the supervision of a city, county, judicial district (probation), state or federal agency. These individuals include but are not limited to patients, parolees, individuals under mandatory supervision, and those incarcerated.

Partner's Program Volunteer - An offender who has been released for a period of six months and has one year of sobriety (six months of which may be acquired during their incarceration). Partner Program participants shall be accompanied by an approved volunteer and may visit the unit(s) more than one time. (Refer to AD- 07.36 Partner's Program).

Releasee - An individual convicted and sentenced for any crime (excluding traffic violations), and is currently on community supervision, deferred adjudication, parole, or mandatory supervision. (See also definition for Ex-offender.)

Special Volunteer - Any individual or group who provides a service or participates in volunteer activities no more than four times or has not established a pattern of regular, scheduled participation. After the fourth visit as a special volunteer, the individual will be required to become an approved volunteer for future visits. The exception is those individuals that participate in special events such as crusades on an annual basis, but no more than four times in a calendar year. Special volunteers do not complete a Volunteer Application and are not typically subject to a criminal history check unless deemed necessary. Ex-offenders and releasees are eligible to participate as a special volunteer 12 months after their release from incarceration and with a clear criminal history.

Student Intern Volunteer - A student who is enrolled in a university or community college; desires to volunteer for limited periods of time; and is taking course work which requires “internship” experience for course credit, pre-professional training, or work experience.

Volunteer Coordination Committee (VCC) – A committee of representatives designated by the TDCJ divisions and departments that use volunteers. The VCC serves as the reporting entity for and provides oversight of volunteer activities for the agency.

Unit Chaplain - An employee on the facility that is responsible for all religious programming as well as coordination of volunteer(s) and volunteer activities associated with religious programming.

Unit Volunteer Coordinator (UVC) - An employee on the facility that has been designated by the unit volunteer authority to coordinate volunteer(s) and volunteer activities not associated with religious programming.

Unit Volunteer Authority (UVA) – An assistant warden (or major on smaller units that do not have an assistant warden’s position) or administrator of the parole office that is responsible for oversight of volunteer(s) and volunteer activities.

Victim - An individual or family member directly or indirectly affected by the unlawful behavior of an offender.

Volunteer Review Committee (VRC) – A committee that includes the chairman of the Volunteer Coordination Committee, the director of the Correctional Institutions Division or Parole Division, and a designee of the appropriate volunteer program. The VRC reviews placement denials of volunteers; volunteer suggestion forms and other matters regarding volunteers that require dispute resolution. A designee may be substituted for any of the members, as needed.

Volunteer Services – A department within the RPD that serves as the coordinator of the agency's volunteer program. The director of volunteer services typically serves as the RPD division director's designee chairperson for the Volunteer Coordination Committee (VCC).

VS00 - The official TDCJ mainframe volunteer database (Volunteer Tracking System) from which authorized users' access a volunteer's status, unit restrictions, history of visits, history of policy violations, and all other related volunteer information. (Refer to the VS00 User Guide for instructions).

III. OVERSIGHT OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES

VCC

The VCC includes representatives from the TDCJ departments/divisions that use volunteers. The manager of support services, or designee, of the RPD serves as chairman of the VCC. Functions of the committee include, but are not limited to:

1. Establishing agency-wide philosophy, goals, and objectives regarding volunteer use consistent with the mission of the TDCJ.
2. Enhancing and coordinating volunteer activities.
3. Evaluating performance objectives.
4. Reporting the results of volunteer activities annually to the Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ), the TDCJ managers, legislators and the public.
5. Developing agency-wide volunteer policies and procedures and reviewing, as necessary.
6. Analyzing critical issues and providing guidance to departments/divisions.
7. Reviewing volunteer programs, as reported by their department/division, and identifying new or continuing areas in which volunteers are needed and may serve.
8. Soliciting input from other staff members, volunteers, victims, and offenders regarding volunteer issues, as necessary.

Volunteer Services Plan

The Volunteer Services Plan, along with applicable policies and procedures, shall be the guide for developing, implementing, and managing volunteer services/programs within the agency. The plan consists of designated categories of volunteers; screening and approval procedures; orientation/training; code of conduct; procedures for managing policy violations; recognition of volunteers; record-keeping; confidentiality rules and laws; monitoring and other similar categories. Each division shall be responsible for compliance with the agency-wide plan and any procedures specific to their division. All departments/divisions shall strive to treat volunteers in a uniform, consistent manner from location to location and ensure volunteers comply with agency policy.

IV. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- A. Individuals who want to participate in the TDCJ volunteer program shall submit a completed and signed original TDCJ Volunteer Application (Appendix A) and attend an approved volunteer training/orientation session. The volunteer application is also available on the TDCJ website.
- B. Volunteers shall submit proof of qualifications such as licenses, certificates, or other similar items for services that require special training and certification. Proof of the qualification(s) shall be kept in the volunteer's file.
- C. The agency may decline the services of an individual for any reason other than race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disabilities, genetic information or age [18 years or over (Partner Program volunteers must be 21 years old)].
- D. Processing Volunteer Applications
 - 1. Volunteer applications will be date-stamped upon receipt. The number of applications received for each month will be documented on the Monthly Volunteer Application Summary form (see Appendix B).
 - 2. Volunteer applications must be filled out completely. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant.

Upon receipt of the completed application, designated volunteer staff shall conduct a criminal background check on each applicant through the Texas Crime Information Center (TCIC) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). Fingerprint cards may be required when deemed necessary. Additional criminal background checks will be conducted on an as-needed basis.

3. Possession of a criminal record or specific offenses on record does not exclude a volunteer applicant. However, the criminal record may be used to determine placement or denial of the applicant. Current background references and/or additional criminal history information may be requested and checked. A personal interview may also be conducted at the discretion of the appropriate division director or designee.

4. Ex-offender and Releasee Volunteer Applicants

- a) Ex-offenders may serve as a volunteer provided they have a clear criminal background for the previous 18 months and have demonstrated successful reentry into the community since discharging their sentence.
- b) Releasees may serve as a volunteer provided they have a clear criminal background check for the previous 18 months; a satisfactory report from their supervising officer while on parole, mandatory supervision, or community supervision; and the supervising officer concurs with the releasee's participation in the volunteer program. A letter from the supervising officer concurring with the releasee's participation in the TDCJ Volunteer Program shall be requested. The supervising officer shall be notified if the releasee has been approved/disapproved as a TDCJ volunteer. The supervising officer shall report all violations of supervision to the director of volunteer services. Violations committed while on supervision may result in removal from the volunteer program.
- c) The application of any ex-offender or releasee convicted of a sex offense, as defined by Administrative Directive 04.09 "Sex Offender Identification Criteria and Methods of Recording Information", shall be reviewed by the manager of the Sex Offender Rehabilitation Program (SORP), or designee. The manager of the SORP, or designee, will provide their recommendation for approval or disapproval as a participant in the volunteer program to include a justification before final approval is granted.

5. Security Threat Group (STG)/Gang Affiliation

- a) All ex-offenders and releasee applicants shall be screened for gang affiliation through the TDCJ Security Threat Group Management Office (STGMO) and the Texas Anti-Gang Information Tracking (TAGIT) System.
- b) Applicants who are confirmed gang members, but have completed the Gang Renunciation and Disassociation (GRAD) process, will not be excluded from the TDCJ volunteer program unless there is evidence that placement of the individual would affect the safety and security of the facility, employees, volunteers and offenders.
- c) Any individuals who are confirmed as a member of a STG while incarcerated, and who did not complete the GRAD process, shall be approved by the VRC.

6. Employee and Ex-employee Applicants

- a) Applicants who are currently or previously employed by the TDCJ will undergo an employment check through the TDCJ Human Resources Division for disciplinary history and rehire eligibility. The applicant's disciplinary history will be considered when approving the volunteer applicant. Applicants who are not eligible for rehire will not be approved as a volunteer unless the appropriate divisional authority agrees.
- b) Employees will not be eligible to serve on a facility where they are currently assigned unless the facility administrator approves the employee volunteer's assignment.

7. Volunteer Programs and Program Areas

Volunteer applicants will select the program area in which they desire to serve. Program areas include: Chaplaincy; Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP); SORP; Parole Division; Victim Services; Windham School District (WSD); as a Student Intern and/or at a Transitional Treatment Center (TTC)/Halfway House. The applicant may select more than one program area. All programs are subject to review and approval, to include proposed curriculum (i.e., books, study guides, videos, etc.), prior to implementation. New programs shall be submitted for approval on a program proposal form to the RPD

for review and approval. The program proposal form is available on the TDCJ website under Volunteer Services. The unit volunteer authority is responsible for ensuring that programs and related material have been approved, and materials are maintained, as appropriate. Should the proposed program/curriculum convey a message that is contrary to the mission of the agency (i.e., safety, security, and rehabilitation), the program and the volunteer will not be approved.

8. Additional Processing Requirements for Each Program Area

a) Chaplaincy Program Volunteers

Applicants with a criminal history that select Chaplaincy as their area of interest will be required to:

- i. provide a letter of support from their pastor or other ecclesiastical authority; and
- ii. answer additional questions regarding their criminal history, incarceration and contact with those currently incarcerated (see example form at Appendix C).

If the applicant is an ex-offender, a letter of support from a chaplain or warden that is familiar with the ex-offender applicant is also encouraged.

b) Substance Abuse Program Volunteers

Applicants with a criminal history that select the Substance Abuse Program as their area of interest will be required to answer additional questions regarding their criminal history, incarceration, and contact with those currently incarcerated (Appendix C).

c) SORP Volunteers

Applicants that select the SORP will be reviewed by the SORP manager for approval. Applicants with a criminal history will be required to answer additional questions regarding their criminal history, incarceration and contact with those currently incarcerated (Appendix C).

d) Parole Division Volunteers

Applicants that select the Parole Division as their area of interest will be processed according to the standard procedures only.

e) Victim Services Volunteers

Applicants that select Victim Services as their area of interest will be required to provide a professional and personal letter of support.

f) WSD Volunteers

Applicants that select the WSD as their area of interest will be processed according to the standard procedures only.

10. Applicants with a clear criminal history report will be sent a letter (Appendix D) within 15 working days of receipt of the application to attend volunteer training. Applicants with a criminal history will be processed as requested information/support documentation described under Section IV.8 is received. For those applications, the in-house processing time should take no more than 20 days and a letter to attend volunteer training will be sent to the applicant.

NOTE: All support documentation requested of the volunteer (i.e., letter from pastor, letter from supervising officer, etc.) shall be a signed original, dated, and on official letterhead.

V. **VOLUNTEER TRAINING/ORIENTATION**

- A. Applicants are not considered approved until they attend a volunteer training/orientation session. Training topics shall include, but are not limited to, safety and security, rules of conduct, definition and examples of contraband, emergency situations, confidentiality, lines of communication, liability, and other pertinent information. Additional training similar to on-the-job training may be required by specific program areas (i.e., Parole, WSD) before the volunteer is allowed to begin their volunteer service.

- B. Volunteers shall attend an approved volunteer training session within six months from the date of the letter notifying them to attend training. A list of the training locations available state-wide, and their dates and times for each training session, will be included. Should circumstances prevent the applicant from attending the training session within the six month timeframe, a one-time extension may be granted to the applicant. In this event, a second criminal background investigation will be conducted to confirm the applicant's criminal history status has not changed.
- C. New volunteers must present their training letter to the trainer(s) in order to attend the training session.
- D. Volunteer training is conducted by designated security supervisory staff using the TDCJ Volunteer Training Facilitation Guide. The Guide will be developed in coordination with the VCC and the RPD Staff Development group. The Guide shall reflect the guidelines established within the Plan and will be reviewed by the VCC on an annual basis. Volunteer trainers must be positive representatives for the Agency. Volunteer trainers must be trained to conduct volunteer training. Correctional Institutions Division regional staff will be responsible for training the volunteer trainers. A unit chaplain will typically assist as a co-trainer and will also receive training as a trainer. The RPD staff will provide training to regional staff to train volunteer trainers.
- E. Volunteers shall sign a TDCJ Volunteer Sign-In form (Appendix E) and a TDCJ Acknowledgment of Training/Orientation form (Appendix F) at the conclusion of the training session. These forms provide a written record of the volunteer's training and their written acknowledgment of agency rules and risks. The volunteer trainers shall also sign the training form at the conclusion of the training session.
- F. The volunteer trainers shall collect all signed Acknowledgement of Training/Orientation forms and the Volunteer Training Sign-In Roster and forward to Volunteer Services. Volunteer Services will maintain the rosters for one calendar year and the acknowledgement of training/orientation form will become a part of the volunteer's permanent file.
- G. The Acknowledgment of Training/Orientation form serves as the needed documentation confirming that the volunteer has completed the process to become an approved TDCJ volunteer.

- H. Volunteers are responsible for confirming their approval status prior to scheduling their volunteer visit(s). The volunteer shall contact the appropriate volunteer authority who shall review the volunteer's status on the VS00.

- I. Volunteers shall be required to attend volunteer training every two years. The volunteer may attend refresher training at an on-site location or participate in refresher training online (if available). The online training is available to the volunteer in alternating two year increments, beginning with the first refresher training session. The volunteer shall strive to attend a refresher training session within six months of the two year anniversary date. If the volunteer will be attending an on-site training session, they shall contact the unit volunteer authority at the facility they wish to attend the training session at least five days prior to the session in order to be approved to enter the facility. Volunteer Services will generate an annual report to monitor/identify those individuals that have not participated in a refresher training session within the required timeframe. Volunteers who fail to attend a refresher training session within the stated timeframe will be placed in pending status until refresher training has been completed.

VI. ENTRY PROCEDURES

- A. All volunteers shall be required to present a valid picture identification card (e.g. driver's license or similar photo identification) and have received proper clearance in order to enter or exit the facility (refer to Post Order-07.047). Volunteers are required to complete the volunteer sign-in log (Appendices J-1 through J-3) for the program area in which they are participating and will wear a volunteer badge. Volunteers will be searched for contraband prior to entering the facility.

- B. Volunteers will be required to seek prior approval from the unit volunteer authority to bring items such as supplies, equipment, study material, food items, etc. into the facility for their volunteer program/visit.

- C. Coordination and direct oversight of volunteer activities is provided by facility staff. However, direct oversight does not necessarily imply that the volunteer's assigned staff member shall be physically present while the volunteer activity is being performed (i.e., tutoring, teaching, leading support groups, mentoring, training, and performing other similar activities).

- D. A Volunteer Program Assessment/Suggestion Form (Appendix G) will be available to volunteers in order that they may have input into the TDCJ Volunteer Services' goals and objectives. These forms will be forwarded to each department/division administrative staff. The VRC will convene to review suggestions and determine feasibility for implementation. Suggestion forms will be maintained as administratively valuable.

VII. VOLUNTEER CATEGORIES

A. Approved Volunteers

Individuals that have met the requirements stated in Section IV are approved volunteers. Approved volunteers will make arrangements with the unit volunteer authority to schedule visits and activities.

B. Special Volunteers

Individuals who want to participate in volunteer activities, but are not approved volunteers, will be considered special volunteers with the following requirements.

1. Ex-offenders and releasees who desire to participate in a volunteer activity as a special volunteer must have been released from incarceration at least 12 months at the time of the activity/program and must have the prior approval of the unit volunteer authority. An exemption from this 12 month timeframe requirement may be granted by the executive administration on a case-by-case basis and the exemption shall be documented on the Special Volunteer Approval Form (Appendix H).
2. The Special Volunteer Approval Form (Appendix H) will be completed by the unit chaplain, unit volunteer coordinator or the volunteer/volunteer group and submitted to the unit volunteer authority for approval. The unit volunteer authority has final approval whether or not the individuals listed on the form will be granted access into the facility. Adequate time shall be allowed for obtaining approval for large volunteer activities/programs that will use a large number of special volunteers. The form shall be used for entrance and exit from the facility.
3. The forms will be submitted to Volunteer Services for record-keeping and tracking purposes. A copy of the form shall be maintained on the facility. The Special Volunteer Approval Form shall be maintained for two years.

4. Special volunteers (individuals/groups) approved for visits will receive training/orientation through the Letter of Orientation for Special Volunteers (Appendix I) prior to entering the facility.
5. Once the special volunteer enters the facility for the event, they will initial the Special Volunteer Approval Form in the space provided indicating they agree to abide by the rules and regulations presented in the orientation letter.
6. Special volunteers are subject to sanctions for rule violation(s) (see Section X).
7. Direct oversight is required for special volunteers unless otherwise approved by the facility administrator. Special volunteer groups will stay together unless otherwise approved by the facility administrator.
8. Special volunteers may visit (statewide) no more than four times before they become an approved volunteer. If the individual establishes a pattern of regular, scheduled participation they will be required to become an approved volunteer for future visits. The exception is those individuals that participate in special events such as crusades on an annual basis, but no more than four times in a calendar year.
9. Use of special volunteers is beneficial in recruiting approved volunteers.

B. Student Intern Volunteers

1. Placement of student intern volunteers shall be approved by the appropriate TDCJ department/division supervisor.
2. The student intern shall be jointly managed by designated TDCJ program staff and the student's professor.
3. Student intern volunteers shall be approved volunteers, to include participation in formal training and compliance with all departmental procedures and record-keeping requirements.

4. Major course studies for which volunteer interns may be placed are criminal justice, political science, sociology, psychology, social work, health professions, education, teaching, agriculture and industry-related fields, seminary and ministerial training, or other fields as appropriate to each division.
5. A Memorandum of Agreement (Appendix K) between the department/division with which the student intern will be serving their internship, the student intern, and the participating university will be completed. A copy of the completed form will be maintained in the intern's permanent volunteer file.
6. Student intern volunteer visits will be recorded on the TDCJ mainframe database, VS00.

D. Partners Program Volunteers

1. The Partners Program is a Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facility (SAFPF) / In-Prison Therapeutic Treatment Facility (IPTC) substance abuse program.
2. A releasee who wishes to participate in the Partners Program must be referred by an approved volunteer.
3. A Partners Program application (Appendix L) must be completed and submitted to Volunteer Services.
4. The Partners Program application shall be signed by an approved volunteer who is willing to sponsor the partner. By signing the application, the approved volunteer attests to the positive characteristics they have seen displayed by the applicant.
5. The applicant must have been released from incarceration at least six months at the time of application or unless otherwise approved by the unit volunteer authority.
6. The applicant shall have one year or more of continuous sobriety, six months of which may be acquired during their incarceration.

7. The applicant must have a letter from their supervising parole/community supervision officer stating that they have satisfactorily completed at least six months of supervision and have their approval to participate in the Partners Program. If the sentence was discharged, a copy of the discharge papers showing completion of sentence must be submitted.
8. Approved Partners must be accompanied by the sponsor volunteer during the unit visit. Unit administration shall be notified of the partner visit at least five calendar days prior to the visit. The warden, or designee, shall have final approval of the visit.
9. Partners Program volunteers may not visit at units where they have a known enemy, relative, friend, or significant other. Volunteer Services shall be notified of potential or known enemies, relatives, friends or significant others that were not reported on the application but recognized by the partner after arrival at a unit.
10. Partners Program volunteer visits will be recorded on the TDCJ mainframe database, VS00.

C. Community Partner Program Volunteers

1. Community Partner Program volunteers shall complete a volunteer application and participate in volunteer training to become an approved volunteer.
2. Community Partner Program volunteer visits will be recorded on the TDCJ mainframe database, VS00.

VIII. GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

The following guidelines are provided for management of volunteers and volunteer activities. All volunteers and facility staff shall adhere to these guidelines. Volunteers are subject to sanctions for failure to abide by the guidelines.

- A. Volunteers shall be respectful of the needs and requirements of each department/division. Volunteer activities shall be consistent with sound correctional practices for security and orderly operations.

- B. Volunteers shall not form a non-professional, personal or emotional relationship with an offender(s).
- C. Volunteers (excluding employee and Victim Services volunteers) may correspond with an offender(s). Correspondence shall not include any references that are sexual in nature; refer to criminal behavior or gang-related information; refer to or include contraband; refer to actions that are inappropriate such as soliciting money, or contain records or documents held by the TDCJ (those not listed in the TDCJ Public Information Act Manual). Volunteers shall not reference or include personal information when corresponding with offenders (e.g., personal photographs, personal relationships, personal finances, etc.) or provide legal and/or financial advice.
- D. Such exchange shall terminate the volunteer approved status. The volunteer shall include the word "Volunteer" as part of the return address. Volunteers shall use a postal box address or the address of the organization, program, or church they represent as the return address.
- E. Volunteers shall not mail any items of correspondence for offenders. This includes, but is not limited to, correspondence between offenders, family members, victims, friends, or enemies.
- F. Volunteers shall not carry/pass messages from offender to offender; the offender's family; their victims or their victim's family in written or verbal form. This includes making or accepting personal calls for or from an offender's family member(s).
- G. Volunteers may be spiritual advisors to offenders, visiting an offender on a one-on-one basis. However, the visit must be arranged and approved in coordination with the facility chaplain and facility administrator.
- H. No volunteer shall contact the victim of an offender, including a family member who may be the victim. The offender may state that he wants to reconcile with or make it up to the victim. It is the responsibility of the TDCJ volunteer to notify volunteer staff if the offender has made such a request, but the volunteer is not to act upon the offender's request. While it is understood that restoration, forgiveness, and reconciliation are important aspects of rehabilitation, the right of the victim will always take precedence over the desire of the offender. The victim, if and when he or she chooses to come face

to face with his or her offender, can contact the Victim Services Division to arrange mediation.

- I. Volunteers are required to acknowledge on their application if a family member, friend, victim, or enemy is assigned to a TDCJ facility. Volunteers are responsible for reporting immediately to the unit volunteer authority when a family member, friend, victim or enemy becomes incarcerated after the volunteer begins their volunteer service.
- J. Volunteers shall not be placed at a location where a relative, friend, victim, or enemy resides or is supervised. Volunteers are responsible for reporting immediately to the appropriate authority when a relative, friend, victim or enemy is moved to the facility on which the volunteer serves. The volunteer may be reassigned to another facility. The unit volunteer authority may permit exceptions to this practice, but the exception shall be documented on the VS00.
- K. Volunteers shall not enter a facility with any item considered to be contraband. All items or materials the volunteer will be using during their program/service must be approved before entry into the facility.
- L. Volunteers shall not remove any item from the facility without prior approval.
- M. Access to telephone service on a facility will be limited to emergency use only, with the exception of CVCA making telephone calls to a family member of an offender when authorized. Any such calls pertaining to an offender's family shall be made from within the facility. Volunteers shall be advised that calls made from the unit may be monitored by agency personnel.
- N. Volunteers shall dress in a conservative and responsible manner that is appropriate for the volunteer assignment being performed and adhere to the grooming standards established herein. Regardless of the volunteer assignment, any attire which is of extreme design, revealing in nature and conveys messages of a derogatory or offensive nature through language, logos, or symbols is prohibited. This includes signs or symbols of apparent membership in a STG/gang as evidenced by tattoos or other signs or symbols of membership. Any extreme haircuts, styles or colors are also prohibited. Items that will not be allowed are: jewelry items worn on the facial areas (e.g., earrings/studs in nose, tongue, lips, or eyebrow); any attire (to include slits in skirts) shorter than three inches above the middle of the knee while standing; sweat suits and wind suits unless

they are appropriate for the activity being conducted; any attire that exposes midriff or shoulders; halter tops or tank tops; slacks and pants worn below the waist; any attire that is considered to be see-through, low-cut (in front or back) or tight-fitting; white shirt and white pants/skirts worn together ; and open-toed shoes worn without socks or hose. The agency may take into consideration the type of activity being offered by the volunteers before ruling on whether or not grooming standards or attire is appropriate.

- O. In accordance with the TDCJ Risk Management policy (RM-25), volunteers will abide by agency safety guidelines and immediately report an injury to the assigned staff member.
- P. Volunteers shall not be permitted to perform any activity involving the actual receipt or handling of money (either cash or readily negotiable documents such as checks, money orders, state warrants, etc.) while performing volunteer/intern services for the TDCJ.
- Q. Volunteers shall not accept any personal gifts from offenders or give personal gifts to offenders. [Exception: See Mentoring Plan]
- R. Volunteers, or their family members, shall not place money in an offender's Trust Fund Account. [Exception: Family member or individual with whom a relationship was established prior to incarceration and declared to the unit volunteer authority or Volunteer Services.]
- S. Volunteers may not visit an offender in regular unit visitation. [Exception: Family member or individual with whom a relationship was established prior to incarceration and declared to the unit volunteer authority or Volunteer Services.]
- T. Volunteers shall not allow a releasee to reside at their personal place of residence. [Exception: Family member or individual with whom a relationship was established prior to incarceration and declared to the unit volunteer authority or Volunteer Services.]
- U. Volunteers shall not have releasees visit in their home [Exception: Group meetings or events (i.e., Alcoholics Anonymous group meetings, religious study groups, religious fellowships, etc.)]

- V. Volunteers may transport releasees.

- W. Volunteers shall not, under any circumstances, supervise or manage offenders or other volunteers. Supervision of offenders and volunteers is a staff function. However, CVCAs may coordinate and facilitate religious/substance abuse programming.

- X. Volunteers may use the TDCJ office space, supplies, and equipment. Administrators shall maintain control over such usage.

- Y. Volunteers will report complaints or concerns directly to the unit volunteer authority. If the issue cannot be resolved at the facility, Volunteer Services must be contacted for coordination with the appropriate divisional authority. Volunteers shall use the Volunteer Suggestion Form to provide information/make suggestions regarding the volunteer program.

- Z. Volunteers shall report immediately to the appropriate authority any information revealed by an offender to a volunteer that is criminal in nature or could impact public/facility safety.

- AA. The TDCJ has zero tolerance for sexual misconduct, as defined in PD-29 "Sexual Misconduct with Offenders". Volunteers are prohibited from establishing or continuing in personal relationships with offenders, including engaging in, or attempting to engage in, any form of consensual sexual misconduct with offenders or forcing or attempting to force offenders to participate in non-consensual sexual misconduct. Volunteers who violate the policy shall not be allowed to continue to perform services for the agency.

Acts of sexual misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- i. having sexual contact or sexual intercourse with an offender;
- ii. requiring or intentionally allowing an offender to engage in sexual contact, sexual intercourse or other sexual conduct for any reason (e.g., the sexual gratification of another employee or other individual);
- iii. masturbating in front of an offender;
- iv. making obscene or sexual advances, gestures or comments toward an offender or being receptive to any such advances, gestures or comments made by an offender toward another employee or other individual;

- v. touching of self in a sexually provocative way to solicit a response from an offender or while located in any area where offenders might be located (e.g., unit, an office when an offender cleaning crew is present);
- vi. conducting any verbal communication of a sexual nature with or within potential hearing range of an offender;
- vii. providing written communication or photographic items of a sexual nature to an offender; or
- viii. influencing or making promises in exchange for sexual favors or because an offender refused to submit to a sexual advance. This includes putting money into or promising to put money into an offender's trust fund or bringing in or promising to bring in contraband for an offender in exchange for sexual favors.

It is a felony offense if anyone, including a volunteer, at a TDCJ facility violates the rights of a person in custody or engages in sexual contact or sexual intercourse with a person in custody.

Any volunteer who witnesses any such misconduct shall be required to report the misconduct immediately to one or more of the following: facility administrator/warden; Records Management Office, Office of Inspector General – Investigations Division in Huntsville, TX; or the PREA Ombudsman Office in Huntsville, TX.

A volunteer shall not be subject to harassment, retaliation, intimidation or coercion for reporting a personal employee-offender relationship or any incident of sexual misconduct.

- BB. Communication with the media by volunteers regarding any TDCJ business shall be approved by the TDCJ Public Information Office and coordinated with the unit volunteer authority prior to contact and dissemination of any information.
- CC. The TDCJ maintains a drug free workplace. If a volunteer is required to take a prescription/non-prescription medication while on the facility, it must be taken into the facility in the original container. If the medication causes side effects that may affect the volunteer's service, a written statement that includes the name of the prescribed drug, the name of the prescribing physician and possible side effects must be submitted to the appropriate authority.

- DD. Volunteers must notify Volunteer Services when there is a change in the volunteer's name and/or contact information (i.e., address, phone number(s), etc.)
- EE. Volunteers must notify the unit volunteer authority or Volunteer Services within 48 hours if they have been arrested. The volunteer will be placed on pending status in the VS00.
- FF. Volunteers shall not proselytize or induce someone to convert to one's faith or recruit someone to join one's party, institution, or cause while serving as a volunteer. Volunteers shall not disparage the faith of any offender, nor deliberately seek to influence a change in any offender's denomination.
- GG. Volunteers are allowed to bring in electronic musical devices to include PA systems and components, such as microphones and speakers, and portable music players needed for background music, laptop computers without broadband capability. Other electronic devices allowed include amplifiers and instruments used with amplifiers. Before laptop computers are allowed on the unit the volunteer will sign an affidavit (see Appendix M) stating that the laptop computer does not have broadband capabilities. No PDA, Blackberry, cell phone devices or any variations of these types of units are allowed on the facility at any time.

IX. PLACEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

- A. While preferences of the volunteers shall be considered, placement of volunteers will be based on the needs of the facility, needs of the offender population, space availability, existing program schedules, and the proposed volunteer activity.
- B. Approved volunteers shall sign the Volunteer Assignment Description Form (see Appendix N), which will become a part of the facility volunteer file, and will be updated as necessary. This form shall be kept on the unit as deemed administratively valuable.

X. CONFIDENTIALITY

All approved volunteers shall agree in writing by signing the Volunteer Training/Orientation form to abide by agency policies relating to security and confidentiality of all records and information, both written and verbal, which pertains to employees, offenders, and releasees. A volunteer may have access to confidential information on an as needed basis and as approved by the appropriate department and applicable facility administrator or their designee. Approved

volunteers that are granted access to the TDCJ mainframe system will be required to be fingerprinted via the TDCJ Livescan system. Facility staff shall contact Volunteer Services to make arrangements for the designated volunteer to be fingerprinted. Failure of the volunteer to maintain confidentiality as stated may incur a penalty for disclosure of such information, i.e., criminal prosecution or civil suit.

XI. VOLUNTEER RESIGNATION AND INACTIVITY

A volunteer may be deleted from the program by resigning or for inactivity.

- A. A volunteer that wishes to discontinue their participation in the volunteer program shall notify the appropriate authority and submit a letter of resignation. The volunteer's status will be changed to "delete" on the TDCJ mainframe volunteer database, VS00. Should the individual desire to renew their service, they must repeat the approval process (application and training).
- B. A volunteer who has been inactive for two years will be deleted from the program. Departments/divisions shall screen volunteer records once per year identifying those volunteers who have not provided services during the past two years. The volunteer's status will be changed to "delete" on the TDCJ mainframe volunteer database, VS00. Should the individual want to renew their service, they must repeat the approval process (application and training).

XII. VIOLATION OF POLICY

- A. Volunteers are subject to sanctions for failure to abide by the TDCJ rules and regulations or failure to perform responsibilities in accordance with the assignment description or expectations. Serious or unusual incidents involving volunteers will be reported in accordance with AD-02.15 (Operations of the Emergency Action Center and Reporting Procedures for Serious or Unusual Incidents). The unit volunteer authority shall be notified in any such event so that appropriate action may be taken.
- B. The unit volunteer authority shall contact Volunteer Services within ten days of the date of the charge/incident to change the approval status of the volunteer to "pending" on the TDCJ mainframe volunteer database, VS00. The volunteer will not be allowed to continue their service until an investigation has been completed and a decision is made regarding action to be taken, if any. Violations that typically result in a letter of

instruction do not require placing the volunteer on pending status.

- C. The unit volunteer authority shall initiate an investigation into the allegations of improper behavior to include securing witness statements and a statement from the volunteer, if required.
- D. Sanctions will be progressive in nature but determined by the seriousness of the violation; results of the investigation; previous violations; and service history of the volunteer. As warranted, sanctions include, but are not limited to: a letter of instruction; verbal reprimand; suspension; restriction(s); reassignment; retraining; removal from the program (denied) or a combination thereof.
- E. The unit volunteer authority shall consult with the director of volunteer services prior to final disposition of sanctions.
- F. The unit volunteer authority shall contact the volunteer to discuss the results of the investigation and confer the sanction(s), if any. An entry into the VS00 will be made documenting the sanctions and any change(s) to the volunteer's status within 15 days after the volunteer is notified. The volunteer may appeal the decision to the appropriate division volunteer authority.
- G. The unit volunteer authority shall complete a Volunteer Violation of Policy form (see Appendix O), attach support documentation, and submit the form to Volunteer Services. If due to unforeseen circumstances the investigation/forms completion process is delayed, the unit volunteer authority shall contact Volunteer Services for an extension.
- H. For those volunteers whose status is changed to "denied", an electronic message will be sent to facility administrators notifying them of the change in approval status. Volunteers who have been placed in denied status due to violation of policy may reapply for consideration to become an approved volunteer one year from the date of the incident (exceptions may be granted on a case by case basis).
- I. The Violation of Policy form will be placed in the volunteer's permanent file. Violation of Policy forms will be maintained as long as deemed administratively valuable.

XIII. RECORDKEEPING AND REPORTING

In order to accurately record/report volunteer activities/services within the TDCJ, each department/division shall report all monthly volunteer statistics/activities.

A. Definitions for Volunteer Statistics:

Cumulative (C) - In statistical reports, the cumulative number (C) for each volunteer category shall reflect the total volunteer activity to date, beginning with the onset of the current fiscal year.

Fiscal Year Total - The statistics for all volunteer categories shall start from a zero balance EXCEPT for the number of approved volunteers, employee volunteers, certified volunteer chaplains' assistants and any carry-over student intern volunteers.

Monthly (M) - In statistical reports, the monthly number (M) for each volunteer category shall reflect that volunteer activity for the reporting month.

Volunteer Contacts - The number of offenders, victims, or offender family members that received rehabilitative service, activity or program from an individual volunteer. (Note: The same offender or victim may have contact with multiple volunteers depending on the rehabilitative programming in which the offender or victim is participating.) Correspondence shall not be considered an offender or victim contact and shall not be reported as such.

Training – The actual number of volunteers that have completed volunteer training/orientation for the reporting month.

Volunteer Hours - The actual number of hours a volunteer has spent in providing some type of rehabilitative activity or service for offenders or victims.

Volunteer Visit - Each time an approved or special volunteer visits any facility in order to provide some type of rehabilitative service, activity or program for offenders or victims.

B. TDCJ Monthly Statistical Volunteer Report

The monthly statistical report will be completed by each department/division and forwarded to the VCC coordinator by the third Friday of each month. The monthly report shall include the following information: number of approved volunteers (to include employee volunteers, CVCAs, ex-offenders, mentors, partners, and student interns); volunteer visits; volunteer hours; volunteer to offender/victim contacts; special volunteer visits; special volunteer hours; and special volunteer to offender/victim contacts. These monthly reports will become a part of the annual VCC Fiscal Report and will be maintained in the record retention schedule as long as it is deemed administratively valuable.

C. Annual VCC Fiscal Report

The VCC Coordinator shall prepare an annual report that includes a summary of the monthly statistical reports and an overview of each volunteer program area. The annual report shall be completed within six months of the closing current fiscal year ending.

D. Volunteer Training Report

A monthly report that reflects the number of volunteer training sessions scheduled state-wide; the number of volunteer training sessions conducted; the number of special training sessions conducted; and the number of attendees for each session. The data will reflect the previous month's totals.

E. Emergency Action Center (EAC)

An annual review of the number of EAC reports submitted for the fiscal year in comparison to the number of volunteer visits to determine a ratio of serious or unusual incidents involving volunteers to volunteer visits. The number of serious or unusual incidents should not exceed two percent of the total number of volunteer visits.

F. Each department/division's designated volunteer staff shall ensure data is entered into the VS00 to record volunteer activity (i.e., history of visits). Data will be entered by the tenth day of the month following the reporting month.

XIV. VOLUNTEER FILES

- A. The approved volunteer's permanent file (paper file) will be maintained by the division's central administration staff for the program area for which the volunteer serves. These files will be maintained for three years after the volunteer's status has been changed to delete. Volunteer files with a status of denied due to policy violations will be maintained as administratively valuable by all departments/divisions. Individuals who apply to be an approved volunteer but fail to complete the necessary training or fail to submit required documents/licenses within the allotted timeframe will be classified as incomplete and the volunteer file will be destroyed. Individuals who apply for approved volunteer status but are denied due to their background check will be classified as denied and documents received will be maintained as administratively valuable. The permanent file will contain the following documents:
- Volunteer Application
 - TDCJ Acknowledgement of Training/Orientation form(s)
 - TDCJ Volunteer Assignment Form (Parole and Victim Services only – all other departments/divisions shall maintain the form in the facility file)
 - Criminal History (NCIC/TCIC)
 - Pertinent Licenses/Certification
 - TDCJ Volunteer Violation of Policy form (if applicable)
 - Other notes/statements deemed appropriate.
- B. The electronic volunteer file (VS00) is created when a completed application is received by each department/division. The electronic file serves as an official record and contains information from the volunteer application; regarding policy violations; restrictions and reflects the status of the volunteer. The electronic file of those volunteers in denied status will be maintained as long as deemed administratively valuable. The electronic file of those volunteers in delete status will be maintained for three years.

XV. RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS

- A. Recognizing the valuable contributions of volunteers is an important part of the volunteer program. Volunteers shall be recognized annually for their contribution. This may range from a formal event that may include a program, presentation and food or as informally as a letter and certificate of appreciation.

- B. Local or regional events shall be coordinated with the appropriate division volunteer administrator or designee. The unit volunteer authority shall be included in the planning phase.
- C. A calendar of award/recognition programs for the calendar year shall be established for reporting/tracking purposes.
- D. An annual agency-wide volunteer awards ceremony will be coordinated by the VCC and its chair and in coordination with the TBCJ. In all cases, awards, events, or ceremonies provided by the agency shall be adhere to the financial limits set forth in Texas Government Code § 2109.004.

XVI. MONITORING

Performance measures will be reviewed at VCC meetings and evaluated to determine if the goals of the program are being met. The VCC will make necessary adjustments to the Plan to ensure effectiveness of the volunteer program. Performance measures may include, but are not limited to: processing timelines for applications and policy violations; volunteer training; EAC reports; number of new applications; and volunteer appreciation events

Each department/division shall establish a system of self audits to ensure data on volunteers and their service(s) is entered accurately on the VS00; reporting procedures are followed and timelines met; and training for volunteers and facility volunteer trainers is meeting the intended goal.

XVII. VOLUNTEER REVIEW COMMITTEE (VRC)

- A. The VRC shall be a standing committee that will consist of three members, or their designees:
 - Director of RPD.
 - Division director for which the concern/issue is affected.
 - VCC member from the appropriate program area.

B. The functions of the VRC are as follows:

- Review submitted justifications from wardens/office administrators regarding placement denial of approved volunteers.
- Review volunteer plan violations, volunteer suggestion forms, and other related volunteer issues
- Review applications of individuals who have been identified in association with a STG and did not complete the GRAD process before release.
- A VRC Form (see Appendix P) will be prepared for the meeting and committee members will sign the form indicating their position (approved/disapproved) regarding the volunteer applicant.

C. The director of volunteer services will convene the committee on an as-needed basis. Appeals to decisions made by the VRC shall be directed to the director of volunteer services.

APPENDIX OF VOLUNTEER FORMS

APPENDIX A	TDCJ Volunteer Application	A form required as the initial step in becoming an approved volunteer. An on-line version is available from the TDCJ website.
APPENDIX B	Monthly Volunteer Application Summary	A report that reflects the number of new applications received each month.
APPENDIX C	Criminal History Questionnaire	Form mailed to volunteer applicant with a criminal history to obtain additional information regarding their incarceration.
APPENDIX D	Volunteer Training Letter	Letter sent to the volunteer applicant to attend a volunteer training session.
APPENDIX E	Volunteer Training Sign-In Form	Signed by the volunteer upon entrance to the training session. Volunteer trainer will also sign.
APPENDIX F	Acknowledgement of Training / Orientation Form	Signed by the volunteer and volunteer trainer at the conclusion of the training session.
APPENDIX G	Volunteer Program Assessment / Suggestion Form	Available to the volunteer to provide input into the volunteer program.
APPENDIX H	Special Volunteer Approval Form	Form listing all special volunteers and is submitted to the unit warden for approval prior to the volunteer activity.
APPENDIX I	Letter of Orientation for Special Volunteers	Training/orientation for the special volunteer. Provided to the special volunteer prior to the event.
APPENDICES J1-J3	Volunteer Sign-In Logs	Facility sign-in logs for volunteer program areas (i.e., Chaplaincy, Parole and Substance Abuse).
APPENDICES K1-K3	Student Intern Memorandum of Agreement forms	Utilized for establishing an agreement between a student intern and the TDCJ. Includes a confidentiality and indemnification statement.
APPENDIX L	Partner Application	A form required for volunteer applicants interested in the Substance Abuse Partner Program.
APPENDIX M	Broadband Affidavit	Required for volunteers that bring in laptop computers as part of their service.
APPENDIX N	Volunteer Assignment Description	To be completed by the volunteer and facility volunteer staff member.
APPENDIX O	Violation of Policy	To be completed when volunteers violate TDCJ policy.
APPENDIX P	Volunteer Review Committee Form	To be completed as part of the VRC process.