

State of Iowa Department of Corrections

Policy and Procedures

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Applicability: Institutions

Policy Code: Public Access

Iowa Code Reference: [669.24](#)

Chapter 1: Administration & Management

Sub Chapter: Citizen Involvement / Volunteers

Related DOC Policies: [AD-TS-04](#), [OP-MTV-01](#), [OP-MTV-03](#), [OP-MTV-04](#)

Administrative Code Reference: NA

Subject: Institution Volunteer Program

PREA Standards: [115.32\(a\)\(b\)\(c\)](#), [77\(a\)\(b\)](#)

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1. PURPOSE

To describe the philosophy of the volunteer program and to provide procedural guidelines for program implementation within the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC).

2. POLICY

It is the policy of the IDOC to recognize the value that volunteers contribute to accomplishing our mission. Volunteers can provide significant assistance in meeting the needs of the Iowa correctional system.

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3. DEFINITIONS – As used in this document:

1. Volunteer – An unpaid, non-staff member, who directly or indirectly, provides an in person service to the correctional system, its staff, an incarcerated individual or group of incarcerated individuals. There is neither a recognized employer/employee relationship between the IDOC and the individual nor is the individual entitled to any benefits or compensation associated with their tenure as a volunteer.
2. Community Partner- A non IDOC staff member, who directly or indirectly provides a treatment or educational service to the correctional system, generally through the individual's employer. Community partner's services are to be considered contractors.
3. Infrequently scheduled visitors- Individuals who provide an infrequent service (2-3 times per year) to incarcerated individuals. This may include a guest speaker for an established program.

4. PROCEDURES

A. Functions of Volunteers

1. A volunteer program serves to supplement existing staff resources to provide services that are not currently available, and to promote the integration of public and institutional entities.
2. The level of knowledge and skill necessary to deliver volunteer services may vary greatly. When professional level or specialized services are provided, the staff shall ensure that the volunteer has the proper credentials (license, certification, etc.) to perform the services.
3. Services may be provided directly or indirectly for incarcerated individuals, the institution or for staff. Services may include providing ongoing mentoring of incarcerated individuals as part of a structured re-entry program.
4. As members of the public, volunteers are representatives of those we serve. Volunteers' interactions with others within their communities has a direct impact on the public's knowledge and perception of the work we do.

5. The Warden or designee may temporarily discontinue volunteer services due to facility emergencies or staffing shortages at their discretion. An attempt shall be made to notify volunteer of cancellation of services.

B. Program Coordination

1. The Deputy Director of Institution Operations/Designee shall serve as coordinator of volunteer services for the Iowa correctional system.
2. Institutions shall utilize the Non-IDOC Personnel PREA Database on the DOC Portal to maintain a system wide master list of volunteers providing services in the IDOC.
<https://docwebapps.doc.gov.state.ia.us/VolunteerPREA/main>
3. Each institution shall appoint a staff member to be responsible for coordinating the volunteer program and activities.
4. The institution coordinator shall oversee the recruitment, screening, orientation/training, and staff supervision of all volunteers and their activities.
5. Volunteer applications, approvals, and training records shall be retained by the institution volunteer coordinator or designee during the duration of the individual's volunteer services.
6. The institution volunteer coordinator/designee shall retain files of terminated volunteers indefinitely.
7. Information about available volunteer services shall be conspicuously posted in appropriate areas and communicated to the incarcerated individual population.

C. Eligibility

1. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and of good character.
2. No person has an entitlement to selection as a volunteer.
3. Former incarcerated individuals may be considered for approval providing they have displayed successful adjustment in the community for a minimum of 18 months after discharging all correctional supervision and remaining crime free. The decision to approve a former incarcerated individual once they have met these minimum requirements is subject to the Warden/Designee's approval.

4. Relatives and approved visitors of incarcerated individuals shall not normally be approved as volunteers. The Warden must approve any exceptions.
5. Former staff members that left in good standing may be approved as volunteers. Former staff members who were not in good standing at the time they left employment or have not remained in good standing shall not be approved as volunteers.
6. Efforts should be made to recruit volunteers from all segments of society. The screening process should be uniform and consistent with security concerns.

D. Application Process

1. Each volunteer interested in providing volunteer services must complete **AD-CI-01 F-1** *Volunteer Application Form*, which is designed to collect pertinent information to assist with the screening and assignment of the potential volunteer.
2. Individuals must designate the services they wish to provide on their application. New or non-approved programming will be subject to a full review including but not limited to requiring the individual/ program to submit a manual establishing their mission, purpose, and goals.
3. The application form must be filled out completely and honestly. Any attempt to omit or falsify information shall constitute cause to deny volunteer privileges.
4. Community Partners who provide services to the department shall submit their employers contact information on their application to volunteer.
5. Those who anticipate providing ongoing mentoring of incarcerated individuals as part of a structured re-entry program shall provide documentation of such in their application. Current volunteers may submit a supplemental application requesting ongoing mentoring approval.
6. If a visitor has been removed from an incarcerated individual's visiting list, six months must elapse before volunteer application can be made. The Warden must approve any exceptions.
7. All applicants shall have a criminal history check through the National Crime Information Center (NCIC).

8. A check of phone numbers and emails will be completed on all volunteer applicants prior to approval.
9. The institution volunteer program coordinator and the Associate Warden/Security or supervisor shall make a final determination to allow or deny the volunteer.
10. Infrequently scheduled visitors shall have a criminal history check through NCIC prior to each visit. Additional training is not required for infrequent visitors. All visitors shall be directly supervised by staff.

E. Registry and Identification of Volunteers

1. The site coordinator will be responsible for maintaining entries into the database. This includes entering ICON View/NCIC check dates annually.
2. Volunteer IDs shall be issued to regularly scheduled volunteers and shall be worn and visible while they are on the premises and acting in their volunteer capacity.
3. Infrequently scheduled volunteers may be issued a guest badge in lieu of a photo identification card.

F. Training and Supervision¹

1. Approved volunteers who have an active Corrlinks account shall delete their Corrlinks account before beginning their volunteer training.
2. An orientation/training session shall be completed with volunteers appropriate for their functions and the service they provide. This shall be completed and documented prior to initiation of the volunteer service. This may be completed electronically.
3. Training provided to volunteers shall, at a minimum, include:
 - a. Confidentiality of incarcerated individual's information IDOC Policy **AD-PR-29** and CJIS Security Awareness Training.
 - b. PREA
 - c. IDOCs zero tolerance policy regarding sexual violence and harassment.

¹ PREA § 115.32(a)(b)(c)

- d. Limitations of their responsibilities.
 - e. Professional boundaries.
 - f. CJIS (online training)
4. Volunteers shall also be informed of all rules and procedures that apply with respect to the specific service they are providing.
 5. All volunteers shall be provided a copy of this policy outlining volunteer requirements and expectations.
 6. All volunteers shall agree, in writing, to abide by all institutional rules, especially to those relating to security and confidentiality of information.
 7. All volunteers shall sign the *IDOC Liability Release Form AD-GA-22 F-1* prior to being transported in a state vehicle.
 8. Volunteers shall adhere to maintaining confidentiality while serving as a volunteer with the IDOC. This includes refraining from posting on social media sites about the nature of their volunteer services without written permission from the Department's Public Information Officer. Each facility may elect to complete random checks.
 9. All volunteer programs shall be directly supervised by IDOC staff in all maximum and medium security prisons. Direct supervision requires staff to physically be present in the area. Minimum security prisons shall have at minimum, constant direct video monitoring and staggered rounds not to exceed thirty minutes per round by facility staff using a PDA scan device.
 10. All items brought in by volunteers need to be pre-approved by the facility. All volunteers should attempt to limit the amount of items brought into the facility. All items will be searched by IDOC staff.
 11. Community Partners/Contractors shall be provided with the following training, at a minimum, in the event they are not supervised by IDOC staff.
 - a. Personal Safety Training (initial training shall be eight hours, boosters shall be provided annually.
 - b. Radio training, if applicable
 - c. Keys, if applicable

d. PREA (online training)

12. Community Partners who provide services to the department shall submit their employers contact information on their application.
13. To ensure compliance with requirements of the Code of Iowa governing confidentiality of information in the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC), all individuals providing services to the organization shall know and implement **Iowa Code chapters 904.601 and 904.602** requirements that govern their use and dissemination of information. Volunteers shall sign IDOC form **AD-PR-29 F-1** *Authorization and Confidentiality of information - ICON Medical and ICON Case Management*.

G. Conduct²

1. Volunteers shall abide by all institutional department rules and regulations including those involving confidentiality. They shall cooperate with staff at all times, and shall refrain from inappropriate conduct with incarcerated individuals, an incarcerated individual's family and/or associates.
2. Current volunteers, generally, shall not be allowed normal personal visitation privileges with any incarcerated individual. Where a familial relationship exists, in extraordinary circumstances and only in consultation with the Deputy Director of Institution Operations, the Warden may authorize normal personal visitation privileges concurrently with the provision of volunteer services. The volunteer's volunteer status shall be clearly noted in visitation approval documentation.
3. Under certain limited circumstances, such as with volunteers involved in approved Mentorship Programs Circles of Support and Accountability and in consultation with the Deputy Director of Institution Operations, the Warden may authorize professional visitation privileges between a current approved volunteer and one or more incarcerated individuals. The purpose of such approvals shall be to facilitate the rehabilitative process within the institution or as part of the reentry process. The volunteer's volunteer status shall be clearly noted in the visitation approval documentation.
4. Current volunteers, generally, shall not be allowed normal personal mail/o-mail or telephone privileges with any incarcerated individual. Where a familial relationship exists, and only in consultation with the Deputy Director of Institution Operations/Designee, the Warden may authorize normal personal mail/O-mail privileges concurrently with the provision of volunteer services.

² PREA § 115.77

5. With specific approval of the Warden, current volunteers may be allowed to send information regarding volunteer activities to the site supervisor to be posted to the incarcerated individual population. Two way communication shall not be allowed except by authorization of the Deputy Director of Institution Operations.
6. Incidental and non-planned community contact with incarcerated individuals is not a violation of this policy.
7. For stipulations regarding former volunteers refer to IDOC policies **OP-MTV-01** *Incarcerated Individual Correspondence*; **OP-MTV-03** *Incarcerated Individual Access to Telephone*; and **OP-MTV-04** *Incarcerated Individual Visitation*.

H. Volunteer Status Review

Institutional procedures shall establish protocol for a yearly review of volunteer programs and individual volunteers. Program review shall include review of the program goals, progress toward those goals, and determination of need for the program revision or elimination. The review of individual volunteers shall include a current NCIC check, ICON view search, an evaluation of performance, and determination of continued volunteer involvement.

I. Termination

1. Volunteers and their services may be discontinued at the discretion of the appointing authority. Denials must be entered in the Volunteer Database and communicated with any other facility that is identified as an approved site.
2. Any volunteer who engages in sexual assault, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment shall be prohibited from contact with incarcerated individuals and shall be reported to law enforcement agencies, unless the activity was clearly not criminal, and to relevant licensing bodies.
3. The institution shall take appropriate remedial measures, and shall consider whether to prohibit further contact with incarcerated individuals, in the case of any other violation of IDOC sexual violence or sexual harassment policies by a contractor or volunteer.³

³ PREA § 115.77(a)(b)

J. Gratuity & Recognition

1. While not paid for their services, volunteers may receive limited and nominal considerations as a display of gratitude for services provided. This may include a meal being provided, permission to travel in, but not drive, a state vehicle, when doing so is directly related to their volunteer service, or other similar considerations. Providing anything of value to a volunteer requires approval from the Warden.
2. The recognition of the contributions and achievements of volunteers is vital to any citizen volunteer program and is encouraged. This may include certificate of appreciation, awards banquets/ceremonies, special recognition at staff meetings, or simply a personal thank you.