

PART II: Volunteer Manual

Introduction:

VOLUNTEERS IN TENNESSEE CORRECTIONS

Citizen involvement has operated in correctional programs in Tennessee for over 100 years. In an 1891 report to the state legislature, Chaplain J. W. Perry advocated use of volunteers to teach English in prison, stating "a moral reformation usually has for its antecedent a mental or intellectual function."

During the 19th century, volunteers, individually or in groups, were primarily motivated to participate through theological and/or denominational directives. Initial impetus for service to prisoners came often from professors at Nashville's colleges and universities. Beginning with this leadership, citizens and citizen groups became active in movements for both institutional and legislative reform in corrections.

In 1972, under the direction of Commissioner Mark Luttrell, a division of Volunteer Services was established to coordinate recruitment and training efforts for volunteer programs across the state. Having worked with VISTA volunteers at the Shelby County Penal Farm, Commissioner Luttrell sought to open all institutions to more active involvement of community citizens.

BEING A VOLUNTEER

A person, who is at least 18 years of age, who has met with some of life's problems, and has been able to solve them, may provide positive support and encouragement for the inmates and parolees/probationers. Volunteers dealing with inmates/offenders should be drawn from all social, economic and educational levels in order to adequately meet the needs of the offender and parolee/probationer population. There are many enthusiastic retired people whose experience, expertise and accomplishments make them ideally suited for work in corrections.

Under certain conditions, the approving authority (Warden, District Director, Superintendent, and DRC/CRC Director) may approve former offenders to serve as volunteers, but during the first two years after release, former offenders may not serve as volunteers at any institution where they were incarcerated. Programs can often be enriched by the contributions of these former offenders who share their experiences and personal progress. The approved authority may disapprove volunteer applications of persons with felony convictions if it is believed that the security of the institution or safety of individuals could be jeopardized. This information shall be entered on the volunteer database.

Immediate relatives of an inmate may not serve as volunteers in an institution where that inmate is housed. Immediate relative is defined as parent, child, sibling, in-laws, aunt, uncle, grandparent, nephew, niece, or grandchild. TDOC employees may not serve as volunteers at their own job sites.

Persons with sexual abuse or sexual harassment histories may not serve as volunteers having direct contact with TDOC offenders.

DEFINITIONS OF VOLUNTEERS

Certified Volunteer: An individual who is directly participating in the programs and operation of the institution, who is under the supervision of paid staff, and who may have direct contact with offenders

Program volunteer: A volunteer for designated programs only that may volunteer at more than one TDOC

location. These volunteers must be pre-approved and must have been through volunteer training, including PREA and NCIC background checks. Organizations must submit a list of all volunteers that will be conducting the training with their programs. All these volunteers must be approved before entering any TDOC location. Badges for these volunteers will reflect the program they are volunteering in.

Organizational Volunteer: Any individual or group whose services to the institution occur temporarily or irregularly (four times or less per year) and under supervision of a volunteer, Chaplain or Security staff member (i.e., visiting church groups, entertainment, participants in sporting events). Organizational Volunteers may have direct or non-direct (Security-staff supervised) contact with inmates

For PREA purposes, visitors and guests who come into the facility with Volunteers are considered 'non-direct contact' if the event is directly supervised by Security staff (such as a special event in the gym or visitation gallery). They need minimal PREA training, contact information, and a signed CR-3819.

All other certified and organizational volunteers having direct contact with inmates (i.e. regular church services and other events who meet without direct Security staff supervision present) are required to have PREA Training, NCIC background checks, and PREA Compliance Certification before entering the facility.

STATUS OF VOLUNTEERS

Pending --- Applicants who have submitted an application but whose services are not yet needed. After 12 months as Pending the application will automatically be deleted.

In Process --- Applicants whose services are needed but who have not yet been approved AND applicants who have been approved but not yet assigned to a service. After 24 months In Process the application will automatically be denied.

Denied --- Applicants whose applications are denied AND applicants who have been In Process for 24 months as well as volunteers who are not recertified within 120 days after expiration.

Active (Approved) --- Volunteers whose applications have been approved AND applicants who have been assigned to a service or program at their primary site AND applicants whose certifications are current.

Active (Restricted) --- Volunteers who are permitted to enter only one TDOC location which shall be designated as their primary site.

Inactive (Approved) --- Volunteers who fail to go into any TDOC location for nine consecutive months AND volunteers who request to become inactive. Volunteers who fail to enter any TDOC location for nine consecutive months may not enter any TDOC location, and volunteers who request to become inactive may not enter any TDOC location where they request to be inactive, until they are reactivated.

No Cert --- Volunteers whose certifications or re-certifications have expired. Volunteers who are No Cert will be allowed three grace visits for 120 days after expiration. If they are not recertified within 120 days their status will become "Denied", and they will be required to submit a new or updated application.

Terminated --- Volunteers who are terminated by the approved authority for cause. Terminated volunteers are permanently prohibited from entering any TDOC location unless the termination is overruled on appeal. If the termination is overruled on appeal, the volunteer will be put into In Process by the Assistant Commissioner of Rehabilitative Services.

Deceased --- Volunteers who are deceased.