



## CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Department of General Services Volunteer Program provides employment and/or training opportunities designed to assist people in fulfilling their career development goals. Participants in the program can work a variable schedule to accommodate their needs as well as the needs of the Department. A maximum or minimum number of hours are not a requirement of this program. Some volunteers opt to work in fields they are interested in, have current or prior schooling in, or work in areas they know little about--gaining exposure to a different career environment.

A volunteer position is a way to gain on-the-job training while performing meaningful service for the Department. It is an excellent way to become familiar with various work environments, acquire work-related references, and increase one's marketability for future employment. In addition, the Volunteer Program is an excellent avenue for transitional workers, retirees, college students, homemakers and others who are interested in joining the Department's workforce.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### Supervisors

Supervisors play a vital role in a successful volunteer program. Through the guidance of a supervisor, volunteers are able to develop important work skills and identify their career objectives.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to familiarize volunteers with the Department's policies, rules and regulations, which govern the work environment; provide on-the-job training and supervision; and establish goals for each specific assignment.

Supervisors will treat volunteers as full members of the staff, making every effort to give them challenging work at a level that is appropriate to their ability.

#### Volunteers

The role of the volunteer is to dedicate time and talent to the Department in exchange for valuable work experience.

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to complete assignments as directed by the supervisor, conduct themselves in a professional manner while performing volunteer duties, and fulfill the commitments described in the Volunteer Service Agreement.

Volunteers need to understand they receive no pay for their assignments and the assignments will not necessarily lead to paid employment.

### Personnel Liaison

The Personnel Liaison for each office and program serves as a resource for supervisors, volunteers and the community.

It is the responsibility of the Personnel Liaison to recruit community members who are interested in volunteering at the Department, develop and maintain a list of available worksites for their program or office, perform intake interviews prior to referral to a specific worksite, ensure there is a match between volunteer and supervisor, and be available as a consultant to resolve any concerns on the part of the participants as they might arise.

The Personnel Liaison also serves as a resource to volunteers for information regarding civil service positions and other types of employment.

### Volunteer Program Administrator

The Volunteer Program Administrator's role is to serve as a resource for the Personnel Liaisons, supervisors, volunteers and the community.

It is the responsibility of the Volunteer Program Administrator to support the Personnel Liaisons in identifying volunteers, providing information on civil service exams, and monitoring the number of volunteers working in the Department.

## **HIRING A VOLUNTEER**

If the supervisor and volunteer agree to a working arrangement, the supervisor must notify the Personnel Liaison. Direction will be given to the supervisor on the volunteer's orientation.

A Volunteer Orientation Packet, (Attachment A) which includes the Volunteer Service Agreement, (Attachment B), Oath of Allegiance, (Attachment C), and Emergency Information/Physician Designation form, (Attachment D) will be sent to the site supervisor prior to the volunteer's first scheduled day. Please note that the Volunteer Orientation Packet provides instructions for completion of each form. Be sure to follow the routing instructions to ensure that all forms are filed in the right office. The Personnel Liaison will provide assistance if there are questions regarding procedures.

### Orientation

Volunteers need support and encouragement. Many are returning to the workforce after a period of unemployment or are coming to work for the first time. A complete orientation must be given to the volunteer to establish and clarify work assignments and expectations.

The following areas should be covered in a volunteer orientation:

1. Completion of the Volunteer Service Agreement which specifies the duties, term of employment, and work schedule. This Agreement must be completed and signed by the volunteer and the supervisor once both parties understand its contents.
2. Clarification of volunteer status. The supervisor should remind the volunteer that the position is not paid and will not necessarily lead to a paid position.

3. Emphasize the importance of the monthly timesheets by demonstrating how to complete, and clarifying when and where timesheets are to be turned in.
4. Explain work rules, expected behavior, and appropriate dress.
5. Describe the type and amount of training provided through the volunteer assignment, and seek feedback from the volunteer regarding their training needs.
6. Orient the volunteer to the facility and introduce to associated staff.
7. Describe the office/program objectives.
8. Respond to any questions the volunteer might have.

### **VOLUNTEER TIMESHEET**

The volunteer is responsible for completing the Volunteer Program Timesheet, (Attachment E). The supervisor approves the timesheet and then forwards to the Personnel Liaison by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month. The supervisor will retain a copy of the timesheet for his/her own file. The Personnel Liaison will forward the original timesheet to the Volunteer Program Administrator.

Timesheets are imperative. Volunteer experience may be used to meet entrance requirements for State examinations. In addition, if a volunteer is injured on the job, the timesheet serves as a record of when the person was on duty.

The Volunteer Program Administrator maintains all volunteers' timesheets and work experience for the purpose of substantiating volunteer experience utilized to qualify for State exams.

### **PARKING/TRANSPORTATION**

The supervisor should have local parking/transportation information available to volunteers. Reimbursement for normal commuting to or from the worksite and parking are not available.

### **DRIVING AND TRAVEL**

Volunteers are eligible to travel on State business and can be reimbursed for travel expenses according to the Department's Travel and Expense Guide. Volunteers will be reimbursed for necessary travel expenses at the rate negotiated for State employees performing comparable duties. A Travel Expense Claim form, STD. 262, (Attachment F) is to be completed and approved by the appropriate State supervisor. Travel advances are not issued to volunteers.

Volunteers may be permitted to check-out State vehicles for the purpose of conducting State business. Volunteers must have a valid California driver license and auto insurance. If a volunteer operates his/her own motor vehicle for State business, a form STD. 261, (Attachment G) "Authorization to Use Privately Owned Vehicle on State

Business" must be completed. Claims for cost reimbursement should be submitted utilizing a Travel Expense Claim form.

The volunteer's immediate supervisor is held responsible for the validity of the reimbursement expenses claimed when approving claims for payment.

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND LIABILITY**

According to Section 3363.5 of the Labor Code, volunteers may be deemed to be an employee of the agency for purposes of Workers' Compensation coverage while performing volunteer service. Volunteers are covered by Workers' Compensation in cases of work-related accidents. Volunteer forms should be on file with the Personnel Liaison and Volunteer Program Administrator to verify volunteer employment.

## **EMERGENCY AND SAFETY**

During orientation and training, the supervisor should acquaint the volunteer with the Department's safety regulations and emergency procedures, which apply to his/her specific workplace. The adoption of safe work habits and the willingness to follow safety rules and procedures is of the utmost importance.

## **FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS**

Any person legally residing in the United States can work as a volunteer in the Department.

## **CHILD LABOR LAWS**

Because the Volunteer Program is open to minors age 15 and older, attention must be given to Child Labor laws. These laws state that an employer can be cited and fined from \$1,000-\$5,000 for a Child Labor law violation that creates "substantial probability of death or serious physical harm to a minor", and from \$100-\$200 for a violation that has a direct or immediate relationship to the health, safety or security of a minor. A minor is defined as any person under the age of 18 years who is required to attend school under the provisions of the Education Code (LC 1286 c).

When school is in session, minors cannot work more than 3 hours per day if age 15, or 4 hours per day if age 16 or 17. When school is not in session, the daily maximum is 8 hours per day.

Volunteers under the age of 18 shall not be involved in any occupation declared hazardous by the Secretary of Labor, including, but not limited to:

1. Motor vehicle occupation, including gasoline service stations.
2. Occupations involving the operation of power-driven working machines (circular saws, band saws and guillotine shears), power-driven metal forming, punching or shearing machines, and power-driven hoisting apparatus, including elevators.
3. Occupations involving roofing work or the application of weatherproofing materials or substances.

4. Occupations where dust in large quantities or where dangerous or poisonous acids, dyes, gases or lye are being used.
5. Any occupation dangerous to life or limb, or the health or morals of a minor.

For further information on the Child Labor Laws, visit the Department of Industrial Relations' Division of Labor Standards Enforcement at [www.dir.ca.gov/DLSE/dlse.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/DLSE/dlse.html).

## **PERSONAL EVALUATIONS**

Formal evaluations are not required for volunteers, however, it is important that they receive feedback on their performance. A volunteer supervisor should meet with their volunteer staff monthly to provide feedback regarding the assignment. In addition, the volunteer supervisor should allow the volunteer to provide feedback regarding the assignment.

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION BY VOLUNTEERS**

Ongoing evaluation of the Volunteer Program is vital for continuing effective operation of the program. Volunteers can assist in this process by completion a Volunteer Evaluation form, (Attachment H), when they leave the Volunteer Program. This evaluation allows the volunteer an opportunity to offer comments regarding the operation of and involvement in the Volunteer Program.

## **PAID EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Though volunteering cannot guarantee a civil service position, it can be a strong tool in the search for regular employment. By making the best use of their time, volunteers continue to develop skills as they broaden their contacts in the community. Gaining experience and developing contacts may lead to employment in one of the areas listed below:

### Student Assistant Positions

To be eligible for a Student Assistant position, an individual must be enrolled as a student in an accredited college or university.

### Civil Service Positions

Information on civil service employment opportunities can be found at [www.dgs.ca.gov/JobOpportunities/default.htm](http://www.dgs.ca.gov/JobOpportunities/default.htm) , through the State Personnel Board at [www.spb.ca.gov](http://www.spb.ca.gov), or by visiting any Employment Development Department office.

## **SEPARATION**

A volunteer should attempt to provide at least two weeks notice prior to separation from the volunteer program. When a volunteer separates, the final timesheet should be forwarded to the Volunteer Program Administrator.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

*What are the qualifications needed to volunteer?*

No prior work experience is necessary to volunteer. All you need is available time and the desire to work.

*How long can I volunteer?*

The length of the volunteer assignment is determined when the volunteer and the supervisor complete the Volunteer Service Agreement.

*Can I work 40 hours per week?*

Yes. As long as your supervisor is available to supervisor you, you are welcome to work a full 40-hour week. Most volunteers average 20 hours per week and spend the remaining hours attending school or seeking paid employment.

*What kind of work can volunteers do?*

Volunteers work in a broad variety of areas including, but not limited to: accounting, administration, legal, information technology, telecommunications, procurement, and marketing. The Personnel Liaison will try to develop a job that fits the volunteer's interests and abilities.

*Does volunteering lead to permanent employment with the State?*

No. Volunteering does not directly lead to a paid position, but the experience may help the volunteer qualify for and be competitive in State exams, as well as help clarify career goals.

*Does volunteering improve the chance of obtaining a paid employment?*

It is entirely up to the volunteer to market their volunteer experience effectively in both the public and private sectors.

*Why does anyone want to work without pay?*

Most volunteers are unemployed, underemployed, or in a training program. The Department's Volunteer Program offers these individuals a unique opportunity to develop their skills in a flexible environment.

*What do I do if my volunteer is not working out?*

If you are having a performance problem with your volunteer, the first step is to talk to the volunteer about the problem. If there is no improvement, call your Personnel Liaison. Sometimes an objective third party can help solve the problem or reassign the volunteer to a more appropriate assignment.

If it is necessary to ask a volunteer to leave, this can be handled either by the supervisor or the Personnel Liaison. The Volunteer Service Agreement indicates either party can terminate the arrangement at any time.