PA State System of Higher Education
Board of Governors

POLICY 1991-04-A: VOLUNTEERISM

See Also:

Adopted: July 18, 1991
Amended: May 14, 1998

A. General

Volunteerism is encouraged throughout the State System of Higher Education. Volunteers represent a most valued human resource whose contributions without compensation or promise result in immeasurable benefit to our students, the State System, and the Commonwealth. In order to provide recognition of volunteers and their services, as well as safeguards for their usage, the following administrative guidelines are to be used. It is understood that volunteers will not be used in a fashion that displaces incumbent bargaining unit employees, and that when practicable and appropriate, discussion in advance of volunteer usages may occur at the local meet and discuss level.

B. Administrative Guidelines

1. To be recognized under this policy, an individual must serve in a volunteer capacity that has been authorized by an appropriate appointing authority (Board of Governors, Chancellor, or President); however, for incidental services and in the interest of practicality, an appointing authority may choose to delegate this authority.

2. The appointing authorities are responsible for developing volunteer authorization and regulatory procedures which ensure adherence to relevant laws, (e.g., Fair Labor Standards Act), labor contracts, and policies. It is understood that volunteers will not be assigned hazardous duties or to work in hazardous duty areas. It is also understood that such procedures will be sufficient to document the volunteer relationship for risk management, indemnification, and legal defense purposes. As a minimum standard (e.g., incidental services), this would require the recording of the volunteer's name and address, dates of service, nature of service, and authorizing authority. By logical extension, longer term volunteers' documentation should include other biographical data such as social security number, home and business phone numbers, education and work experience, as well as an emergency contact

name and number. For volunteers assigned to work with pre-school and school age children (K through 12), Act 34 documentation is recommended. A formal letter of appointment for longer term volunteers would also be customary.

3. Volunteers will be eligible for reimbursement of authorized official travel expenses in accordance with the State System's travel expense regulations (Policy 1986-07-A). Volunteers should understand they are still subject to the Motor Vehicle Responsibility Act in terms of liability exposure, although depending on the circumstances, the Commonwealth may provide excess insurance above the primary insurance covering the owner of the vehicle.

4. At the discretion of the appointing authority, volunteers may also be extended incidental courtesies and privileges normally extended to employees. This may include the transporting of volunteers in Commonwealth- or university-owned vehicles as part of their official duties; however, volunteers are not authorized to operate such vehicles.

5. Volunteers are provided limited insurance coverage for illnesses or injuries incurred as a direct result of providing volunteer services to the State System. This insurance is not workers' compensation insurance but is administered through the State System's workers' compensation claims administrator. Consequently, it does not include any disability or catastrophic loss income for volunteers or their survivors. Coverage is limited to medical and hospital benefits only and is based on terms contained in the workers' compensation law. Damage or loss to personal property (e.g., clothing, eyeglasses, vehicles) is not covered.

6. Volunteers will be entitled to legal defense and indemnification for legal actions arising from acts or omissions within the scope of their official duties to the same extent as employees of the State System.

7. Volunteer records must be retained for at least six years after the date the services are completed.