



Disaster Preparedness & Response Volunteer Handbook

Volunteer LEON—“devoted to strengthening the individuals and organizations in our community through volunteerism”.



Dear Volunteer:

On behalf of everyone at VolunteerLEON we would first like to take the time in welcoming and thanking you for becoming a team member. It is our goal to ensure that we facilitate infrastructure development of local community based organizations, raise local awareness of volunteerism, and build partnerships and model programs for volunteers and volunteer organizations.

This year our goal is to promote volunteers to donate as much time and talent as possible to help local citizens prevent, prepare for, and respond to disasters.

This handbook was created to give you important information that will enhance your volunteer experience. Please take the time to read through it and refer back to it as questions arise.

Feel free to contact me for additional information or to pass along suggestions or comments. Once again, welcome to VolunteerLEON. We wish you a rewarding experience as a volunteer.

Sincerely,

Jeri Bush

VolunteerLEON, Director

Leon County Emergency Management, ESF 15 Coordinator

Introduction

About this Handbook

Thank you for becoming apart of our organization devoted to volunteerism. This handbook was prepared to give you some essential information about VolunteerLEON's policies and expectations of our volunteers. The handbook has been organized by topic to help you find information you need easily. You are also encouraged to talk with your supervisor if you have any questions about the content of this handbook.

Thank you for giving your time and talents to help others. We hope that you find volunteering through VolunteerLEON a positive and rewarding experience!

VolunteerLEON'S Mission

The mission of the Leon County Volunteer Center is to strengthen the individuals and organizations in our community through volunteerism.

VolunteerLEON's Vision

Our vision is to incorporate a responsive and caring Big-Bend community defined by volunteerism and civic engagement.

VolunteerLEON History

VolunteerLEON, the Leon County Volunteer Center, is a service of Leon County Board of County Commissioner. The Center began as a program internal to Leon County government called Volunteer Services in 1992. VolunteerLEON has been a Points of Light Foundation certified Volunteer Center since 2001 and has grown to provide numerous programs and services benefiting individuals and organizations throughout the Big Bend area.

Facts about VolunteerLEON

- Our role in this community is centered on our ability to promote volunteerism, connect people with the opportunity to serve, build capacity of local volunteer programs, and participate in strategic initiatives that mobilize volunteers from all sectors.
- We bring people and community needs together through a range of programs and services based upon community needs, demographic area, population size, and other factors.

- We believe that volunteer centers are conveners for the community, catalysts for social action, and key local resources for volunteer involvement.

Policies & Procedures

Policies

- I. Leon County administrators recognize that volunteers are essential to the productivity, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness of government and encourage and welcome individuals and groups who have the skill, talent, ability, and time to volunteer in county departments, divisions, and facilities.
- II. Definition: "Volunteer" is a person who, of his/her free will, provides goods or services to any unit of county government without receiving monetary or material compensation.

Classes of Volunteers:

- A. "Regular-service volunteer" means a person engaged in specific voluntary service activities on an ongoing or continual basis.
 - B. "Episodic volunteer" means a person who offers to provide a one-time or occasional voluntary service.
 - C. "Material donor" means a person who may be unable to give the time required for volunteer service, but chooses to express his/her contribution by providing funds or materials.
 - D. "Community service volunteer" means a person who is court-ordered to complete a required number of volunteer hours as part of their probation.
- III. The Volunteer Center office will be responsible for the direction of the volunteer program and its compliance with all laws pertaining to volunteers including the recruitment of volunteers and the evaluation of the volunteer program. Specific Authority: Florida Statute 125.9501-06.

Procedures

I. Requirements

- A. Volunteers will work within the rules set by the responsible department supervisor.
Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the department or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. However, no volunteer will be dismissed until the volunteer has an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with supervisory staff. Prior to dismissal of a volunteer, staff should seek the consultation and assistance of the Volunteer Director.
- B. Volunteers may perform any task adhering to prior assessment of risk and liability issues assigned by their supervisors and approved by the responsible administrators.
- C. Volunteers will maintain strict confidentiality of any information to which they may have access within their volunteer job.
- D. Volunteers are prohibited from using information or materials not generally available to the public and obtained by reason of their volunteer positions for the personal benefit of themselves or others. Volunteers will follow the County's policy in regard to conflict of interest in accordance with regulations specified in Sections 112.311-43 of the Florida Statutes.
- E. A back screening will be required when the volunteer will participate in the same physical labor that requires a screening for regular employees.
- F. Children under 13 years of age who wish to volunteer must be pre-approved by a department administrator and must have adult supervision.
- G. Volunteers will sign in and out in the Volunteer Log. A Volunteer Log will be maintained by all departments or facilities and will contain volunteer names, dates, hours of service, and tasks assigned. Volunteers will use only the space, equipment, and materials authorized during their assignment.
- H. Volunteers will receive a name badge following 10 days of regular service.

- I. Volunteers who are public officers/employees will not be permitted to voluntarily perform services which are the same as or are similar to their duties for which they are paid to perform by the same public agency.
- J. Volunteers must read and agree to abide by the County's Substance Abuse Prevention Program, and in certain circumstances, they may be required to submit to drug screening prior to performing **voluntary** services.
- K. Volunteers are eligible for workers' compensation in accordance with Chapter 440, Florida Statute.

Risk Management Guidelines For Employing Volunteers

- I. Volunteers must be trained for the jobs they will perform, including safety aspects.
- II. When personal protection equipment is required for the position. The volunteer must either provide his/her own or be properly equipped by the department, as well as trained in the use of the equipment prior to engaging in any such work.
- III. Volunteers must not be knowingly exposed to any unnecessary danger or hazards in the workplace and must not perform any functions requiring a license or certification unless they have a **current** license or certification to do so.
- IV. Volunteers will be permitted to drive county vehicles and operate county equipment in accordance with guidelines and regulations as they apply to paid staff.
- V. Workplace harassment will not be tolerated in the workplace or outside the workplace. Workplace harassment is defined as unsolicited, offensive or retaliatory behavior based on race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, ancestry, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation or an employee's exercise of constitutional or statutory rights. (County policy 2.02)
- VI. It is the policy of Leon County to provide a work environment that is reasonable safe, secure, and free from threats, intimidation, abusive behavior and physical violence. Acts of physical violence, direct or indirect verbal threats, stalking, aggressive or intimidating behavior, or provocation, which could lead to violence, will not be tolerated. (County policy 2.03)

Recruitment, Selection, and Management

Recruitment and Equal Opportunity

Volunteers are recruited on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding volunteer involvement to assist in mobilizing communities to help people prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters and other life-threatening emergencies. Volunteers are recruited without regard to gender, disability, age, race or other condition. Volunteers are recruited based upon their skills, abilities, and suitability to perform volunteer responsibilities

Our volunteer intake process is as follows, the prospective volunteer:

- Completes a volunteer application;
- Participates in a orientation and interview;
- Indicates preference in volunteer position;
- Reviews and then agrees to abide by Volunteer LEON's policies and procedures; and
- Receives necessary training for chosen volunteer position.

Note: Exceptions to these procedures may be made under some limited circumstances such as when the community is experiencing a larger-scale disaster.

Placement:

In placing a volunteer in a position, attention shall be paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and to the requirements of the volunteer position. No placement shall be made unless the requirements of both the volunteer and the supervising staff can be met.

Recruitment of Minors (parent/guardian release form)

Volunteers who have not reached the age 18 must complete, sign, and date the Youth Volunteer Application and a parent or legal guardian must sign the Parental Consent Form. The volunteer services assigned to a minor should be performed in a non-hazardous environment and should comply with the appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

Volunteer Records, References, and Privacy

VolunteerLEON maintains personnel records of each volunteer, which are confidential. Volunteers are required to notify the Volunteer Coordinator of any changes in contact information (*i.e.*, emergency contact notification, information, home address, telephone

number(s), email address) and to report any additional educational and skill training acquired for becoming a volunteer and also to aid in volunteer placement.

Volunteer Position Descriptions

Every registered volunteer position under VolunteerLEON can be accessed through our website "Volunteer Connection," it shows a list of all possible volunteer opportunities that we are offering at the current time. It explains the volunteer position description summarizing the principal duties, responsibilities, qualifications, and essential work functions of the volunteer assignment. Volunteer position descriptions should be periodically updated to reflect changes in title, assignment, or essential work functions. Prior to and following a disaster we rely on trained volunteers to fill critical community needs.

Training for Volunteers

Volunteers and employees have equal access to training for equivalent positions. Volunteer development is a collaborative effort between VolunteerLEON, supervisors, and volunteers to align individual goals with the overall direction of our organization. Development efforts are focused on building the capabilities of all volunteers. Developmental activities may include both hands-on projects and formal training. Training requirements for each volunteer position are outlined in the volunteer position description.

Disaster Services Training

VolunteerLEON training "Introduction To Disaster Services" is available on-line. Access the courses by going to <http://www.capitalareafire.redcross.org> or by calling the Disaster Services Voice Mail at 850-894-6741. Alternatively you can fax your name, phone number and course selection to 850-878-6602. FEMA also provides many programs, courses, and materials to support emergency preparedness and response for emergency personnel as well as the general public.

Information & Courses for Emergency Personnel*:

- Emergency Management Institute
- NIMS Training
- Noble Training Center
- EENET
- Community Emergency Response Teams
- Master Trainer Program
- National Fire Academy
- Fire Management Assistance Grant Program Resources
- Master Exercise Practitioner Program
- EMI Independent Study Courses
- Incident Command System / Unified Command System
- FEMA Higher Education Project (Higher ED)
- Professional Development Series (PDS)
- Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC)
- Advanced Professional Series (APS)

*Note: More FEMA information, available courses, and training can be found at www.fema.gov/tab_education.shtm

Role of Volunteer Supervisors

Each volunteer has a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor most of the time will be an employee. This supervisor is responsible for the day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance. The supervisor has a primary responsibility for developing suitable assignments for the volunteer, for involving the volunteer in the communication flow of VolunteerLEON and for providing feedback to the volunteer regarding their work.

Attendance

VolunteerLEON expects all volunteers to assume diligent responsibility for their attendance and promptness. Volunteers who are unable to come to work or who will be late should notify their supervisors as soon as possible prior to their scheduled start time. Frequent absenteeism or lateness that is unexcused or excessive may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Work Schedules

VolunteerLEON establishes the time and duration of working hours as required by workload, customer service need, the efficient management of personnel resources, and any applicable laws. Daily and weekly work schedules may be changed from time to time at the discretion of VolunteerLEON as needed. The schedule of work hours and meal period for volunteers is determined by the supervisor and changes in work schedule are announced as far in advance as practicable. Volunteers and staff should notify their supervisor and the receptionist when they leave the building and how long they will be gone. The standard operating hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Performance Feedback

Volunteers and their supervisors are encouraged to have informal, open and honest discussion on an ongoing basis about work performance and goals of the volunteer. A more formal performance review may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the volunteer's supervisor. Performance reviews are intended to reflect the volunteer's effectiveness on the job, and are a continuing record of work performance. They allow the supervisor to measure the volunteer's work against the requirements of their positions, review results of negotiated business goals, and assess general performance behaviors.

Tracking Volunteer Hours

VolunteerLEON tracks volunteer hours online at www.VolunteerLEON.org/VolunteerConnection. Volunteers will receive training on reporting hours online during volunteer orientation. If you do not have Internet access, or would prefer to mail or fax your times sheet to the Volunteer Center by the 5th of each month, please let us know and we will make those arrangements. The Volunteer Coordinator will sign any necessary paperwork regarding hours, but it is the sole responsibility of the volunteer to maintain any records.

Dress Code

Appropriately, dressed volunteers add to the overall credibility of Volunteer LEON and display a sense of confidence to the American Public.

Office Volunteers: VolunteerLEON expects volunteers and paid staff to dress in a manner that is normally acceptable in business establishments. The wearing of suggestive attire or unkempt clothing is not permitted. It is necessary that volunteers wear their name badge at all times.

Field Volunteer: Those who provide the majority of their volunteer service outside of the office are expected to keep themselves clean so as to present an image favorable to themselves, their colleagues, and VolunteerLEON. It is necessary to wear your name badge at all times.

VolunteerLEON Communication System

All communication systems at VolunteerLEON are property of Leon County and are to be used for business purposes only. Because these communication systems are provided for business purposes, volunteers should have no expectation of privacy regarding their personal use of any chapter communication systems, and their communications and systems use may be audited by

authorized management at any time without notice. Our organizations communication systems include, but are not limited to, e-mail, telephone, Internet, fax, voicemail, bulletin boards, and interoffice mail. Volunteers are to use proper discretion in the amount and length of non-business use of VolunteerLEON communication systems.

Volunteers must be mindful that their association with VolunteerLEON will be visible to any recipient of an electronic communication, and assure that their communications are consistent with the VolunteerLEON mission and accepted community standards. Prohibited uses chapter communication systems include, but are not limited to:

- 1.) Developing, accessing or distributing material which:
 - harasses or disparages others, or contains ethnic or racial stereotypes, epithets or slurs;
 - contains pornography, profanity, violent or sexually explicit images, messages, or cartoons;
 - solicits for commercial ventures or outside organizations;
 - advocates positions not officially endorsed by the Red Cross
 - violates any applicable law
- 2.) Personal mass e-mail distribution (“spamming”), unauthorized computer access (“hacking”), obtaining pirated software, or violating copyright protections.
- 3.) Distributing sensitive, proprietary, confidential, or private information of the organization without appropriate authorization.
- 4.) Obtaining unauthorized access to another volunteer’s or employee’s communication systems, or sending unauthorized communications under another colleague’s name.

VolunteerLEON communication systems may not be used in situations that violate Federal, State, or Local Law. Inappropriate use of any communication systems may result in disciplinary action, up to and including separation.

Progressive Discipline

VolunteerLEON has adopted rules and standards to ensure productive, harmonious operations. The best interest of our lies in ensuring fair treatment of all volunteers and in making certain that discipline is prompt, fair, and uniform.

Our organization endorses a philosophy of progressive discipline in which it attempts to provide volunteers with notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to improve whenever practical or reasonable. Volunteers’ performance and conduct is evaluated on an ongoing basis, with

feedback provided when necessary. Informal discussions may be used to ensure that volunteers know and follow rules and standards. These discussions should focus on clarifying expectations, providing appropriate training and development and coaching volunteers.

In some cases, formal disciplinary action may be deemed appropriate. Progressive discipline steps may include, but are not limited to, verbal warnings, written warnings, suspension, and separation from service. VolunteerLEON retains the right to administer discipline in any manner it deems suitable and any of the steps listed above may be skipped. Separation from service may occur at any time without any progressive discipline steps having been taken.

Drugs and Alcohol

VolunteerLEON maintains a workplace that is free from the effects of drug and alcohol abuse. Abuse of drugs or alcohol that imperils the health or well being of its staff or the customers it serves, threatens its operation, or compromises the safety of its products and services will not be tolerated. While on VolunteerLEON property or while performing official business off premises, volunteers are prohibited from unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, sale, or dispensation of illegal drugs or alcohol. Such conduct is also prohibited during nonworking time to the extent that it violates laws, negatively affects our organizations activities, or adversely affects the reputation of VolunteerLEON.

Reasons For Dismissal

Every now and then, it is necessary to dismiss a volunteer. Reasons that a volunteer may be dismissed include:

- Attendance problems: frequent absences from work, chronic late arrival or early departure.
- Poor attitude: cynical responses; “passing the buck” when something bad happens; inability to accept suggestions or criticism; negative attitude toward the public, employees and volunteers; too much socializing with other workers or visitors.
- Difficulty with job duties: has to be supervised too much of the time, does not follow instructions, fails to recognize errors or problems.
- Fails to follow program policy or department rules

It is necessary to approach volunteer work with a sense of commitment, open-mindedness, resourcefulness and initiative. By doing so, volunteering will be a rewarding experience

Emergency Contact Information For Volunteer Center Staff:

Jeri Bush, Director/ ESF 15 Coordinator

Office :(850) 606-1975

Cell: (850) 228-5052

Amanda Phillips, Volunteer Coordinator

Office: (850) 606-1976

Cell: (850) 694-1038

Scott MacLaughlin, AmeriCorps VISTA InterFACE Coordinator

Office: (850)606-1977

Cell: (850)205-5298

Cindy Boyer, Administrative Associate V

Office: (850) 606-1980

Cell: (850) 212-2903

Katrina McLendon, Emergency Mgmt.Services Assistant

Office: (850) 606-1983

Cell: (850) 519-9783

County Contacts:

Richard Smith, Emergency Management Director

Office: (850) 488-5921

Robby Powers, Emergency Management Coordinator

Office: (850) 488-5921

Jennie Khoen, Leon County Public Information

Office: (850) 606-5300

Acknowledgement and Receipt

Signature on this receipt acknowledges that you have reviewed VolunteerLEON Disaster Preparedness Volunteer Handbook. Please sign and date the receipt.

Volunteer Handbook Statement of Certification

I, _____, certify that I have received and understand the policies & procedures therein VolunteerLEON's Disaster Volunteer Handbook.

I further understand that, by signing this statement as required I am indicating that I have read the Volunteer Handbook and understand its contents or have discussed questions I have with the Volunteer Coordinator. I also realize that this statement will become a permanent part of my volunteer personnel file.

Volunteer's Name (Please Print)

Signature

Address

Date