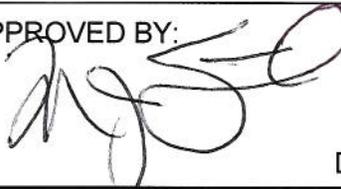




**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH  
POLICY/PROCEDURE**

SUBJECT <b>VOLUNTEERS</b>	POLICY NO. <b>600.11</b>	EFFECTIVE DATE <b>10/01/2014</b>	PAGE <b>1 of 7</b>
APPROVED BY:  Director	SUPERSEDES <b>600.11</b>	ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE <b>04/01/2002</b>	DISTRIBUTION LEVEL(S) <b>2</b>

**PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To establish policy and procedures governing the recruitment, application process, utilization, reporting of hours, and recognition of volunteers in the Los Angeles County-Department of Mental Health (LAC-DMH/Department).

**DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 **Employee:** Any permanent or temporary individual, temporary agency, or locum tenens employed under contract or other type of purchased service agreement, unpaid student, intern, and volunteer as well as any other individuals who represent LAC-DMH in the course of their work duties.
- 2.2 **Volunteer:** An individual who performs or offers to perform a service voluntarily.

**POLICY**

- 3.1 LAC-DMH programs may utilize volunteers to support and enhance services. Volunteers may be assigned a variety of roles in specific projects or programs for short or indeterminate periods of time.
  - 3.1.1 Volunteer applicants and volunteers will be treated in a respectful, fair, equitable, and culturally competent manner.
  - 3.1.2 The Human Resources Bureau Volunteer Coordinator (HRBVC) is responsible for management of the LAC-DMH Volunteer Program.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all volunteers including, but not limited to, retired County employees, members of LAC-DMH community advisory groups, student professional interns (Authority 2, LAC-DMH Policy No. 106.7, Student Placement in LAC-DMH Programs), other students, clients, family members, and interested members of the general public.



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3.3 In no instance shall volunteer services be a replacement for County employees.

**PROCEDURE**

4.1 Human Resources Bureau (HRB) Procedures. Volunteers must be officially registered with HRB prior to beginning LAC-DMH volunteer duties. This process includes the following:

- 4.1.1 Volunteer completes the Volunteer Application Packet (Attachment 1) and submits it to the HRBVC.
- 4.1.2 All volunteer applicants must be fingerprinted and background check cleared by HRB prior to providing services.
- 4.1.3 HRB will issue a picture identification (ID) card to the volunteer.
- 4.1.4 HRBVC will compile and maintain all volunteer files, including the applications and the database of all registered volunteers.
- 4.1.5 HRB will submit a volunteer statistical and program information report to the Chief Executive Office on a quarterly basis.

4.2 Program Responsibilities. LAC-DMH programs seeking to recruit, work with, and/or terminate volunteers, shall coordinate with the HRBVC to ensure proper procedures are followed.

4.2.1 Each LAC-DMH program is responsible for the selection of volunteers for its program. LAC-DMH programs shall complete a written agreement between the volunteer and the supervisor of the volunteers that covers everything necessary to assure a clear understanding of expectations, roles, and responsibilities of both the volunteer and the LAC-DMH program site. The agreement shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Service responsibilities and participation in training;
- Acceptance of the guidance of a supervisor;
- Established, acceptable working hours;



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- The requirement to follow LAC-DMH policies, regulations, and rules; and
- The requirement to notify the supervisor, in advance when possible, or in a timely fashion, of any absences and/or incidents of injury.

4.2.2 Ensure the individual is fully qualified to perform volunteer duties.

4.2.3 Make appropriate ongoing training opportunities available to volunteers.

4.2.4 Assign staff to provide supervision for all volunteers at the facility.

4.2.5 Maintain files for volunteers containing all related documents.

4.2.6 Report volunteer hours to the HRBVC on a monthly basis.

4.2.7 Conduct an exit interview with the volunteer at the time of termination and submit the Transfer/Termination Form and the volunteer ID card to the HRBVC.

4.3 Volunteer Responsibilities. Volunteers assume certain responsibilities when they agree to serve in this capacity. These include:

4.3.1 Report to their assignment at the time agreed upon and perform the designated duties until the time agreed upon at the end of their day.

4.3.2 Perform only the assigned duties agreed upon with the supervisor and only under supervision.

4.3.3 Accept supervision from the designated LAC-DMH staff person.

4.3.4 Wear the volunteer ID card at all times and disclose their volunteer status to any consumer/family member with whom they come in contact during their volunteer duties.

4.3.5 Give their supervisor advance notice of planned absences and notify them of unplanned absences in a timely manner.

4.3.6 Complete all required documents.



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- 4.3.7 Inform promptly their supervisor of the occurrence of any incidents, accidents, or injuries to themselves or others during the course of their volunteer service.
- 4.3.8 Participate in training as directed by their supervisor.
- 4.4 Inadequate Service and/or Violation of LAC-DMH Policies. Performance issues shall be addressed by the supervisor in a meeting to discuss minor violations of policy and clarify expectations and any perceived problems.
  - 4.4.1 Serious performance problems on the part of the volunteer may include, but are not limited to:
    - Violations of the County or LAC-DMH policy or rules.
    - Unwillingness to comply with service agreement.
    - Gross inability to handle the assignment.
    - Personality conflicts.
    - Acts of dangers or threats to LAC-DMH employees, consumers, or the public.
    - Acts of malice or gross negligence.
    - Acts or behaviors that constitute a liability to the County.
  - 4.4.2 Unacceptable work behavior may result in termination of volunteer status.
  - 4.4.3 Notwithstanding the preceding subsections, nothing in this policy or any agreement between LAC-DMH and the volunteer shall prevent LAC-DMH, at its discretion, from ending the service of any volunteer at any time.
- 4.5 Incidents/Injuries. For incidents not resulting in injury, the volunteer should be interviewed for information concerning the incident to determine if the incident is covered under the Volunteer Insurance Program. If the volunteer is a minor, the parent or legal guardian must be consulted and be in the agreement.
  - 4.5.1 In the event of a serious injury to a volunteer in the course of his/her assignment, paramedics or other emergency aid should be summoned to provide emergency treatment and/or transport to the nearest



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treatment facility. Under the Volunteer Insurance Program, the volunteer may obtain treatment at any facility. However, in that instance, the volunteer is responsible for payment of all charges.

- 4.6 Insurance/Risk Management. Volunteers are covered under a Volunteer Insurance Program which provides commercial excess medical expense reimbursement and liability insurance relating to general auto and medical malpractice.
  - 4.6.1 Volunteers are indemnified by the County for third-party liability arising as a result of their activities as a volunteer, unless the volunteer's actions are fraudulent, malicious, criminal, or outside the scope of the volunteers' assignment. Volunteers are not indemnified for punitive damages.
  - 4.6.2 Volunteers working in a professional capacity such as a physician, registered or licensed vocational nurse, or social worker who perform medical services to County consumers are covered for third-party professional liability under the County's Medical Malpractice Program.
  - 4.6.3 Volunteers driving vehicles in the course and scope of their LAC-DMH duties are insured under the County's Auto Liability Insurance Program for property damage or injuries sustained by other persons caused by negligence of the volunteer, unless the volunteer acts with malice, gross negligence, or is working outside the scope of his/her assigned duties. Volunteers who drive must possess valid California Driver Licenses and comply with all California State Laws, including having current auto liability insurance.
  - 4.6.4 Volunteers involved in auto accidents/incidents must report them to their assigned supervisor within twenty-four (24) hours. These incidents must also be reported to the HRBVC.
- 4.7 Disaster Services Volunteers. The State of California and Los Angeles County have provisions for individuals to volunteer and provide emergency services in the event of disasters. The State and County codes contain sections that stipulate State and County actions and responsibilities during a disaster or state of war emergency.



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- 4.7.1 County policy provides that volunteers from 14-18 years of age are eligible to be certified as Volunteer Disaster Services Workers. Registration must include a letter of parental or guardian consent and emergency medical release. Minor Volunteer Disaster Service Workers are to participate in low risk activities with full supervision.
- 4.7.2 Records must be kept of time worked by a volunteer during a disaster or state of emergency. Time reports shall be sent to the HRBVC to be compiled and maintained.
- 4.7.3 The HRBVC will provide Disaster Services Volunteer listings to the LAC-DMH Disaster Coordinator and HRB Health and Safety Officer.
- 4.7.4 The LAC-DMH Disaster Coordinator assures County volunteers who sign up to provide services during a disaster or emergency are registered with the Emergency Management Council. LAC-DMH Disaster Coordinator will retain copies of the registration form and provide copies of the disaster/state of emergency form to the volunteer.
- 4.8 Recognition Activities. While, by definition, volunteers receive no financial remuneration for their services, it is important to formally recognize the importance of their contributions. To this end, LAC-DMH participates in the annual Los Angeles County Volunteer of the Year Recognition and Award Program.
  - 4.8.1 In January of each year, LAC-DMH will select a Volunteer of the Year and submit his/her name to the Chief Executive Office as part of the Countywide Volunteer Recognition Program.
  - 4.8.2 The HRBVC shall solicit nominations for the Countywide Volunteer Recognition Program throughout LAC-DMH, convene a selection committee to review the nominations, and recommend the selection of the LAC-DMH Volunteer of the Year to the Director of Mental Health.
  - 4.8.3 LAC-DMH encourages its staff to support the recognition of the Department's Volunteer of the Year by attending the annual Recognition and Awards Program.



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- 4.8.4 LAC-DMH encourages programs to conduct local recognition events and honor their volunteers.
- 4.9 County Employee Volunteers in Countywide Programs. County employees may volunteer their services to the County as long as the work they perform as volunteers is outside their scope of duties as a County employee.
  - 4.9.1 Time sheets maintained for LAC-DMH volunteers should verify that the hours worked were outside of the hours during which the employee is regularly employed and specify that the work performed was voluntary and not paid.
- 4.10 County Volunteers in Private Not-For-Profit Programs. There are no restrictions for County employees performing volunteer work outside of their County employment unless such volunteer work presents a conflict of interest with their County job.
- 4.11 Mutual Aid Agreements. LAC-DMH employees who provide a specific service to another governmental agency as part of a mutual aid agreement may volunteer to perform for that agency the same type of service for which they are paid by the County.

**AUTHORITY**

1. Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office
2. LAC-DMH Policy No. 106.7, Student Placement in Department of Mental Health Programs
3. California Government Code, Section 3100 (Disaster Services Workers)

**ATTACHMENT**

1. [Volunteer Application Packet](#)

**RESPONSIBLE PARTY**

LAC-DMH Human Resources Bureau