



Volunteer Risk and Program Management (VRPM) Handbook

Oregon SMP

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Section 1.0: Introductory Volunteer Engagement Policies

1.1 Overall policy on engagement of volunteers

Policy: The SMP accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at a range of levels and within all appropriate projects and activities. Involvement of volunteers is a key component of the SMP.

Rationale: The achievement of the goals of the SMP is best served by the active participation of citizens of the community. Volunteers are an integral part of the SMP team and are essential to effective delivery of SMP services to beneficiaries. Volunteers contribute unique talents, time and knowledge, complementing the skills and dedication of SMP paid staff.

1.2 Scope of the volunteer policies

Policy: Unless specifically stated, these volunteer policies apply to all volunteers in all programs and projects undertaken by or on behalf of the SMP, including volunteer involvement that is organized and managed in SMP volunteer host organizations (VHOs). The pivotal variable in the application of these volunteer policies is volunteers' performance of SMP work. Where volunteers are clearly performing what could reasonably be called "SMP work" under the direction and control of the SMP, those volunteers and their coordination are subject to the provisions of these volunteer policies.

Rationale: The policies apply throughout the SMP system to all entities that control or manage volunteers performing SMP work. These volunteers who are also agents of the SMP while working day-to-day with other partners (volunteer host organizations – VHOs), are still the responsibility of the SMP. Noncompliance creates potential risk to volunteers themselves and/or beneficiaries and potential liability for the SMP and/or the VHO.

Definitions: See the Definitions of Terms section that follows these policies for further clarification about the terms volunteer and volunteer host organization.

1.3 Compliance

Policy: Volunteers are made aware of all volunteer policies. Not knowing a policy is not acceptable if the policy has been communicated and the volunteer ought to have known. SMP volunteers are expected to conduct their work with a view to the larger picture of what is in the best interests of the majority of SMP beneficiaries, the integrity of SMP programming, and the long-term reputation and sustainability of the SMP itself. Compliance with all SMP volunteer policies is a minimal expectation of SMP volunteers.

Failure to comply meets with a graduated response designed wherever possible to assist the volunteer to return to functioning inside the rules. Should reasonable

efforts on the part of SMP prove unsuccessful, further disciplinary action is taken, up to and including dismissal.

Rationale: Any responsible employer and/or service provider must strike a balance between respecting the dignity, rights, and comfort of its personnel and client population and its legal and ethical obligations to deliver safe, efficient services to fulfill its mission. Sometimes satisfying both sets of obligations equally is very difficult, and tough decisions need to be taken. This is the case, when, for example, volunteers' interests, motivation, and goodwill exceed the boundaries of their defined volunteer role or when beneficiaries have legitimate needs that fall outside the mandate of the SMP program. These needs may include areas such as assistance with health or mobility issues that are valid but which do not lie within the services provided by the SMP program.

Policies and procedures, workplace rules, and prohibitions do not exist for their own sake. They have been developed to facilitate achievement of this fine balance among the SMP's obligations to its various constituents. The intent is to bring about the best outcome for all. Organizations and their volunteers exist as a team in which each of the partners brings resources to their mutual effort and each of whom possesses rights and interests that deserve protection. Volunteers have an obligation to know and understand volunteer policies and to stay current with their provisions. The policy also gives fair warning to volunteers that failure to comply with SMP policies is subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

Procedure: Mechanisms for informing volunteers include but are not necessarily limited to: various parts of the volunteer screening process; volunteer orientation; volunteer training; the volunteer handbook; volunteer in-service sessions; notices, memos, and bulletins about existing policies; and supervisory and performance evaluation sessions.

1.4 Volunteer Role Classifications

Policy: These policies apply to all roles undertaken by SMP volunteers, whether through direct service with a SMP or involvement in SMP activities via a host organization.

Titles for volunteer positions in the SMP program are not nationally standardized and the exact number and kind of volunteer roles will be determined by each SMP program. Volunteers may be qualified to serve in one or more role(s).

Rationale: The intent is to reduce the burden of imposing in-depth training, screening, and supervision on all volunteers and particularly on those who perform relatively simple and safe work for the SMP. This allows the SMP to

focus more attention and energy on working with volunteers who perform more complex tasks.

Procedure: Examples of SMP volunteer roles include, but are not be limited to, the following:

1. Administrative support aide
2. Call center operator
3. Complex interactions specialist
4. Coordinator
5. Counselor
6. Exhibitor
7. Information distributor
8. Marketer
9. Presenter
10. Team lead
11. Trainer

SMPs may create volunteer positions and related position descriptions that incorporate more than one role. When new roles are created, care is taken to determine the risks connected to the new role and to design appropriate role descriptions, screening, training, and supervisory procedures.

1.5 Policy revision

Policy: Alterations to or exceptions from the national SMP volunteer policies may only be granted by ACL and must be requested in advance and in writing. Matters not specifically covered in these national policies are determined at the state level by the SMP director, the designated coordinator of volunteers, and/or other authorized SMP staff.

Rationale: Changes in policies are a natural occurrence over time, but it is essential to control how and by whom policies may be changed.

Procedure: Questions from volunteers, staff, or affected partners regarding interpretation of these policies should be addressed to the coordinator of volunteers for clarification and ultimately determined by the SMP director.

Section 2.0: Risk Management and Health and Safety

2.1 Risk assessment

Policy: Every three years the coordinator of volunteers, along with other SMP personnel, conducts a risk assessment on the roles, work, and activities of SMP volunteers.

Also assessed regularly in connection with risk are training and qualification procedures, volunteer performance management, volunteer program management processes and activities, and volunteer worksite(s).

Risk management strategies are implemented as needed, including, in particular, local-level procedures that identify, prevent, and reduce the incidence and impact of risk.

Rationale: ACL conducted a national risk assessment for SMP that generated the national SMP VRPM policies. As a national-level process, it was, of necessity, general and high-level in nature. Each individual SMP program has unique risks and exposures, arising, for example, from: the kind of volunteer host organization (VHO) partnerships it has; its unique geographic features such as extreme weather or long, isolated distances; special services being provided to diverse target populations; the staffing complement in the volunteer program; the degree of oversight undertaken around volunteer performance; and local and state laws and regulations that bear on the involvement of volunteers.

For these reasons it is critical that SMPs implement their own risk assessment process – a local-level undertaking that will almost certainly identify unique and specialized risks in volunteering organized either directly by the SMP and/or through its VHOs. Those unique risks may require additional local level policies and procedures to bring the risks under control. It is the responsibility of each SMP to ensure that its unique risks, exposures, and risky conditions are adequately and appropriately managed.

In addition, conducting an annual risk assessment is a precursor to designing a volunteer management system that is tailored to current conditions and that enables the SMP to engage volunteers as effectively and productively as possible.

Procedure: Volunteers and paid staff are both invited to participate in this process.

Definition: Risk assessment identifies risks, assesses their magnitude, and re-examines the measures the SMP already has in place to control and mitigate risks.

2.2 Insurance

Policy: Liability and accident insurance or other comparable forms of indemnification and protection may be provided for all volunteers engaged in the

SMP's business. Insurance may also be provided through sub-contractors such as RSVP or other entities.

The SMP evaluates its insurance needs annually and ensures that its insurance providers are well aware and up to date on the work done by volunteers at the SMP.

Where insurance coverage is extended to volunteers, SMPs ensure that volunteers are explicitly identified in the relevant policies as "named insureds."

SMPs should determine the extent of coverage within their state's volunteer protection laws and within their state's liability coverage for state workers.

Rationale: The health and well-being of persons in ensuring safe and effective services to beneficiaries of which are both ethical and legal obligations of service providers.

Procedure: Volunteers are encouraged to consult with their own insurance agents regarding the extension of their personal insurance to include community volunteer work. Specific information regarding such protection is available from the coordinator of volunteers.

2.3 Automobile insurance coverage

Policy: Volunteers are advised to notify their own automobile insurance provider about their SMP driving activities and ensure coverage is in place and provides adequate protection.

SMP volunteers who drive their own vehicle for SMP work purposes are required to carry liability coverage on any vehicle so used. The cost of this insurance is borne by the volunteer.

Automobile insurance coverage is verified at least annually by the volunteer's supervisor, signed off by the volunteer, and the signed certification is retained in the volunteer's personnel file.

Volunteers immediately notify their supervisor if their automobile insurance coverage lapses.

Rationale: It is the volunteer's own automobile insurance coverage that comes into play in the event of an accident or damage while a volunteer is driving their own car for SMP work. Because volunteer driving activities might affect a volunteer's coverage or premium, volunteers must be advised to let their insurer know about their volunteer driving activities.

Despite best efforts at prevention, things can, and do, go wrong. Humans make errors. Accidents happen. Equipment fails. Weather intervenes. As a

consequence, people can be harmed and people and organizations can suffer losses. While insurance is not an organization's first defense in risk management (prevention is), it is an important backup in the event that prevention measures fail.

Procedure: On acceptance of a volunteer role with the SMP that may require driving their own vehicle, volunteers sign a certification of automobile insurance coverage. The signed certification is retained in the volunteer's personnel file. If coverage lapses, the supervisor attempts to adapt work assignments to exclude driving. If driving is essential to the role and automobile insurance coverage is not obtainable, an alternate assignment is offered to the volunteer where appropriate.

SMPs may consult with an insurance advisor in their jurisdiction and establish a minimal level of automobile insurance coverage that volunteers must carry to undertake driving as part of their SMP role. If a minimal level of automobile insurance coverage is required of volunteers who drive while on SMP duty, consultation with an insurance provider takes place annually to review the ongoing appropriateness of the required minimal level of coverage, and adjustments are made as necessary.

2.4 Safety training

Policy: Volunteers are informed of foreseeable hazardous aspects, materials, equipment, or processes they may encounter while performing volunteer work and are trained and equipped in methods to deal with all identified risks. Training for volunteers includes discussion of safe work practices and methods for responding to potentially hazardous situations. Volunteers exercise caution in all work activities.

Volunteers who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or who fail to report such situations are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Rationale: Volunteers have a responsibility to maintain safety in their own work environments, including obeying all laws and other health and safety regulations that might pertain to their work for SMP.

Procedure: SMP and VHOs communicate to volunteers the unique, position- or location-specific, and/or local hazards and provide whatever training is necessary to ensure volunteers have the knowledge and capacity to comply with safety standards. The SMP should reinforce this with further discussion of safe work practices.

2.5 Reporting of abuse

Policy: SMP volunteers who witness instances of physical, psychological, financial or verbal abuse of consumers while performing their assigned duties report this to their SMP supervisor so that appropriate follow-up action may occur.

Rationale: Volunteers may be in a position to witness or discover instances of abuse of persons they work with while on SMP duty. In many jurisdictions, reporting of abuse of vulnerable persons (older persons, children, etc.) is mandatory by law for people in certain professions or positions. This may or may not include certain volunteers. Even where reporting is not mandatory, reporting abuse is the right thing to do.

2.6 Privacy and location of counseling

Policy: Face-to-face work with individual beneficiaries primarily takes place at SMP offices (or those of partner agencies). Where beneficiaries are unable to travel to the SMP (or partner's) office, volunteers discuss with their supervisor alternate meeting arrangements that will maintain beneficiary privacy. Off-site counseling work is not undertaken by volunteers without prior approval.

Where one-to-one information is requested by an audience member at a public presentation, SMP volunteers provide only general information and do not gather personal, financial, or other confidential information from the beneficiary. Inquiries that involve the collection of such personal, financial or other confidential information are referred for a more formal counseling session in an appropriately private location.

Rationale: Counseling SMP clients can involve sharing of, and access to, private and confidential information and because beneficiaries may divulge such information even without being asked, the setting within which such exchanges take place must be controlled to prevent unauthorized people from overhearing.

2.7 Home visits

Policy: When home visits by SMP volunteers to a beneficiary's residence are determined to be necessary, the grantee is required to have protocols in place to ensure the safety of the volunteers and the beneficiaries involved.

Rationale: Any volunteer work that takes place in a potentially isolated, unregulated, or unsupervised environment, out of range of other SMP personnel and/or supervisory staff, represents increased risk to the SMP volunteer. At the same time, beneficiaries may encounter legitimate obstacles or hardships if required to travel to receive face-to-face services. This policy attempts to balance due regard for the safety and well-being of SMP volunteers with delivery of accessible services to beneficiaries.

Procedure: It is appreciated that travel to SMP premises may be difficult for some beneficiaries and/or their families. Where cost or travel logistics are a legitimate hardship, the SMP will attempt to locate a community transportation service for the beneficiary or, where necessary, make arrangements for the SMP volunteer to meet the beneficiary in a safe and secure public place that also provides an environment suitable for the exchange of confidential information, such as a neighborhood library, or by arrangement with a partner agency located more conveniently for the beneficiary.

When home visits by SMP volunteers to a beneficiary's residence are determined to be necessary, the grantee is required to have protocols in place to ensure the safety of the volunteers and the beneficiaries involved. The following are examples of protocols that could be used:

- Visits are made in pairs (two volunteers or a volunteer and a staff member).
- Notice of the visit is provided to at least one other "on-alert" SMP staff along with travel start and projected return times, beneficiary name, address, and phone number.
- At least one of the two visitors has a charged and working cell phone.
- The availability of cell phone or land line coverage is checked before entering the home; where phone coverage does not exist, the visit is cancelled.
- Volunteers who do not feel comfortable as they approach the home, or who become uncomfortable or threatened during a visit, terminate the visit in a non-confrontational manner and report the event to their supervisors as soon as possible.
- Visiting volunteers notify the on-alert staff immediately upon their return from the visit.
- If return of the volunteers is overdue by more 15 minutes, the on-alert staff attempts to contact the visiting staff by cell phone as pre-arranged; two attempts to reach the visiting staff are made at five-minute intervals.
- Failure to reach the visiting volunteers after two attempts triggers an immediate notification to the coordinator of volunteers or other SMP manager who implements further action as required, including, for example, calling the beneficiary's home, notification of authorities, and 911 contact.

Definition: Information sessions delivered in public settings in senior housing complexes, nursing homes, etc. do not constitute a "home visit" for the purposes of this policy. In these kinds of apartment or congregate housing settings, "home visit" refers to contact inside a person's private apartment, residence, or room.

2.8 Incident reporting

Policy: Any accident or injury to or by a volunteer is reported immediately to the supervisor or other SMP authority.

An incident reporting form and protocol exists. Volunteers complete required accident and injury reports promptly following any incident.

Rationale: The SMP is responsible for the safety and well-being of volunteers just as it is for the safety and well-being of paid personnel. As with paid personnel where occupational health and safety and labor laws generally make reporting mandatory, volunteers' workplace injuries and accidents need to be reported.

Definition: An "incident" may include, but is not limited to, an error in judgment, other misstep, or substandard performance (particularly in relation to provision of services to beneficiaries), lost possession, boundary breach, offensive remark, or sense of risk or peril while on duty.

2.9 Incident response

Policy: In response to a reported incident involving SMP volunteers, the coordinator of volunteers ensures/oversees the notification of relevant authorities (e.g., SMP management, police, public health, insurance, ACL, etc.) as appropriate and undertakes subsequent steps necessary to respond to and resolve the incident.

2.10 Emergency contact procedures

Policy: The SMP has emergency contact information on all of its volunteers – even short-term volunteers – and a procedure that enables volunteers to communicate with SMP supervisory personnel at any time volunteers are on duty. Response to emergency communications takes place without delay.

Rationale: Volunteers work as agents for the SMP and volunteer host organizations (VHOs), who are therefore responsible for those volunteers when they are volunteering. Volunteers should be able to reach their supervisor or another SMP/VHO authority in the event of an incident, danger, or substantive programming question while on duty. It is equally critical that the organization is able to reach the volunteer in the event of a change of schedule or other event that requires off-hours contact.

2.11 Disaster plan

Policy: The SMP has a plan for dealing with natural disasters, including flood, tornado, earthquake, and pandemic. This plan includes a communication plan for alerting volunteers who might be engaged in performing SMP work in affected communities.

Rationale: The SMP is responsible for the safety and well-being of volunteers just as they are for the safety and well-being of their paid personnel.

Section 3.0: Volunteer Program Management

The 122 policies in this section pertain to volunteer program management. They are divided into the following subcategories. *(If viewing electronically, clicking the hyperlinks will advance you to selected categories.)*

- [Infrastructure](#)
- [Role design](#)
- [Recruitment](#)
- [Screening](#)
- [Placement](#)
- [Orientation and training](#)
- [Performance management](#)
- [Volunteer behavior, performance, and roles](#)
- [Retention and recognition](#)
- [Volunteer/paid staff relationships](#)

Infrastructure

3.1 Fair and equitable application

Policy: SMP policies guiding volunteer program management apply equally to all SMP volunteers, and compliance with these policies is a condition of continued volunteer involvement in the SMP.

Rationale: It is critical that such policies be applied fairly and equitably with all volunteers.

3.2 Community representativeness

Policy: The SMP strives to develop a volunteer population that mirrors the diversity of the community in which it operates.

Rationale: This diversity allows the SMP to better understand and serve its community and concerted efforts are made to achieve community representativeness. The more representative a volunteer population is of the population within the area that it serves, the easier it is to reach out to new volunteers and be effective in serving all constituencies.

3.3 Beneficiaries and relatives as volunteers

Policy: Relatives of beneficiaries may serve as SMP volunteers, but are not placed in a position of direct service or relationship to members of their family who are receiving services.

Rationale: Many volunteers come to volunteer for an organization because a relative or friend is receiving service there. This is a worthy motivation; however, there is the risk of putting a volunteer into a potential conflict situation if he or she is directly working with a relative or friend.

3.4 Service at the discretion of the SMP

Policy: The SMP accepts the service of volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the SMP.

Volunteers agree that the SMP may at any time decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the SMP or to make changes in the nature of their volunteer assignment.

A volunteer may at any time, for any reason, decide to sever her or his volunteer tenure with the SMP.

Rationale: The SMP has both the right and the obligation to ensure that its volunteers are capable of effectively providing service. This means that the SMP must retain the right to determine when a volunteer is not suitable for continued service and to end the service of a volunteer who is deemed not suitable. At the same time, volunteers reserve their own right to, at any time and for any reason, resign from the SMP.

Procedure: Notice of such a decision should be communicated at least two weeks in advance, or as soon as possible to the volunteer's supervisor.

3.5 Volunteer rights and responsibilities

Policy: Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to the SMP, its staff, and its beneficiaries.

Volunteers have the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equal co-workers, the right to effective supervision, the right to be informed about significant matters affecting their roles and the right to recognition for work done.

In return, volunteers agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities, comply with these Volunteer Policies and other work-related direction and provisions, and remain loyal to the values, goals and procedures of the SMP.

3.6 Volunteer program management system

Policy: The SMP ensures that an infrastructure is in place to support volunteer involvement and volunteer program management that, together, create effective, productive, safe, and rewarding volunteer involvement.

Rationale: Management of volunteers is in many ways no different from management of any other organizational resource; it requires planning,

support, and a systematic approach. Volunteers are such a valuable resource that they both deserve and require a management structure that enables and assists them to make a contribution to the organization and to the community.

Definition: The volunteer program management system may include, but is not limited to:

- communication system
- reporting and accountability system
- program evaluation system
- performance management system
- risk management system
- operating budget
- staff resources
- accessible, appropriate physical space and necessary equipment

Many specific parts of the volunteer program management infrastructure are further identified and described in these volunteer policies.

3.7 Coordinator of volunteers

Policy: The SMP has at least one staff person with designated responsibility for coordinating and managing the involvement of volunteers. As required by program or budgetary limitations, this role may be shared among staff.

Rationale: Operation of the volunteer program management system in the SMP requires professional skills, time and attention. The productive engagement of volunteers requires a planned and organized effort. This individual (referred to in these policies as the coordinator of volunteers) provides a central coordinating point for effective volunteer involvement within the SMP, and directs and assists staff and volunteer efforts jointly to provide more productive services.

Procedure: The coordinator of volunteers bears primary responsibility for planning for effective volunteer deployment, for assisting staff and host organizations in identifying productive and creative volunteer roles, for recruiting suitable volunteers, and for tracking and evaluating the contribution of volunteers to the SMP.

The coordinator of volunteers works with all levels, units and host organizations of the SMP to plan, develop and manage a unified and consistent process for the involvement of volunteers. The coordinator of volunteers takes the lead in assisting all units of the SMP in creating and implementing productive and effective volunteer involvement, ensuring a quality volunteering experience. The coordinator of volunteers is involved in all significant SMP decisions likely to affect volunteers and the volunteer program management system.

Coordinators of Volunteers are selected for their professional skills and experience in working with volunteers and receive additional training in volunteer program management as necessary. Staff and budgetary allocations are made to ensure that the coordinator of volunteers position is appropriately remunerated and staffed to a level sufficient to ensure effective management of the program. If such responsibility is designated as a part-time responsibility, then other duties are reduced to allow sufficient time and focus to ensure attainment of high standards of volunteer program management, including compliance with all pertinent portions of these volunteer policies.

3.8 Resources for volunteer support and involvement

Policy: An annual budget for the volunteer management unit is formulated with input from the coordinator of volunteers.

Rationale: While time contributed by volunteers is “free,” management of that time is not. Volunteer programs require all the resources common to any effective program, including adequate budget, space, and staffing.

Procedure: This project budget covers costs related to staffing of the volunteer program management unit, volunteer recruitment and screening, staff and volunteer training, volunteer supervision and recognition, and all other appropriate areas of volunteer program operation.

The volunteer program management budget provides for space, financial resources and support staff to operate the volunteer program in an effective manner.

3.9 Maintenance of records

Policy: A system of records is maintained on each volunteer, including, but not necessarily limited to:

- application and related information gathered in the screening process
- dates of service
- positions held
- training and orientation received
- duties performed and achievements attained
- performance records including appropriate documentation of any performance issues
- awards received
- record of exit
- current contact information

Rationale: Accurate and current records regarding volunteers are essential to a volunteer program because they provide the data that allows for continuous and consistent supervision, even if there is staff turnover. These records

provide a history of the volunteers' involvement and are essential in protecting the SMP in the event of a lawsuit because they will outline the care that the SMP has taken in screening, training, and supervising its volunteers. Inadequate records may themselves be viewed as evidence of insufficient management.

Procedure: Volunteers and relevant staff submit all appropriate records and information to the coordinator of volunteers in a timely and accurate fashion.

Volunteer personnel records are accorded the same confidentiality as staff personnel records. Volunteer records are kept in a secure location and requests for information contained in the records are approved as appropriate by the coordinator of volunteers.

3.10 Volunteer access to personnel record

Policy: Upon reasonable notice, volunteers may examine the contents of their own personnel file.

Rationale: Volunteers are entitled to examine the contents of their personnel file, just like paid staff.

Procedure: Volunteers wishing to access their files are accompanied by the coordinator of volunteers. Volunteers wishing to make an addition or correction to their file submit a written proposal to the coordinator of volunteers.

Inactive files will be maintained for a minimum period of seven years after the volunteer's involvement with SMP ends.

3.11 Evaluation of the volunteer involvement and the volunteer program management system

Policy: The coordinator of volunteers conducts regular evaluations of both volunteer involvement and the infrastructure in place to support volunteer involvement in the SMP.

Procedure: The coordinator of volunteers provides periodic reports to appropriate senior leadership on current operations and future needs.

These evaluations include feedback from both volunteers and paid staff, along with community partners as appropriate. The evaluations outline future goals and plans for improvement in the use of volunteers by the SMP.

Role Design

3.12 Volunteer role development

Policy: Volunteers may fill a wide range of standard roles at the SMP. All roles must conform to the primary goals of the SMP program.

SMP staff are encouraged to identify possible new roles for SMP volunteers. Volunteers may be invited to serve at a range of levels of skill and decision-making.

Rationale: This policy is the rationale for developing an array of volunteer opportunities. Volunteers, like staff, can fill a number of roles that should be identified and described so that the volunteers can be assigned work congruent with the organization's needs and the volunteer's interests and abilities. Volunteer roles add value to SMP services.

Procedure: Creativity in role development is encouraged to engage a wide array of volunteer skills and make volunteer participation accessible to a diverse population of prospective volunteers. The coordinator of volunteers assists staff in the development of volunteer assignments and role descriptions. When SMP staff are expected to work alongside or supervise SMP volunteers in a newly proposed role, the input of those staff should be solicited in the development of the role.

3.13 Volunteer-Staff interface

Policy: Volunteer resources do not displace paid staff. The availability of volunteer resources is never a factor in the consideration of staff layoffs, terminations or loss through attrition. Volunteers supplement but do not supplant the work of paid staff.

Rationale: Volunteers should be used to increase reach of the program and better serve beneficiaries not used to replace or displace paid staff. There is little that can destroy a volunteer program faster than animosity between paid staff and volunteers. If paid staff sense that volunteers may be "used" to threaten paid staff job security, the suspicion, tension, and sometimes outright hostility will chase volunteers off. Volunteers are an adjunct to the work of paid staff, not a substitute for it.

3.14 Role descriptions

Policy: Prior to any recruitment effort or volunteer assignment, a role description is developed for each volunteer position. All role descriptions include, but may not be limited to the following:

- purpose of the role
- role duties
- designated supervisor

- worksite location(s)
- time frame for the performance of the work along with work schedule
- qualifications
- benefits of the role to volunteers

Rationale: It is important that volunteers understand their duties before they agree to volunteer. A written role description helps ensure volunteers understand their role and its responsibilities. Volunteers benefit from a clear, complete, and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the role that they are expected to fill. Volunteer role descriptions create the SMP's legal basis to screen volunteers for suitability for specific roles and form the basis of the volunteer performance management system.

Procedure: A role description(s) is (are) made available to all prospective volunteers when they apply to become a SMP volunteer and provided to each SMP volunteer upon acceptance as a volunteer.

Role descriptions are reviewed and updated at least annually by the coordinator of volunteers, or whenever a role changes substantially.

3.15 Standards of performance

Policy: Standards of performance are established for each volunteer role. A copy of the relevant standards of performance is provided to all volunteers at the beginning of their assignment.

Rationale: From the beginning of their involvement volunteers have a right to know the standards of performance that apply to the work they will do. Performance standards are the basis for both communicating expectations and appraising volunteer performance. Failing to create and communicate standards of performance is both unfair and almost certain to hamper program goal attainment.

Procedure: These standards list the work to be done in that role, measurable indicators of whether the work was accomplished to the required standards, and appropriate time frames for accomplishment of the work. Creation of these standards is a joint function of the coordinator of volunteers, relevant paid staff, and wherever possible, volunteers already in the role.

3.16 Refusal of assignments

Policy: Volunteers are expected to refuse work assignments whenever an assignment exceeds the parameters of the volunteer role description, requires the volunteer to perform a function for which they have not been trained or are not qualified, or exceeds the limits of their individual capacity.

Rationale: The essence of volunteer work is that it is voluntary. Volunteers must have the right to refuse assignments and must feel comfortable doing so. Sometimes volunteers may be asked to work beyond their role responsibilities by beneficiaries, paid staff, or others. Volunteers must refuse to step outside the limits of their role descriptions. Volunteers must be empowered and feel confident to refuse work assignments, particularly in connection with staying safely within the boundaries of their defined roles. Refusing such assignments shouldn't affect their position with the agency.

Procedure: Wherever possible, volunteers provide advance notice of refusal to the coordinator of volunteers or direct supervisor along with reasons for the refusal.

3.17 Paid staff requests for volunteers

Policy: Requests from paid staff for volunteer assistance are communicated to the coordinator of volunteers by interested staff.

The coordinator of volunteers recruits and places volunteers only in settings where staff are clearly supportive of volunteer involvement and willing to work together with, and provide support for, volunteer participation.

Rationale: Because the relationship between paid staff and volunteers is a critical factor to volunteer satisfaction and retention, volunteers are placed where staff support exists. It is understood that the recruitment and satisfaction of volunteers are enhanced by creative and interesting roles. Volunteers are not always easy to locate and require screening, orientation, and training.

Procedure: The coordinator may need up to several weeks or even months to find, train, and place a suitable volunteer for any given position, so advance notice is given well ahead of the role start date. An outline of the volunteer role and suggested time frame accompany each request.

3.18 Worksite

Policy: A safe and appropriate worksite is established for every volunteer.

Rationale: It is the responsibility of the SMP to ensure that their volunteers are working in a safe and well-equipped environment. Volunteers recognize efforts to attend to their well-being, and such efforts convey a sense of welcome and appreciation.

Procedure: If off-site facilities are frequently utilized by SMP volunteers, the SMP should conduct an examination of these facilities to determine their accessibility, appropriateness, and safety.

Definition: Safe and appropriate worksites contain facilities, equipment, and space necessary for volunteers to safely, effectively and comfortably perform their duties.

3.19 Length of service

Policy: All volunteer roles have a set term of service. Volunteer assignments end at the conclusion of their set term, without expectation or requirement of re-assignment of that role to the incumbent.

Rationale: Because volunteers have a right to know the expected tenure of the position and because time-limited roles are much easier to recruit to, volunteer positions have a time limit on them. It is only fair to honor the agreed-upon time commitment by ending a position as scheduled; volunteers need to feel they can leave the position without guilt. Additionally, renewal of a termed volunteer engagement should not be automatic, particularly where a volunteer's performance or reliability have failed to meet standards.

Procedure: Terms ideally are of one year duration or less, with an option for renewal at the discretion of both parties. Volunteers sign an agreement to fulfill the designated term of work. This agreement is mandatory in roles for which extensive training is required or for roles in which volunteers are assigned to a specific case or to work with a specific beneficiary.

Volunteers are neither expected nor required to continue their involvement with the SMP at the end of their set term, although in most cases they are welcome to do so where performance standards have been met.

At any time, volunteers may seek a different volunteer assignment within the SMP or with another organization, or may retire from volunteer service.

3.20 Leaves of absence

Policy: At the discretion of the coordinator of volunteers, in consultation with the volunteer's immediate supervisor where appropriate, leaves of absence are granted to volunteers.

Rationale: Volunteers sometimes need to take a break from their volunteer work. It is more desirable to grant a leave of absence with the hope of having the volunteer return at some point in the future than losing a volunteer completely. If the leave is of significant duration, retraining may be needed in advance of re-entry.

Procedure: Leave does not necessarily alter or extend the previously agreed upon completion date of the volunteer's term of service. This is negotiated with the volunteer when the leave is arranged.

Recruitment

3.21 Recruitment

Policy: Volunteers are recruited by the SMP on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and extending SMP services to beneficiaries.

Acceptance as a volunteer is not automatic. Volunteers fulfill all screening, orientation and training requirements for the role in which they are interested before being accepted into service.

Rationale: Effective volunteer programs have a plan for maintaining their volunteer population, often targeting specific segments of the community that can best help the program provide services. This targeting may focus on elements such as ethnicity, geographic location, or other characteristics, with the intention of “broadening” or “shaping” the volunteer population to make it more capable of providing services to a wide(r) scope of the community. Effective recruitment also requires intentional rejection of some prospective volunteers, based on their inability to meet the needs of the SMP or of the inability of the SMP to meet the needs of the prospective volunteers.

Procedure: From time to time, recruitment campaigns may be launched to attract volunteers who may better serve targeted beneficiary populations. Volunteers are recruited through a variety of mechanisms. They enter the application process either through an interest in a specific function, or through a general interest in volunteering for the SMP in which case they will later be matched with a specific function.

3.22 Non-Discrimination

Policy: Volunteer roles are open to community members of all ages above the age of majority regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ancestry, mental or physical disability, medical condition, disability, political activity, marital status, or age. The sole qualification for volunteer assignment to a specific role is suitability to perform a task on behalf of the SMP.

3.23 Recruitment of minors

Policy: Volunteer roles open to the engagement of minors have clearly prescribed responsibilities well suited to young persons, occur in a supervised and non-hazardous environment, and comply with all child labor laws.

Rationale: The majority of SMP volunteer roles are suitable to adults only.

Procedure: Volunteers who have not reached the age of majority may be considered for selected volunteer roles upon the written consent of a parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering.

3.24 Advertisement of volunteer opportunities

Policy: Opportunities to volunteer are publicized broadly and through a variety of methods to ensure that no group of people is excluded because of limited distribution of information.

3.25 Communication with prospective volunteers

Policy: Response to people who express an initial interest in volunteering with the SMP is speedy. A response protocol exists to prevent undue delay and ensure that prospective volunteers receive a welcoming and effective recruitment message.

Rationale: Prospective volunteers are often highly motivated and typically want to become active as soon as possible. Prospective volunteers are therefore quite sensitive to the time that organizations take to respond to their inquiries. They may leave if made to wait for a connection to the organization.

Procedure: It is made clear to prospective volunteers from the beginning of their connection with the SMP that volunteers undertake important work in this program. Communication is open and forthcoming. The responsibilities of the SMP volunteer roles and the high standards of performance and conduct expected of SMP volunteers are not downplayed.

3.26 Wait list

Policy: If volunteer opportunities are not immediately available or initial volunteer training is not available quickly, the SMP may maintain a wait list of interested prospective volunteers or help volunteers find other suitable volunteer work

Procedure: Because prospective volunteers typically want to become active as soon as possible and leave if made to wait for a connection to the organization, the SMP attempts to engage people quickly through continuous intake.

Screening

3.27 Selection policy

Policy: The decision to accept (or not) each volunteer applicant is based on careful consideration of all pertinent information gathered in the screening process.

The SMP strives to maintain a safe and productive workplace with honest, trustworthy, reliable and qualified volunteers who do not present a risk of harm to themselves, other persons, or the reputation of the SMP. Screening processes are clear and comprehensive and standards are never waived, even for persons known to the screener.

Screening inquiries are limited to collecting information directly connected to the ability of the applicant to effectively perform volunteer work for the SMP.

The SMP applies a formal selection process to all prospective volunteers. This process varies according to the nature and degree of responsibility in the work to be done, access to money or other valuables, access to personal or confidential information, and/or access to beneficiaries or members of the public.

Positions of trust are subject to significantly more rigorous screening inquiries.

Rationale: Volunteer screening is a critical component of both human resources management and risk management. To be fair to all applicants and, in many cases, to comply with relevant human rights legislation, the screening process needs to be applied appropriately to all applicants, based upon the role for which they are applying.

3.28 Screening authority

Policy: Screening and acceptance decisions are made by authorized persons only, typically the coordinator of volunteers.

Rationale: Screening is often a complex and multi-part function that typically requires significant expertise, not just in knowing what mechanisms to use and how to use them effectively but also in how to assess all the information collected in the screening process to come to the best screening decision. It is a function that should be carried out by a trained and experienced individual. Screening decisions should be made only by a designated screening authority.

Procedure: A list of authorized persons will be maintained by the SMP.

3.29 Equity and human rights compliance

Policy: While screening processes vary by role, applicants for any given role are screened in the same way as all other applicants for that same role.

All screening inquiries and decisions comply with relevant human rights requirements.

3.30 Right of refusal

Policy: Acceptance as a volunteer is not automatic. The SMP reserves the right not to accept applicants based on an objective and equitable assessment of their suitability.

Rationale: Not all people are suited to all positions. Screening and placement decisions must focus solely on the ability of the applicant to do the work and meet performance standards.

3.31 Full disclosure of process and volunteer consent

Policy: Prospective volunteers are notified early in the application process about the range of screening inquiries used by the SMP for its various volunteer roles. No screening inquiry is undertaken without the prior knowledge and permission of the applicant.

Prospective volunteers agree to the right of SMP to conduct appropriate inquiries regarding the background and qualifications of applicants and cooperate fully in the fulfillment of these checks.

Prospective volunteers have the right to refuse permission for any line of screening inquiry in which case the SMP reserves the right to terminate the application process and refuse acceptance as an SMP volunteer.

Applicants are informed of a projected time line of the screening process at the time of their initial interview. They are updated if screening takes longer than expected. Prospective volunteers are informed of the outcome of their application as expeditiously as possible, preferably within one week of the decision.

Rationale: Because a screening process can be long and sometimes somewhat intrusive, depending upon the role, it is only fair that applicants understand and agree to the full screening process before it begins.

Procedure: Applicants sign an agreement allowing the SMP to complete its screening inquiries. The agreement gives permission to references and others to disclose relevant information to the SMP. Volunteers receive an estimate of the time needed to complete the screening process and a timely response upon completion.

3.32 Application form

Policy: A standardized application form is completed by all prospective SMP volunteers.

Rationale: Standardizing the application form not only ensures that all applicants are treated in the same way, but it also ensures that complete and uniform information is collected on all applicants.

3.33 Interviews

Policy: All prospective volunteers are interviewed to ascertain their suitability for, and interest in, various roles at the SMP.

Rationale: Interviews determine volunteers' qualifications and commitment to fulfill the requirements of the role, and provide ample opportunity for interviewees to ask questions about the program, volunteer duties, and gain

any other information they may need to make an informed decision about volunteering with the SMP.

Procedure: Interviews are conducted either in person or by other means such as by telephone or internet. Whenever possible, however, interviews are conducted in person because this both allows the SMP to better evaluate the volunteer and allows the volunteer to better form a positive opinion of the SMP. It also allows the SMP to ensure that the person being interviewed is actually the correct applicant and not someone acting as a surrogate.

3.34 Availability of suitable volunteer roles

Policy: In cases where the interview does not uncover a suitable placement for a prospective volunteer, or where the SMP cannot meet his or her interests, needs or availability, the coordinator of volunteers recommends that the volunteer seek placement elsewhere.

3.35 Conflict of interest

Policy: No person who has a conflict of interest in connection with the work they will do at the SMP, whether personal, philosophical, or financial may serve as a volunteer. Volunteers do not promote any personal or business interest while undertaking their SMP assignment.

One example of persons with an inherent conflict of interest is anyone who receives compensation for enrolling beneficiaries in a specific insurance plan or plans.

Rationale: Given the sensitive nature of SMP work, the need for objectivity, and the ever-present possibility of fraud and abuse, even inside the SMP, the screening of volunteers must be done carefully to avoid a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest.

Procedure: SMP volunteers sign a conflict of interest statement and agree to immediately notify their designated supervisor if any potential conflict arises during performance of their duties. All possible conflicts of interest are immediately reported by volunteers to their supervisor.

SMP can attempt to resolve conflicts of interest through, for example, changes of volunteer duties or changes of volunteer role. If a conflict of interest cannot be resolved, the volunteer may be relieved of duty.

3.36 Reference checks

Policy: At least two personal and/or professional references are checked for prospective volunteers who may be placed in a position of trust at the SMP.

Rationale: Reference checks are a fundamental step in the screening process. They can reveal a good deal about a candidate’s previous experience and performance, work, and personal characteristics and strengths.

3.37 Background checks

Policy: Background checks vary according to volunteer role and may include, but may not be limited to verification of:

1. identity
2. volunteer history and experience
3. employment history and experience
4. education
5. social security number

Rationale: Particularly for positions of trust, background checks are an essential screening step to ensure that candidates are who they claim to be and to verify several critical pieces of information they provide.

Definition: Note that in common usage the term “background check” is sometimes synonymous with “criminal records check.” In these policies, the two are very different things. A “background check” includes any or all of the five checks noted in the policy above, while the term “criminal records check” refers specifically and only to a check of an applicant’s criminal history; it is not part of the background check, but is separate from it (see next policy).

3.38 Criminal records check

Policy: All prospective volunteers applying for any position of trust at the SMP are subjected to a national-level criminal record check.

The SMP has a protocol for determining which criminal violations render an applicant unsuitable for SMP assignments.

Rationale: Despite their limitations, criminal records checks have become an industry standard in the field of volunteer program management in connection with screening for positions of trust. Failure to conduct criminal records checks for positions of trust may not only lead to the engagement of an inappropriate or even harmful applicant but also leave the organization vulnerable to legal action for failure.

On the other hand, checking for a criminal record on a person who is not in a position of trust or who is otherwise performing relatively low-level work in a controlled environment may actually represent a breach of privacy or provide grounds for an allegation of discrimination because the check is not demonstrably related to position responsibilities.

Procedure: The presence of a criminal record is not an automatic disqualifier from SMP volunteer work. The nature of the offense, when it occurred, and other pertinent information are considered in combination with all other information gathered in the screening process, and the acceptance decision is based on an overall assessment of the qualifications and appropriateness of the candidate for the role in question.

3.39 Driver's license and record checks

Policy: Prospective volunteers whose volunteer responsibilities at the SMP involve operation of a motor vehicle are subjected to two specific screening inquiries:

- proof of valid driver's license
- driver's record check

Prospective volunteers whose responsibilities require operation of a motor vehicle are subjected to a driver's record check. Driving offenses may disqualify applicants for roles involving driving. The nature and number of the offense(s) and when it (they) occurred will be considered in the screening decision.

3.40 Limiting conditions affecting volunteer work

Policy: Volunteers who have any medical or psychological condition that might affect the safe and effective performance of their volunteer work are requested to consult with the coordinator of volunteers about their ability to perform their assigned duties.

Rationale: This is a safety precaution for both the volunteer and the SMP to be used when there may be doubt about a volunteer's capacity to continue or take on the work assigned. This screening device can be used in the initial volunteer intake process or at some later point when ongoing capacity to perform assigned duties comes into question.

3.41 Probationary period

Policy: All new volunteers are placed on probation for a period of three months after their initial training is complete and they have been placed into a role. Adjustments are made wherever appropriate, including the possibility of placement into a different volunteer role that better suits the volunteer. If it is determined by either party during the probation period that involvement in the work of the SMP is not appropriate, termination can be immediate and without prior notice or reason provided by either party.

Probationary status also applies to volunteers who have been reassigned to new roles with the SMP.

Rationale: The probation period allows both the volunteer and the SMP to assess the appropriateness of the "fit" between the volunteer's interests, skills

and abilities and the mission, values and work of the SMP. Importantly, a formal probation period allows either party to communicate to the other that the situation is just not working out, and to do so without penalty or lengthy explanation.

Procedure: The coordinator of volunteers makes formal contact with volunteers at the end of their probationary period to: 1) end it and finalize their acceptance, or 2) make alternate plans if a volunteer's tenure is in question.

3.42 Documenting screening

Policy: The SMP has a screening documentation process that sets out what documentation is created, for how long it is retained, and when it is to be destroyed.

Rationale: Because volunteers are placed in positions of trust from which they could be harmed or cause harm to others, the potential for legal action arising is ever-present, although remote. The organization could be called on to explain and justify its screening processes (e.g., were they fair and equitable light of human rights provisions?) and to defend its screening decisions (e.g., were they non-discriminatory, sufficiently thorough, and duly diligent in light of potential allegations of negligence in screening?).

Screening documentation is both created and retained so that the organization has proof of its screening processes and a basis to defend its screening decisions in a legal action.

Procedure: Documentation is retained as follows:

- For applicants accepted into volunteer service: Screening documentation becomes part of the volunteer's personnel file and is retained for a minimum of seven years after the volunteer's involvement with the SMP terminates.
- For applicants not accepted into volunteer service: Screening documentation is retained for a minimum of six months after the volunteer has been notified of the non-acceptance of their offer of involvement.

3.43 Confidentiality of screening information

Policy: The confidentiality of information collected during volunteer screening is carefully protected. It may be shared with SMP screening/hiring authorities as needed in the determination of volunteer suitability.

3.44 Incomplete or false information

Policy: Falsification of information, including material omission or misrepresentation, at any point during screening is grounds for immediate

disqualification from the application process, or even immediate dismissal if the falsehood is discovered after acceptance.

3.45 New screening standards for current volunteers

Policy: All SMP volunteers, regardless of length of tenure, are subject to the provisions of all volunteer policies, including new policies coming into effect during an existing volunteer's tenure.

Existing volunteers must meet all new screening standards relevant to the role(s) they hold, with the exception of interviews and reference checks which do not need to be initiated or repeated with existing SMP volunteers.

Rationale: Inconsistencies in the screening process allow for a greater likelihood of substandard, inappropriate, or potentially harmful behavior by SMP volunteers. Screening some volunteers to a newly created standard and allowing the majority of volunteers – those who are already in the program – to not meet those standards is ethically questionable and legally difficult to defend. Double standards can also set up animosity between new and current volunteers because the former would now be subjected to a more rigorous process than the latter.

Procedure: Existing SMP volunteers are not exempt from any of the following processes that would newly apply to the role(s) they hold as SMP volunteers:

- application form
- national level criminal records check
- background checks
- driver's license and record checks

Existing volunteers must complete, within three months of the date of their effectiveness, all new screening processes that now apply to the volunteer role(s) they hold. Failure to complete all necessary screening processes results in suspension of duties until compliance is achieved. Continued refusal can result in immediate dismissal.

3.46 Reconfirmation of screening

Policy: The SMP has a policy on how often various record checks (e.g., criminal records checks, driver's records check, etc.) will be repeated.

Rationale: Criminal records checks, driver's records checks, and so on are time-limited. It is not unusual for organizations to check driver's records during the initial screening process and engage volunteers for years without ever again checking to ensure that they still have a license, haven't been convicted of serious moving vehicle violations, or haven't let their auto insurance lapse. Imagine something going wrong and the SMP having to defend itself in a legal

action: Not having rechecked volunteers' (dis)qualifications for years to ensure that they were still trusted to perform the work would be difficult to justify.

Procedure: Frequency of re-checks varies with the nature of the work and the degree of access and trust vested in the role.

3.47 Up-Screening

Policy: Prospective volunteers are screened to the level of intensiveness dictated by the role(s) for which they apply. If a volunteer applies for transfer to another volunteer role for which the initial screening process is more intensive than for the role the volunteer has been occupying, the volunteer is subjected to the additional screening inquiries of the role being applied for. Failure to satisfactorily meet these additional screening requirements is grounds for denial of the transfer.

Rationale: In the same way that current volunteers are subjected to new screening standards, volunteers who move into new roles that require more or different screening than whatever applied in their previous role must meet all screening standards of the new role.

3.48 Screening of previous volunteers

Policy: Re-acceptance of previous SMP volunteers is not automatic. Re-acceptance decisions are based on past performance and the results of any updated or additional screening inquiries undertaken in connection with the role for which the person is applying.

Rationale: Volunteers sometimes leave a volunteer position and come back to volunteer at some point in the future. Reacceptance is not automatic. Reacceptance must be a thoughtful process that meets the same screening standards and degree of diligence that apply to the initial screening.

3.49 Revisions to the screening process

Policy: Screening protocol is adjusted as roles change, and/or as standards of care and due diligence recommend.

Placement

3.50 Placement

Policy: When placing a volunteer in a role, attention is paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and to the requirements of the volunteer role. Placements are not made unless the requirements of the volunteer, the role requirements, and the supervising staff can be met. Volunteers are not placed in roles where paid staff are unsupportive.

Rationale: Most people can be induced to volunteer for anything for a short period of time but if you want them to volunteer for longer periods you must

find work that motivates them. This requires understanding the interests and capabilities of the volunteer, matching them with a role that suits them, and supportive paid staff.

Procedure: Volunteers are made to feel comfortable in declining a suggested placement and/or in requesting changes to their assignment at any point in their relationship with the SMP. Wherever possible, volunteer roles are adjusted to meet the interests and availability of volunteers. Final placement decisions are made at the discretion of the SMP.

3.51 Staff participation in interviewing and placement

Policy: Wherever possible, paid staff who will be working with the volunteer participate in the interview and placement process.

Final assignment of volunteers does not take place without the approval of the paid staff with whom the volunteer will be working.

3.52 Acceptance and appointment

Policy: Service as a volunteer with the SMP begins only with an official, written notice of acceptance or appointment to a volunteer role.

No offer of acceptance is issued on a conditional basis pending, for example, the results of screening inquiries, and volunteers do not begin any work in the SMP until they have been formally accepted into service.

Rationale: Applying for volunteer work can be nerve wracking because many people invest a lot of themselves in their volunteer work and worry about their “acceptability.” Once the decision has been made to offer a volunteer position to an applicant, the offer must be in writing to formalize the agreement on the part of both parties.

The reason conditional offers are not made is that a volunteer on conditional acceptance could be granted access to confidential information, vulnerable beneficiaries, valuable equipment, and so on, and then it is found out as the final screening information comes in that s/he is inappropriate for the position or even potentially harmful. By that time damage may have been done.

Procedure: Notice of acceptance is given in a timely manner by the coordinator of volunteers or his or her designee.

Volunteers may be offered the opportunity to attend SMP initial volunteer training if it is scheduled while the SMP is waiting for confirmation of screening information (e.g., waiting for results of criminal records check, driver's record

check, etc.) as long as volunteers understand that they are not yet accepted as SMP volunteers and still agree to devote time to training under these terms.

3.53 Placement check-in

Policy: 30-days after a volunteer's placement, a second interview with the volunteer is conducted, providing an opportunity for mutual assessment of the initial placement. At this point either the volunteer or the SMP may request an adjustment to the role, re-assignment to a different role, or determine that the volunteer is unsuitable for a role within the SMP.

Rationale: Scheduling a placement check-in makes it possible for both parties to review the initial placement decision and to make changes if necessary. The goal is to do whatever is possible to make the match work. Failure to perform this check-in often results in volunteers who leave their positions after only a short tenure.

3.54 Re-assignment

Policy: Volunteers who are at any time re-assigned to a new role receive all appropriate orientation, training and up-screening (if applicable) before they begin work.

Orientation and Training

3.55 Orientation

Policy: All volunteers receive orientation on topics that include, but are not limited to:

- the purpose and values of the SMP
- the nature and operation of the program or activity for which they are recruited
- the purpose, duties and requirements of the role that they are accepting

Volunteers must fulfill all mandatory orientation requirements before any work is assigned to them.

Rationale: Volunteers perform better when they are given a sense of context regarding the system within which they will be working. This includes understanding the overall mission of the SMP, the system through which the SMP provides services to the community, and the nature of the role they will be performing.

New volunteers also need an orientation to how the organization works, including everything from where to hang their coat and get a cup of coffee to where they work, the workplace climate, and how people relate to one another. Providing this context will prevent unfortunate misunderstandings and inadvertent mistakes by volunteers. It also makes them feel wanted and part of the team.

3.56 Training

Policy: Minimum initial and ongoing volunteer training requirements are established by the SMP and involve the delivery of a volunteer training program tailored to specific volunteer roles. Volunteers must fulfill mandatory training requirements before any work is assigned.

Rationale: Volunteer training is essential to effective SMP service delivery, and both the SMP and its volunteers have the right to ensure that training leads to satisfactory volunteer performance.

Procedure: Training takes place with minimum delay following the acceptance of the volunteer by SMP. Volunteers who are unable to successfully complete mandatory training – initial or ongoing – are offered alternate placements with lesser requirements wherever possible.

3.57 Credit for related training

Policy: At the discretion of the SMP, credit may be given for training received from another organization that overlaps with training provided by the SMP.

3.58 Demonstrating qualifications

Policy: Following training, volunteers are tested on their knowledge and abilities for certain SMP roles and must demonstrate minimum levels of comprehension and skill. For such roles, volunteers are not assigned duties until their qualification for the role is certified, using the criteria and process required by the SMP.

Rationale: Many SMP volunteer roles depend upon volunteers having a high degree of knowledge of complex subjects. Provision of accurate and current knowledge is an essential element of SMP service delivery.

Procedure: When volunteers are unable to achieve qualification or certification for roles with this requirement, they are offered alternate role placements without such requirements, if possible.

3.59 On-the-job training

Policy: Volunteers receive specific on-the-job training which provides the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. The timing and methods for delivery of such training are appropriate to the complexity and demands of the role and the capabilities of the volunteer.

Rationale: While classroom-style training can provide the underpinnings of knowledge, on-site training offers the opportunity to fine-tune learning and skills in a real-world setting. Providing this additional layer of training offers an opportunity to greatly enhance the ability of a volunteer to perform work in precisely the manner desired by the SMP. It also offers the opportunity to make corrections in

the volunteer's performance before incorrect information is communicated or information is communicated badly to the public.

3.60 Paid staff involvement in orientation and training

Policy: Paid staff members with responsibility for service delivery have an active role in the design and delivery of both orientation and training of volunteers.

Rationale: Paid staff possess essential knowledge and techniques connected to effective performance of volunteer roles. Accordingly, staff should be involved in both designing and delivering volunteer training – particularly for those who will be assigned to them.

Procedure: Staff who supervise volunteers deliver on-the-job training to those volunteers assigned to them. The coordinator of volunteers assists where needed and ensures that all necessary training is provided.

3.61 Volunteer involvement in orientation and training

Policy: The participation of experienced volunteers is invited in the design and delivery of volunteer orientation and training.

Rationale: This creates a heightened sense being part of a team and offers the SMP an opportunity to both benefit from and honor the contributions of experienced volunteers.

3.62 Continuing education

Policy: At the discretion of the SMP, update training and/or recertification training is required for some volunteer roles.

Volunteers who are not able to meet required continuing education requirements for their role are respectfully removed from service in that role.

Rationale: As with paid staff, improvement of volunteer skill levels during their terms of service is encouraged.

Procedure: Additional training and educational opportunities are made available to volunteers wherever possible and appropriate. Volunteers who are unable to meet the continuing education requirements for certain roles are offered alternate role placements with lesser requirements, when possible.

Definition: Continuing education includes both additional information on performance of their current volunteer assignment as well as more general information related to the work and mandate of the SMP. The SMP may provide it directly or may help volunteers take part in educational programs provided by other groups.

3.63 Conference attendance

Policy: Volunteers are encouraged to attend conferences and meetings that are relevant to their volunteer assignments, including those run by the SMP and by other organizations.

Procedure: Prior approval from the volunteer's supervisor and the coordinator of volunteers is obtained before attending any conference or meeting if attendance will interfere with the volunteer's work schedule or if reimbursement of expenses is sought.

Performance Management

3.64 Components

Policy: A constructive, positive and success-oriented performance management system is in place at the SMP.

Rationale: A key principle of volunteer program management is to support volunteers to be successful in their roles. Performance management provides a wide range of support and intervention techniques to supervisors to encourage and enable productive and satisfying volunteer involvement, and to help volunteers adjust performance when necessary to meet performance standards and achieve role outcomes.

Definition: The SMP performance management system includes three primary components:

- supervision
- performance evaluation
- corrective action

Each component of the performance management system includes a range of approaches and techniques at the disposal of supervisors. The guiding principle of performance management is to match the type and extent of supervisory intervention to nature of a volunteer's responsibilities and capacity. It provides for a multiplicity of supportive and enabling responses that acknowledge and reward excellence in volunteer work. It includes positive and reinforcing informal mechanisms through more formal corrective action, to the most formal disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal.

3.65 Supervisor's role

Policy: Supervisors of volunteers follow performance management policies and procedures in their day-to-day work with volunteers.

In instances where more support, understanding or direction is needed, the coordinator of volunteers works with the day-to-day supervisor to help the volunteer to achieve necessary modifications.

Rationale: This allows the all-important early intervention to prevent more serious performance issues. Because many supervisors of volunteers may have little experience in supervision – and particularly in supervising volunteers rather than staff (there is a difference) – the coordinator of volunteers should be available to provide training, tips, advice, and support.

3.66 Notice of performance management system

Policy: Volunteers are advised of the existence of the volunteer performance management system during their initial orientation with the SMP.

Procedure: Upon acceptance into volunteer service, all SMP volunteers are provided with a copy of the SMP Volunteer Handbook along with any other performance management or evaluation instruments.

3.67 Right of supervision and support

Policy: The SMP has both the right and the obligation to provide supervision and support, to manage the work done by volunteers and to determine the nature and extent of supervisory guidance provided to volunteers.

Rationale: Many people who work with volunteers are uncertain about whether volunteers' work can be monitored and/or criticized. Many have a sense that because the gift of volunteer work is so generously given, the organization (and its personnel) has no right to be critical, ask for more, or ask for better. This policy clarifies the SMP position on volunteer supervision.

As personnel working on behalf of the SMP, volunteers are a critical part of the SMP workforce. Accordingly, the SMP has an obligation to ensure that the performance and behavior of volunteers best serves the SMP and does not diminish its ability to deliver the very best services possible to the community.

3.68 The nature of supervision and support

Policy: Supervision and support of SMP volunteers reflects the principle of positive, constructive and success-oriented guidance that underpins the SMP volunteer performance management system.

Rationale: Supervision and support of volunteers is essential to ensure consistent quality of services as well as volunteer satisfaction. This policy explains the approach taken in the SMP performance management system, which honors the contributions of volunteers and pledges the assistance of the SMP in guiding the volunteer toward a successful experience.

Definition: This is the day-to-day feedback and reward process that helps volunteers understand expectations and standards and achieve them. This approach has both reward and disciplinary components, but all of these are focused on assisting the volunteer in meeting standards and delivering a consistent level of quality service. It is very much a success-driven rather than failure-driven system.

3.69 Acceptance of supervision

Policy: Upon acceptance into service with the SMP, volunteers agree to accept supervision and support from designated supervisory personnel.

Rationale: Volunteers engage with the SMP of their own free will. Part of their decision to join the SMP team must include a willingness to agree to the rules and procedures established by the SMP. This policy ensures that volunteers are asked outright to agree to meet the standards of performance and behavior set around their roles and to act in good faith while working with their supervisor to meet these standards.

Procedure: Failure or refusal by a volunteer to accept supervision and/or to integrate the direction of the supervisor into his or her volunteer work performance are grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

3.70 Requirement of a supervisor

Policy: Each volunteer who is accepted to a SMP role has an identified supervisor who is responsible for direct supervision and support of that volunteer.

Rationale: For effective supervision of volunteers to occur, volunteers must know and interact with their supervisor, working with them on their assignments and receiving constructive feedback on the quality of their work.

Procedure: Supervisors provide day-to-day guidance for the work of the volunteer, and are available to the volunteer for consultation, assistance and support. Supervisors assign volunteer duties, involve volunteers in the communication flow of the agency, and provide constructive feedback to volunteers regarding their work.

Responsibility for volunteer supervision is reflected in the role requirements of paid staff who are volunteer supervisors, and their effectiveness as supervisors is monitored as part of their own routine performance assessment. Supervisors are more likely to dedicate time and attention to performing this supervisory responsibility if it is part of their role description.

3.71 Volunteers as volunteer supervisors

Policy: Experienced and qualified volunteers may be assigned volunteer supervision and support responsibilities provided that they are, themselves, under the direct supervision of a paid staff member.

Rationale: Engaging volunteers to help support and supervise other volunteers can help to significantly extend the scope of the volunteer program, enhance the program's effectiveness, and increase volunteer satisfaction.

3.72 Lines of communication

Policy: Volunteers receive all necessary information pertinent to the performance of their work assignments. Accordingly, volunteers are included in and have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials, meetings, and consumer records relevant to work assignments.

Rationale: Many performance management issues are the result of miscommunication and bad information. This is unfortunately a common situation among volunteers who are dispersed through the community such as within the SMP.

Procedure: Supervisors ensure that their volunteers receive all pertinent information. To facilitate the receipt of this information on a timely basis, volunteers are included on all relevant distribution schedules and are given a method for access to information circulated in their absence.

Lines of communication operate in both directions, and exist both formally and informally. Volunteers are consulted regarding decisions that would substantially affect the performance of their duties. Volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback and input, via their supervisor, on the effectiveness and organization of SMP services. All constructive suggestions are welcomed.

3.73 Evaluation of performance

Policy: Volunteers receive periodic evaluation of their work.

Rationale: It is impossible to achieve success without monitoring performance and behavior against established and communicated standards.

Procedure: Volunteer evaluations are conducted by the volunteer's immediate supervisor. Input may also be sought from other supervisory personnel who are in a position to observe volunteer performance. The role description and related standards of performance form the basis of performance evaluation.

Feedback on volunteer performance is non-threatening, constructive and supportive. It is an opportunity for mutual exchange and feedback. It includes formal acknowledgement of, and appreciation for, volunteer contributions.

Volunteers are invited to provide input and suggestions regarding their work, SMP services and the volunteer's relationship with the SMP.

Paperwork related to the volunteer's tenure is updated, including the role description, personal contact information, conflicts of interest, and any licensure relevant to their duties (e.g., proof of valid driver's license, proof of automobile insurance, etc.).

Evaluations are an opportunity to ascertain the continued interest of volunteers in SMP service in their current or other capacity.

Definition: Evaluation of performance is a more formal mechanism beyond day-to-day supervision, providing a more detailed portrayal of each volunteer's performance, on-the-job behavior, achievements and areas for improvement. Evaluations, normally conducted in person, include a review of the performance and achievements of volunteers and suggest needed changes in work style, behavior, standards or outcomes.

3.74 Documenting performance

Policy: The substance and outcomes of volunteer performance evaluations are documented by the supervisor and placed in the volunteer's personnel file.

Rationale: Written documentation of volunteer performance evaluations is essential both to allow a historical record that can be invaluable to a newly assigned supervisor of a volunteer and to demonstrate and justify appropriate supervisory and disciplinary actions in the event of legal action. Documentation should clearly show areas of discussion regarding performance issues and mutually agreed-upon remedies and actions.

Procedure: All plans for improvement are itemized along with mutually agreed upon follow-up dates and procedures.

3.75 Communication with the volunteer management unit

Policy: Supervisors of volunteers maintain regular communication with the volunteer management department – typically the coordinator of volunteers – on the status of the volunteers they are supervising, and are responsible for the timely submission of all necessary paperwork.

The coordinator of volunteers is informed immediately of any substantial change in the work or status of a volunteer and is consulted in advance before any corrective action is taken.

Rationale: Management of volunteers within the SMP is a team effort among SMP, VHO staff (when applicable), and the coordinator of volunteers. Accordingly, these parties should maintain a regular flow of communication regarding the status of volunteer performance and should ensure that other parties are immediately informed should any substantial performance issues arise.

3.76 Progressive Corrective Action

Policy: The SMP has a written protocol for corrective action that includes a wide range of intervention techniques which are progressive in nature. When corrective action is necessary, it is positive, constructive, and success-oriented, designed to help volunteers whose performance and/or behavior is not meeting expectations.

The seriousness of corrective action is matched to the nature of the performance issue, becoming progressively more serious with either the unacceptability of the transgression or the repeated failure by the volunteer to improve the situation.

Rationale: Managing volunteer performance will occasionally require attempts to get a volunteer to modify his or her behavior. Implementing corrective action is a complex human resources management function that most people would rather avoid.

Volunteer performance issues may range from relatively minor infractions to major misconduct. They may be inadvertent errors or intentional or even criminal actions. Given this range of extent and cause, an effective correction action system must include a range of intervention strategies. Continuation or repetition of a behavior a volunteer has already been asked to correct is not acceptable and needs to be communicated clearly to the volunteer.

Consistent corrective action is more likely to be applied by supervisors if a written protocol is developed, listing the specific steps to be followed. They are also more likely to follow this protocol if they are trained in its application.

Procedure: Supervisors are trained in the constructive and respectful application of the corrective action process. Most often corrective action takes the form of a plan for change developed cooperatively between the volunteer and his or her supervisor.

Because corrective action is meant to be success-oriented rather than failure-focused, every effort is made to help the volunteer get back on track and stay involved in the program (as long as continued involvement is appropriate).

Definition - Range of Interventions: begins with the informal development of a performance improvement plan (involving such elements as additional training, coaching support from an experienced volunteer buddy, adjustment of volunteer duties, or re-assignment to a new role) to the more formal range of disciplinary techniques including warnings, suspension, or, in the absence of success through other methods, dismissal of the volunteer from service.

Definition - Progressive Corrective Action: begins with minor adjustments, but rises in seriousness with the seriousness of the volunteer's behavior and/or if he or she fails to improve performance as required.

3.77 Dismissal of a volunteer

Policy: Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules, policies or procedures of the SMP or who repeatedly fail to perform a volunteer assignment satisfactorily despite supervisory support and other corrective action interventions are subject to dismissal.

The SMP establishes grounds for dismissal of volunteers. Individual situations vary and supervisors and the coordinator of volunteers use discretion and good judgment in all decisions regarding possible volunteer dismissal.

Rationale: The SMP is responsible for the performance of its workforce, both paid and volunteer. When volunteers demonstrate a consistent unwillingness or inability to meet expectations regarding performance and behavior, then the SMP has both the right and obligation to terminate their involvement as a volunteer. Establishing specific grounds for dismissal makes it more likely that volunteers will be aware of the seriousness of some forms of misconduct and that staff will consistently apply corrective actions procedures.

Procedure: Dismissal of volunteers is typically a last resort, applied only when other available and appropriate corrective actions have not been successful.

Whenever a supervisor determines that a corrective action process may ultimately lead to volunteer dismissal, the coordinator of volunteers is immediately notified. The coordinator of volunteers works with the supervisor to implement appropriate corrective action steps.

The dismissal process allows volunteers the opportunity to discuss with supervisory staff the reasons for possible dismissal and understand that dismissal is one possible outcome should corrective action fail to ameliorate the situation.

Only the coordinator of volunteers or the supervisor of the volunteer is authorized to make the decision to terminate a volunteer's involvement from the SMP and this decision will often involve consultation between the coordinator of volunteers and his or her own supervisor.

Following is a sample list of possible grounds for dismissal. This list is for illustration purposes and is not intended to be complete or comprehensive:

- gross misconduct
- serious misjudgment that may undermine the SMP's trust in the volunteer, cause harm to others, or diminish public trust in the SMP
- insubordination including failure or unwillingness to perform essential role responsibilities and/or accept direction from authorized SMP supervisory personnel

- being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on volunteer duty or representing the SMP
- dishonesty, theft or other illegal acts
- loss of license (such as driver’s license) or certification or qualification required to perform assigned duties
- unauthorized use or misuse of SMP equipment or materials
- harm, abuse or mistreatment of beneficiaries, co-workers or other persons
- sexual harassment
- serious and repeated failure to abide by SMP policies and procedures
- failure to meet physical, cognitive or emotional standards of performance
- repeated failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties
- irresolvable conflict of interest
- serious breach of boundaries

3.78 Immediate dismissal

Policy: Some behaviors are so unacceptable that they are simply not tolerated at the SMP. Such behaviors trigger immediate dismissal of volunteers from all SMP volunteer service. When there is sufficient information to indicate that the unacceptable behavior has taken place, the volunteer is immediately relieved of his or her duties.

The SMP establishes grounds for immediate dismissal. Individual situations vary and supervisors and the coordinator of volunteers use discretion and good judgment in all decisions regarding possible volunteer dismissal.

Rationale: Some performance or behavioral transgressions constitute an immediate threat to the well-being of the SMP or its beneficiaries. These transgressions warrant an immediate response, which is commonly the immediate termination of the volunteer. This is an unusual occurrence but it is essential to plan for it.

Procedure: Accompanied by a SMP supervisor, the volunteer is given the opportunity to collect personal belongings, turn in SMP identification, and is then escorted from the premises.

If there is some question about the unacceptable behavior, the volunteer is immediately suspended from her or his volunteer role(s) until an investigation is complete. The suspension is treated as a temporary dismissal, wherein the volunteer gathers his or her belongings, returns the SMP identification and is escorted from the premises. In the case of a suspension pending investigation, when the investigation is complete the SMP determines whether the volunteer will be reinstated, and if so, with what provisions, or dismissed.

Following is a sample list of possible grounds for immediate dismissal of SMP volunteers. This list is for illustration purposes and is not intended to be complete or comprehensive:

- fraud, theft or abuse in connection with SMP service
- serious illegal act
- gross negligence causing bodily harm in connection with SMP volunteer service
- breach of confidentiality
- reporting for volunteer service in an impaired condition resulting from the use of alcohol or illegal drugs
- violence in the workplace

3.79 Notice of departure of volunteer

Policy: When a volunteer departs from the SMP, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, or is re-assigned to a new role, the coordinator of volunteers provides written notice of such to all affected SMP clients and personnel (paid and unpaid).

Rationale: Volunteers interact and work with SMP staff and beneficiaries and may from time to time be assigned to a specific beneficiary for ongoing counseling. Where a volunteer who is leaving the program (for whatever reason) had close working relationships in their volunteer role, discrete notice of the departure should be provided to all affected parties. If the volunteer is reassigned to a new role, those with whom they previously worked should be advised so that future communication with the volunteer is restricted, as needed, to the boundaries of the new position.

3.80 Reassignment of work and cessation of work relationships

Policy: When a volunteer is dismissed, the working relationship to the SMP program, its services, personnel and beneficiaries is irrevocably severed. Volunteers are informed that further SMP program- or service-related functioning along with connections with SMP personnel, partners and beneficiaries cease upon dismissal.

Rationale: Beneficiaries working with a dismissed volunteer may be under the impression that the volunteer is still serving on behalf of the SMP and that the SMP is still supervising the volunteer and the relationship. To avoid this situation the SMP should take immediate and proactive steps to inform the beneficiary(ies) of the change in status and quickly link them with replacement volunteers. This action is particularly important when a volunteer has been dismissed for cause.

Procedure: Any active work relationships with beneficiaries or open cases are immediately reassigned. The beneficiary is informed in writing of the reassignment of his or her case. Information regarding departure of the volunteer is provided in the briefest of terms as the reason for the reassignment.

All due caution is exercised to protect the rights, dignity and confidentiality of the volunteer.

Where a dismissed volunteer is in an ongoing relationship with a beneficiary(ies) it is made clear to the beneficiary(ies) in writing that the volunteer is no longer a representative of SMP, that the SMP is neither monitoring nor responsible for any future actions of the volunteer, and the beneficiary(ies) is (are) cautioned to discontinue any SMP-related contact with the volunteer.

3.81 Performance management review and appeals procedures

Policy: The SMP has a corrective action review and appeals procedure in place.

Volunteers are made aware of the appeals procedure upon acceptance into volunteer service.

Rationale: Significant performance management issues, especially those that result in dismissal of a volunteer, are serious actions and warrant adequate processes through which the volunteer may ask for review and reconsideration of the decision. Allowing volunteers to seek additional consideration of their situation respects their rights.

Procedure: Decisions involving serious and formal corrective action, including dismissal of a volunteer, are reviewed for appropriateness by the coordinator of volunteers, often in consultation with his or her own supervisor.

3.82 Grievance/complaint procedure

Policy: Volunteers with complaints or grievances with staff, other volunteers, beneficiaries or partner organizations communicate these to their supervisor. If the complaint involves the volunteer's own supervisor, the volunteer conveys the complaint to the next person in the chain of command at the SMP, typically the coordinator of volunteers. All complaints will be treated as confidential.

Rationale: The right of volunteers to fair and equitable treatment demands that they have the opportunity to formally bring grievances or complaints to the attention of the SMP.

Procedure: Every effort is made by the supervisor/coordinator of volunteers to achieve speedy and effective resolution of the situation and the volunteer is kept informed of the progress of this effort.

The final decision regarding resolution and related action rests with the SMP, typically the coordinator of volunteers.

3.83 Investigation of outside complaints

Policy: The SMP has a process for investigating and resolving complaints from beneficiaries and other outside parties against volunteers.

Rationale: From time to time accusations or complaints may be lodged by beneficiaries or outside parties against volunteers. The SMP is obligated to follow

up on these accusations and attempt to determine whether they have substance. A formal process will guide the response and ensure fairness and equitable application of the policy.

3.84 Resignation

Policy: Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the SMP at any time and for any reason.

Volunteers who intend to resign provide as much advance notice of their departure as possible along with the reason for their decision.

Beneficiaries working with the volunteer should be informed in writing of the assignment of a new volunteer to their case.

At the time of resignation volunteers should turn in all identification and other property or materials belonging to the SMP to their designated supervisor.

3.85 Volunteers Aging in Place

Policy: The commitment of SMP volunteers occasionally leads to volunteers who attempt to continue providing service even when their capacities have diminished to a point where quality of service and safety become issues.

To address this issue, each SMP shall establish a protocol for addressing the suitability of continued volunteer service.

Rationale: While valuing the commitment of these volunteers, SMP recognizes that a time may come of all volunteers when continued service is not a wise choice for the volunteers, for the SMP program or for program beneficiaries.

Procedure: The following apply to a protocol for addressing suitability:

- The protocol shall ensure that the prior service of the volunteer is honored. The attempts of the volunteer to continue to provide service will be respected since the diminishing of their abilities is through no fault of their own.
- All attempts shall be made to find alternate methods for the volunteer to provide service to the SMP. These attempts may include changes in volunteer role, partnering with other volunteers or other enabling techniques.
- Volunteers will be encouraged to undertake their own self-assessment of capacity and to seek counsel from their own support network, such as family members and others who might provide objective information regarding continued volunteering.
- Volunteer supervisors should support the decision of volunteers to resign and shall indicate that this does not imply that the volunteers are letting the SMP program down or failing to meet their commitment.

In situations where the volunteer has exhibited diminishing capacity that significantly affects their ability to perform volunteer service and where the volunteers does not choose to resign voluntarily the SMP shall take unilateral action to initiate retirement of the volunteer and honor the service they have provided.

3.86 Exit interviews

Policy: Exit interviews, where possible, are conducted with volunteers who are leaving their roles.

Rationale: Information obtained from departing volunteers may provide insights into both the strengths and weaknesses of the SMP volunteer program. Efforts should be made to collect this information. It is also possible that a volunteer only wishes to separate themselves from the SMP for a temporary period, in which case efforts should be made to reconnect with them at a future time.

Procedure: The interview ascertains why the volunteer is leaving the role, elicits suggestions the volunteer may have to improve the role or SMP service, and, where appropriate, the possibility of involving the volunteer in some other capacity with the SMP in the future.

Volunteer Behavior, Performance and Roles

3.87 Clarification of meaning

Policy: It is the volunteer's responsibility to seek clarification about policies, as needed. Not understanding a policy is not acceptable grounds for failure to comply.

Procedure: Questions from volunteers regarding interpretation of policies should be addressed to the volunteer's supervisor for clarification, who will then consult with the SMP coordinator of volunteers. Matters not specifically covered in these policies are determined by the coordinator of volunteers.

3.88 Volunteer conduct

Policy: SMP volunteers perform their duties in an objective, timely and conscientious manner. They at all times act in a knowledgeable manner, consistent with their training and these policies.

Rationale: SMP volunteers are agents of the program. Volunteer presentation and performance reflect positively on the SMP, enhancing its integrity, reputation, and credibility.

Procedure: The coordinator of volunteers, volunteer supervisors, and all other SMP team members support appropriate volunteer conduct by ensuring that SMP volunteers feel safe, prepared, supported and competent in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.

3.89 Boundaries and ethics

Policy: The SMP clearly communicates role boundaries to volunteers. Volunteers recognize and respect the limits of their skills and abilities, and the boundaries and limitations of their role. If a volunteer is in doubt regarding the limitations of their role, no action is taken until direction on the matter is received from the volunteer's supervisor, the coordinator of volunteers, or another authorized SMP representative.

Rationale: Boundary breaches can be a very serious matter. Volunteers need to know what kinds of actions and behavior are outside their assigned role.

Procedure: Boundaries are communicated through a range of mechanisms including, but not limited to, role descriptions, performance standards, orientation, training, on-the-job training, ongoing training, volunteer supervision and support, performance evaluation, and, as needed, corrective action.

Definition: All volunteer roles have not only responsibilities, but limits to those responsibilities (i.e., boundaries).

3.90 Provision of service

Policy: Volunteers provide service in a responsible and objective fashion, without regard to the background or characteristics of beneficiaries.

Volunteers provide current and accurate information and seek additional assistance or information when in doubt or when specialized knowledge or expertise is required.

Volunteers do not recommend or endorse specific services, providers or products to beneficiaries. Volunteers do not make plan choices or decisions for beneficiaries.

3.91 Representation of the SMP

Policy: Volunteers are agents of the SMP while functioning in their assigned volunteer roles. Volunteers are not spokespersons for the SMP in any formal sense and do not represent themselves as such.

Rationale: Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the SMP only as clearly and specifically prescribed by their role descriptions and only to the extent of such written specifications.

Procedure: Volunteers do not say anything or act in any way that might obligate the SMP or be construed as a formal SMP role. This applies to all oral and written communications, including online statements in social media or other forums.

Prohibited actions in this regard include, but are not limited to:

- public statements that might in any way be construed as originating from or representing the SMP

- statements to the press regarding anything pertaining to the SMP or the volunteer's service with the SMP
- lobbying efforts with other organizations, governments or other entities
- collaborations or joint initiatives not clearly authorized in advance by the SMP
- any agreements, undertakings or contractual obligations on behalf of the SMP
- online statements in social media or other forums that might be construed as officially representing the SMP

3.92 Identification

Policy: SMP volunteers are provided identification that establishes their affiliation with SMP. Volunteers carry with them their SMP identification while engaged in the business of the SMP. Volunteers use the identification only when undertaking official and authorized SMP duties.

Procedure: This identification is the property of the SMP and is subject to corrective action, up to and including dismissal, for improper or unauthorized use. The identification is returned to SMP in a timely manner when the volunteer's service to the SMP terminates, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.

3.93 Use of SMP affiliation

Policy: Volunteers may not use their affiliation with SMP in connection with partisan politics, religious matters, business dealings or community issues. Volunteers do not sell, recommend, or endorse any specific insurance or medical product, agent or company, or promote religious or political beliefs, perspectives or practice.

Rationale: Volunteers perform their role with the SMP exclusively to serve the interests and purposes of the SMP. Volunteers are not allowed to use their affiliation with the SMP to serve any other personal interest and may especially not utilize their SMP affiliation to engage in partisan politics, religious proselytizing, business dealings, or other activities not directly related to performing service for the SMP. Be aware that many volunteers may violate this policy unintentionally, believing that they are simply being helpful. This may occur, for example, when volunteers identify themselves in public as SMP volunteers and then proceed to:

- give a personal opinion
- offer helpful suggestions having nothing to do with their SMP role
- recommend a course of action that either violates the values of the SMP or is clearly outside of the purview of the SMP program.

3.94 Confidentiality

Policy: Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer,

whether this information involves a member of staff, a volunteer, a beneficiary or other person, or involves the overall business of the SMP.

Volunteers take all steps necessary to safeguard the confidentiality of all SMP and beneficiary related information and to prevent personal information of beneficiaries from falling into the possession unauthorized persons.

Volunteers use any information collected or obtained in their course of their SMP work only to assist the beneficiary or otherwise fulfill volunteer role responsibilities. No information collected or obtained in the course of SMP work is disclosed other than when clearly approved by an authorized SMP representative.

There is zero tolerance for breaches of confidentiality in connection with work at the SMP.

Rationale: Confidentiality related to SMP service delivery is a matter of highest importance. Even small breaches may cause harm to beneficiaries and/or to other persons, and are subject to serious consequences up to and including dismissal. While volunteering for the SMP, volunteers may become aware of private information about beneficiaries. This may be health/Medicare related or information of an otherwise personal nature.

Procedure: Volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement and full compliance with the agreement is a condition of continued involvement in SMP volunteer service. Volunteers are informed on this agreement that a breach of confidentiality is grounds for dismissal.

3.95 Dress code

Policy: As representatives of the SMP, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to beneficiaries and to the community. Volunteers dress appropriately for the conditions and the nature of their volunteer duties, maintaining a high standard of personal appearance, hygiene and grooming at all times.

Rationale: The SMP program will be judged by the public in part by the appearance and demeanor of the volunteers who act on its behalf. Accordingly, volunteers must comport themselves in a way that best represents the SMP, including maintaining appropriate dress for the conditions and performance of their volunteer roles.

3.96 Recording of volunteer time and activity

Policy: Volunteers accurately complete and submit required information on their volunteer activity on a timely basis. This may include timesheets, client or media contacts and other reports.

3.97 Absenteeism

Policy: Volunteers are expected to be reliable and punctual. When expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers inform their staff supervisor as far in advance as possible so that alternate arrangements may be made.

It is neither the responsibility nor the right of volunteers to find or assign an alternate person to perform their work.

Rationale: Because their work is so vital to the achievement of the SMP mission, dependability is important among SMP volunteers. A volunteer who is not able to meet a commitment should never think that it is their responsibility to find a replacement; such action is the responsibility of the supervisor of that volunteer.

Procedure: Frequent absenteeism results in a review of the volunteer's work assignment or term of service.

3.98 Harassment

Policy: The SMP is committed to providing a safe and respectful work environment for all personnel and beneficiaries. No one has to put up with harassment for any reason, at any time. No one has the right to harass anyone else, at the SMP workplace or in any situation related to SMP programs and services.

The SMP treats all complaints of harassment seriously, whether they are made informally or formally. Action is taken on all complaints to ensure that they are resolved quickly, confidentially, and fairly. Corrective action will be taken with anyone who has harassed a person or group of people.

All SMP supervisors have a responsibility to stop harassment. Everything is done to stop it as soon as it is detected, whether or not a complaint has been made. Appropriate corrective action and disciplinary measures are taken where harassment has occurred.

Volunteers report to their staff supervisor immediately if they are made to feel uncomfortable on the job through any behaviors or comments of beneficiaries, staff or other volunteers.

3.99 Drugs and alcohol

Policy: The SMP operates a work environment that is free of alcohol and drug use/abuse. This is a zero tolerance policy. Non-compliance is grounds for immediate dismissal.

The possession or consumption of alcohol or illicit drugs, or the misuse of prescription or "over the counter" drugs is prohibited on SMP premises or work sites, or in circumstances deemed by the SMP to present a serious risk to the interests of the SMP in terms of volunteer, paid staff, beneficiary or public safety, service quality, or the organization's reputation. Volunteers do not use, possess, transfer, distribute,

manufacture, or sell alcohol or any illegal drug while on SMP property, while on duty, or while operating a vehicle on duty or while driving to or from an SMP worksite.

Volunteers taking legal medication, whether or not prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner, that affects or impairs judgment, coordination or perception so as to adversely affect ability to perform work in a safe and productive manner, notifies their supervisor prior to engaging in SMP work.

Rationale: Volunteers reporting for duty are expected to be able to perform assigned duties safely and acceptably without any limitations due to the use or after-effects of alcohol, illicit drugs, non-prescription drugs, or prescribed medications or any other substance.

Procedure: When volunteers report impairments as a result of legal medication, the supervisor determines whether the volunteer can remain at work or whether work restrictions are required. This may include consultation with a medical professional about the individual's ability to perform volunteer work as assigned.

3.100 Acceptance of gifts

Policy: SMP volunteers do not accept gifts from beneficiaries, their families, caregivers, or other representatives. Any such offerings are respectfully and tactfully declined, citing, as needed, this policy as the basis for their action.

Rationale: Acceptance of personal gifts by SMP volunteers is prohibited to prevent, and prevent the perception of, exploitation of SMP beneficiaries and their families and caregivers and to protect both the reputation of the SMP and its volunteers from accusations of favoritism or personal gain. The work of SMP volunteers often engenders gratitude among beneficiaries. It is understandable that some SMP clients and those who care for them wish to express their thankfulness through gifts to the people who have been so helpful; however, the SMP provides services to beneficiaries without compensation.

Definition: For this policy, gift is broadly defined to include any payment, distribution, transfer, loan, advance, deposit, gift or other rendering of money, property, services or anything else of value, whether tangible or intangible. Gifts include but are not limited to material goods, money in any form, valuables, jewelry, wedding gifts, tickets to sporting events and entertainment, and travel. Meals provided during events are not considered gifts for the purposes of this policy.

3.101 Acceptance of honoraria

Policy: Honoraria offered to SMP volunteers are respectfully and tactfully declined, citing, as needed, this policy as the basis for their action. Honoraria which is given to the SMP program may be accepted by the volunteer on behalf of the SMP.

Rationale: It is not appropriate for SMP volunteers to benefit materially from their work duties.

Definition: SMP volunteers perform work functions (e.g., speeches, presentations, training, etc.) which may, from time to time, attract honoraria. Exempted from this policy are one-time speaker's gifts that can reasonably be regarded as small or token and where the nominal value received by any one person is under \$15.00.

3.102 Reimbursement of expenses

Policy: Volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred while undertaking volunteer work for the SMP. Approval is received prior to any major expenditure.

Rationale: Volunteers who incur expenses related to volunteering should be offered reimbursement by the SMP, subject to the prior-approval of the SMP.

Procedure: The coordinator of volunteers distributes information to all volunteers regarding specific reimbursable items and the process for receiving reimbursement.

3.103 Access to SMP property and materials

Policy: As appropriate, volunteers have access to property of the SMP and those materials and equipment necessary to fulfill their duties.

Volunteers receive training in the operation of any work-related equipment and have the same responsibilities as paid staff regarding the safe use and maintenance of SMP equipment and materials.

SMP property and materials are used only when directly required for the volunteer task.

3.104 Relationships with beneficiaries

Policy: Volunteer relationships with beneficiaries have the same boundaries as those between paid staff and beneficiaries. It is appropriate to be friendly, courteous, and caring but it is not appropriate to become friends with beneficiaries, their family members or others connected to the delivery of service. Friendships with beneficiaries can lead to unclear boundaries, inappropriate expectations, the appearance of favoritism or exploitation, and conflicts of interest.

Invitations to SMP volunteers from beneficiaries to spend personal time together or to engage in other than SMP business are declined respectfully, citing, as needed, this policy as the basis for their action.

Volunteers treat all beneficiaries with courtesy and respect. Volunteers respect the personal boundaries of beneficiaries and govern their physical behaviors accordingly.

Rationale: The beneficiaries that are served by the SMP can be isolated, lonely, and particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. For this reason, it is important that SMP volunteers take great care in managing their relationships with beneficiaries they meet and serve through their involvement at the SMP.

Relationships with beneficiaries are of potentially high risk for the beneficiary, the volunteer, and the SMP. Volunteers, due to the nature of their service, are prone to forming both professional and personal bonds with beneficiaries. Volunteers must keep these relationships within acceptable boundaries, maintaining a climate of care and courtesy but at the same time respecting the privacy of the beneficiary.

Procedure: Volunteers normally do not manage relatives' or friends' complex cases or complaints. If such a request is received by a volunteer from one of her or his relatives, friends or close acquaintances, the volunteer reports this to the coordinator of volunteers who may assign the case/inquiry to another volunteer or paid staff.

Volunteers who identify needs of beneficiaries outside the boundaries of their own volunteer role (e.g., financial, health care, household assistance, transportation, etc.) bring these needs to the attention of the coordinator of volunteers for referral to appropriate community services. Volunteers should not try to meet those needs themselves.

3.105 Financial transactions with clients

Policy: SMP volunteers do not enter into financial transactions with beneficiaries, their family members or caregivers, either lending or borrowing in either direction.

Procedure: If clients are in immediate financial need, the coordinator of volunteers is notified and referral is made to appropriate community services.

3.106 Political issues

Policy: Volunteers do not engage in political activities, campaigning or lobbying during volunteer hours. While on SMP duty, volunteers do not:

- publicly express their personal opinions regarding political issues
- display or distribute political signs or materials either on their person or at work sites
- solicit or accept contributions for political purposes during volunteer hours.

Rationale: The SMP is nonpartisan in its operations and services. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining this nonpartisan stance while performing SMP duties.

3.107 Cultural sensitivity

Policy: Volunteers are trained in the norms of identified consumer groups/cultures.

Volunteers demonstrate a respect for the norms and cultures of beneficiaries with whom they work and are sensitive to consumers' beliefs, traditions and lifestyles.

Because excellent communication is a key to success in most SMP volunteer roles, volunteers are placed according to their ability to communicate effectively with beneficiaries and participants from diverse populations.

Rationale: The level of cultural awareness in SMP directly affects both the quality of work with individual beneficiaries and the effectiveness of SMP in working with communities. The SMP must be, and must be perceived to be, a respectful member of the communities it serves. This requires volunteers to be knowledgeable regarding different cultures and to strive at all times to show respect for these cultures.

Procedure: More in-depth specialized cultural sensitivity training may be provided to specialist volunteers who are designated to work with specific beneficiary populations.

3.108 Labor actions

Policy: When a worksite is affected by a labor dispute, the coordinator of volunteers, in consultation with SMP management, determines whether it is appropriate for volunteers to continue their duties at the SMP worksite and/or in alternate settings.

Where it is determined that volunteers may continue their duties, no pressure or judgment is placed on volunteers who choose not to volunteer for the duration of the dispute.

When volunteers do stay involved during a labor dispute, they undertake only their regularly assigned duties and are not asked to, or of their own initiative, perform any additional duties.

Rationale: Some SMP workplaces are unionized, and from time to time tension may arise in regard to labor relations.

Retention and Recognition

3.109 Recognition

Policy: The SMP has a system for recognizing and rewarding the work done by volunteers, both individually and collectively.

Rationale: While recognition is not the sole factor in volunteer retention, it is an important one. In fact, for volunteers, recognition is the equivalent of a paycheck. Volunteers deserve appropriate praise and recognition for their work, delivered both formally and informally. A formal volunteer recognition system provides an official means for the SMP to recognize the contribution of volunteers.

Procedure: This system, including criteria, timing and process, is explained to all volunteers upon acceptance into service. The recognition system is broadly constructed so as to allow recognition of all forms of volunteer contribution and achievement, not just the quantity of volunteer time donated. Staff and volunteers are consulted to identify those deserving of any special recognition or awards.

3.110 Informal recognition

Policy: Paid staff and volunteers responsible for volunteer supervision provide recognition of volunteer service on a regular and frequent day-to-day basis.

Rationale: Formal volunteer recognition systems are not as powerful as the day-to-day appreciation expressed by a volunteer's co-workers and supervisor. This recognition will shape the experience of a volunteer and can provide a powerful motivating force.

Definition: Methods of informal recognition range from simple "Thank You's" to a concerted effort to include volunteers as full participants in decision-making and implementation of volunteer projects and activities.

3.111 Volunteer career paths

Policy: Volunteers are encouraged to develop their skills while serving with the SMP.

Rationale: Long-term volunteers will often wish to "progress" during their participation, moving to different volunteer roles and sometimes accepting increasing levels of responsibility. Volunteers with this motivation are often extremely valuable because their contribution usually occurs over a long period of time and their performance is commonly exemplary. Investing in these volunteers is a wise practice. Keep in mind that for older volunteers, continuous learning opportunities are a powerful motivator.

Procedure: Upon request, volunteers are assisted, through promotion to new volunteer roles, to assume additional and greater responsibilities.

If so desired by the volunteer, the SMP assists the volunteer in maintaining appropriate records of volunteer experience that will assist the volunteer in future career opportunities, both paid and volunteer.

Definition: Mapping out how volunteers might grow and develop in their SMP involvement is one kind of career path. Another is moving from volunteering into paid employment.

3.112 Feedback on results

Policy: Whenever possible, volunteers are provided feedback on the results of their work, including data on volunteer contributions that allow the SMP to meet its service goals.

Rationale: Volunteers do not volunteer simply to fill an empty space on their calendar; they volunteer to make a contribution to their community, to make a difference in someone's life. Accordingly, informing volunteers as to the extent and significance of their contributions is an important means of recognition and can dramatically increase volunteer retention.

3.113 Paid staff recognition

Policy: Recognition systems reward paid staff who work effectively with volunteers, and the coordinator of volunteers consults with volunteers and paid staff supervisors to identify supervisory personnel deserving of special recognition and awards for successful efforts in support of volunteers.

Rationale: One means of encouraging staff to work more effectively with volunteers is to recognize those staff who do a particularly good job involving volunteers.

Volunteer/Paid Staff Relationships

3.114 Volunteer-paid staff relationships

Policy: Volunteers and paid staff are partners in implementing the mission and programs of the SMP, with each having an equal but complementary role to play. Each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.

Paid staff do not make unreasonable demands on volunteers or request that volunteers exceed the boundaries of the role description or the limits of their individual capacity.

Procedure: These concepts should be firmly communicated in orientation sessions for new staff and volunteers.

3.115 Identifying paid staff responsibility for volunteer management in role descriptions

Policy: Paid staff who have responsibility for supervising volunteers have this responsibility clearly identified in their role description, including how such responsibility is to be evaluated in their own performance assessment.

Rationale: The effectiveness of the volunteer program is dependent upon support and cooperation of every member of the paid staff.

Procedure: When volunteers are supervised by more than one staff member, supervisors coordinate their efforts to provide uniform and consistent practices and procedures.

3.116 Filling paid staff roles that supervise volunteers

Policy: Where a paid staff role includes responsibility for working with volunteers, previous experience in working with volunteers is a key consideration in hiring into that role.

Rationale: An SMP can either train its staff in volunteer management or hire new staff based on their previous experience in working with volunteers. Hiring experienced staff is often cheaper and more expedient.

Procedure: This responsibility is clearly identified in role announcements.

3.117 Responsibilities of supervisors of volunteers

Policy: Staff persons who supervise volunteers provide oversight similar to that provided to paid employees.

Rationale: Like all workers, volunteers benefit from supervision.

Procedure: Supervisors exercise primary responsibility for developing suitable assignments for volunteers, for involving them in the communication flow of the SMP, and for providing feedback regarding their work.

Supervisors are familiar with the information and record keeping requirements of volunteer service and assist in maintaining complete and current volunteer records.

Definition: Volunteer supervisors are responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of volunteers' work and are available to volunteer for consultation and assistance.

3.118 Status of supervisors

Policy: Paid staff who supervise volunteers are accorded the same status and privileges as those who supervise paid employees. This includes the ability to participate in training to improve their supervisory and volunteer program management skills.

Rationale: Because the role of volunteer supervisor can be as demanding and specialized as that of a supervisor of paid staff, both deserve recognition for their expertise and achievements. This practice sends a clear message to both paid staff and volunteers as to the significance and value placed by the SMP on effective volunteer supervision.

3.119 Acceptance of volunteers by staff

Policy: Volunteers are not assigned to work with a paid staff person without the latter's consent.

Rationale: Individual paid staff persons are in a better position to determine the requirements of their work and their own managerial abilities. Effective volunteer involvement requires the willing consent and participation of paid staff; volunteers

will quickly identify resistance and/or resentment and their performance will decline accordingly.

Procedure: Since volunteers are a valuable resource in the accomplishment of the SMP mission, paid staff are encouraged to develop creative ways in which volunteers might be of service to the SMP and to consult with the coordinator of volunteers if they need assistance or additional training.

Assignment of volunteers to individual paid staff or projects is at the discretion of the coordinator of volunteers.

3.120 Volunteer management training for members of staff

Policy: An orientation to working with volunteers is provided to all paid staff at the SMP.

Rationale: Many staff will have subject-matter expertise other than that required for working with volunteers. All staff members should receive an overall orientation to the volunteer program because volunteers are an essential component of the SMP.

Procedure: More in-depth in-service training on effective volunteer management is provided to paid staff that work closely with and/or directly supervise SMP volunteers.

3.121 Volunteer involvement in staff evaluation

Policy: Paid staff that work closely with or supervise volunteers have those functions assessed as part of their performance evaluation. Volunteer input is invited into this process.

3.122 Evaluation of volunteer/paid staff teams

Policy: Where volunteers and paid staff work together, individuals are evaluated on their own performance as well as on their ability to develop effective working relationships with other team members.

Section 4.0: Information Technology

4.1 Information procedures

Policy: The SMP has in place an information management protocol that outlines procedures to control volunteer access to and use of beneficiary information and the safe operation of computers used to collect and store program and beneficiary information. The protocol also specifies appropriate and inappropriate use of SMP computers by volunteers.

Rationale: Having an information management protocol ensures the safe handling, transmission, and storage of clients' sensitive personal identifying information and protected personal and health information (see definitions, below). In the course of

conducting SMP work, volunteers may gain access to Medicare numbers, Social Security numbers, birth dates, medical records, and financial information in combination with names, addresses, and telephone numbers and other sensitive information.

Procedure: Volunteers are trained in this protocol, including data collection, entry, transport, protection and disposal. Reasonable accommodations are made for volunteers with disabilities.

4.2 Internet protocol

Policy: The SMP has a protocol for use of the Internet, covering e-mail use and appropriate access to web sites.

The SMP has in place a protocol and appropriate training for volunteers who use wireless devices to connect to the Internet while performing SMP work.

The SMP has a protocol and appropriate training for volunteers who make use of their personal computers while performing SMP work.

Rationale: The main reason for having an internet protocol is to ensure the safe electronic transmission of clients' sensitive personal identifying information and protected personal and health information between volunteers, clients, and other SMP staff. Other reasons for establishing an Internet protocol are to:

- Raise awareness among volunteers and paid staff of their roles in protecting the privacy of SMP clients through appropriate use of the Internet.
- Prevent identity theft that can result from information security breaches through the use of spyware and hacking.
- Prevent breaches that could expose the organization to fines for violating state privacy protection laws or to lawsuits for failure to properly safeguard protected information.

4.3 Reporting stolen or lost consumer information

Policy: If data is misplaced or stolen, volunteers immediately notify their SMP supervisor so that appropriate notification can be made to affected beneficiaries and authorities, and future safeguards are instituted as appropriate.

Rationale: No matter how diligent volunteers may be there remains a possibility that data will be misplaced or stolen. Common consideration, along with privacy protection and security breach laws, require organizations to promptly notify persons whose protected personal information has been stolen or lost. This enables the affected person to take action as appropriate to mitigate the loss. Another reason to notify affected persons is to rebuild trust through transparency.

4.4 SMP reporting software use

Policy: All of the information security policies related to general computer and internet use also apply to SMP national data reporting software use.

Rationale: ACL requires the SMP program to report performance data into the SMP national data reporting system. The SMP data reporting system contains sensitive personal identifying information and protected personal and health information that must be protected.

Procedure: Volunteers who report into the ACL system are given their own user account and do not share these with other SMP staff or volunteers. When any volunteer with a user account leaves the SMP, their user account is immediately disabled by the SMP.

4.5 Use of social media by volunteers

Policy: Social media should be used responsibly by volunteers. The same principles and policies that apply to volunteer behavior in any volunteer role also apply to all activities online.

Rationale: Ultimately volunteers are responsible for what they post online, not the SMP. However, irresponsible use of social media by a SMP volunteer can harm the SMP program they serve. SMP believes that social media, when used appropriately, can be a powerful tool to increase awareness, support and sense of community. We believe that a thoughtful approach to online activity (on blogs, social networking, link-sharing, etc.) can enhance the reputation of SMP and help recruit needed supporters and volunteers.

Procedure: The following guidelines apply to all volunteer use of social media:

- Be transparent. Always identify yourself and your role with SMP. Remember to state that your views do not represent those of SMP unless you have obtained specific approval.
- Be respectful and considerate of others. Do not post disparaging or defamatory statements about SMP or other organizations, staff, volunteers, beneficiaries or other parties.
- Be honest and accurate and avoid spreading rumors based on lack of information.
- Don't reveal confidential information about SMP or beneficiaries.
- Never discuss online any identifiable details on a current or past case or beneficiary.
- Separate any social media communications related to SMP from your own personal social media communications. Set up separate accounts for discussions of your SMP activity and your personal and family social media interactions.

- If you are concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or online activity discuss it first with your supervisor.
- If you see content in social media that reflects poorly on SMP please report it to your supervisor.

Failure to utilize social media appropriately can lead to disciplinary action.

Definitions of Terms

Harassment

Harassment is any behavior that demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions (e.g. touching, pushing), comments (e.g. jokes, name-calling), or displays (e.g. posters, cartoons). It may be a single incident or continue over time. Harassment is also a breach of human rights on protected grounds such as race, religion, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation ancestry, mental or physical disability, medical condition, disability, political activity, marital status, or age.

Disrespectful behavior, also known as "personal" harassment, is prohibited at the SMP. While it also involves unwelcome behavior that demeans or embarrasses someone, the behavior is not based on one of the prohibited grounds named above.

Abuse of authority, also prohibited at the SMP, occurs when a person uses authority unreasonably to interfere with a person or their work. It includes humiliation, intimidation, threats, and coercion. It does not include normal managerial activities, such as counseling, performance evaluation, and discipline, as long as these are not being done in a discriminatory manner.

Human Rights

Human rights are considered inherent to all human beings, and generally include the following areas: race, religion, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation ancestry, mental or physical disability, medical condition, disability, political activity, marital status, age, privacy, rights of the accused, freedom of expression, and more.

In-kind staff

Employees of other organizations who perform SMP-connected work as part of their own ongoing paid work responsibilities – often referred to as “in-kind staff” – are not considered SMP volunteers for the purposes of these policies because they do not work under the control of the SMP. The hours contributed by these employees may be recorded in the SMP national data reporting system.

Other community workers who receive stipends for their service (such as VISTA, AmeriCorps, Senior Companions, SCSEP and others) are also considered in-kind staff for the purposes of these policies, not volunteers. The hours and activities of these community workers may be recorded in the SMP national data reporting system.

Positions of trust

A position of trust involves access to at least one of:

- beneficiaries or other vulnerable people, such as family members

- personal or confidential information
- money or other valuables

Examples of volunteer roles that are likely to be positions of trust include:

- Call center operator
- Complex interactions specialist
- Counselor
- Exhibitor
- Local coordinator
- Presenter
- Team lead
- Trainer

Any other volunteer roles may also, or from time to time, be considered positions of trust as responsibilities change or where the conditions under which the work is done require it. For example, any volunteer roles in which home visits occur would also qualify as a position of trust. Volunteer roles may also qualify as positions of trust due to the nature of the client.

Positions of trust are subject to significantly more rigorous screening inquiries.

Social media

Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else’s web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with SMP, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

Volunteer

A “volunteer” is anyone who, without coercion or compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement of reasonable and previously approved expenses incurred in the course of his or her volunteer duties, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the SMP.

A “volunteer” is one who is officially accepted and enrolled by the SMP prior to performance of any task.

Unless specifically stated, volunteers are not considered “employees” of the SMP.

Employees of other organizations who perform “in-kind” SMP work are not considered volunteers under these policies.

Volunteer host organization

A “volunteer host organization” is any third party organization engaged in recruiting and/or managing volunteers performing SMP duties. Host organizations may be formally contracted

to deliver SMP programs or may be doing so through informal partnership arrangements with the SMP.

The SMP is responsible for ensuring that volunteer host organizations comply with all relevant policies governing the management and engagement of volunteers performing SMP duties through or under the auspices of host organizations.