

Volunteer Guidebook



Alachua County BOCC

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Introduction

1. Mission Statement

The Alachua County Volunteer Program seeks to provide opportunities in various areas of interest for volunteers to gain experience and contribute to maintaining the County's quality of services.

2. Purpose

This guidebook is to be used by Alachua County staff and volunteers as a reference for legal and administrative matters. This guidebook provides overall direction, and does not offer technical guidance related to the department's administration of the program. Departments may have their own guidebooks or similar materials that may provide technical guidance.

3. How to Use

This guidebook is a standard of the volunteer program. After reading this, volunteers should be able to navigate legal and administrative matters. This guide should be used in conjunction with other documents that may be provided, including Volunteer Policies and Procedures.



Volunteer Categories

Alachua County volunteers are classified below. Individual departments construct the position's title and description. Departments may have equivalent or additional forms that volunteers should use in replacement of the ones listed below.

"Regular-service Volunteer" means a person 18 years of age or older engaged in specific voluntary service activities on an ongoing or continual basis who may or may not be supervised. This position requires the following forms to be completed by the volunteer prior to beginning their service:

- 1) Application
- 2) Adult Volunteer Release Agreement for Individuals Form

"Occasional-service Volunteer" means a person 18 years of age or older who offers to provide a one-time or minor, non-involved voluntary service. This position requires the following forms:

- 1) Volunteer for the Day Registration
- 2) Adult Volunteer Release Agreement and Waiver for Group or One-Off Activities Form



"Group Volunteer" means an outside group or organization that is providing a one-time or occasional voluntary service, composing of more than one person. This position requires the following forms:

- 1) Volunteer for the Day Registration
- 2) Adult Volunteer Release Agreement and Waiver for Group or One-Off Activities Form

"Minor Volunteer" means a person who is under 18 years of age old and offering to provide voluntary service on a one-time, occasional, or continual basis. This position requires the following forms:

- 1) Minor Application
- 2) Parent/Guardian Consent Form

If there any questions on the classification of the volunteer, please consult the County Attorney's Office.

Volunteer Responsibilities

The following are fundamental responsibilities applicable to all volunteers.

- 1) Perform duties and tasks established by the supervisor and approved by the department
- 2) Maintain strict confidentiality of information concerning any information to which they may have access within their volunteer duties.
- 3) Must not use information unavailable to the public or inaccessible outside of volunteer position for the personable benefit of themselves or others
- 4) Contact program supervisor or department staff member to inform them of any absences or tardiness
- 5) Shall sign in and out using methods established by the department or supervisor
- 6) Must wear an identification badge at all times while volunteering



- 7) Must read and agree to abide by the Guidebook and Policies and Procedures

Departmental Responsibilities

After the assignment of the volunteer, the Department Director or staff liaison shall:

- 1) Assign a supervisor within their department to closely work with and monitor the volunteer
- 2) Maintain accurate records of volunteer(s) hours
- 3) Provide instruction and training to ensure workers perform the tasks correctly and safely
- 4) Keep the appropriate departments informed as to the status of the volunteer activity, any accidents or injuries related to the volunteer activity, and continued use of volunteers
- 5) Provide recognition and show appreciation for the contributions of the volunteer on a continuous basis



Tracking Volunteer Hours

Tracking volunteer hours can be a measure of volunteer program success and is crucial when applying for funding grants. Therefore, volunteers must check-in and out using the actual time they arrived and left, and not the time they were scheduled to arrive and leave.



Safety

Risk Management staff is available to assist you with any questions regarding a work-related injury. Contact Risk Management at (352) 494-4536 or (352) 494-4530.

1. Risk Management Guidelines

Alachua County is committed to providing its volunteers and members of the public with a safe working environment through training and inspections. Volunteers will attend an orientation and training, which will include safety and health-related information. When personal protective equipment (PPE) is required, volunteers will be adequately equipped and trained by the department before beginning the task. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to follow the training properly, use the safety equipment appropriately, and report unsafe working conditions or practices to the program supervisor or the Alachua County Safety Officer. Contact the Alachua County Safety Officer at (352) 538-0736.

2. Driving

Volunteers shall not operate county vehicles but may ride as a passenger. Volunteers shall not use personal vehicles for business purposes.

3. Reporting an Injury

If a volunteer is injured while performing their assigned task:

- 1) Attend to the injured person if possible without putting oneself in harm's way and call 911 if needed
- 2) Immediately notify your supervisor of the injury
- 3) Immediately notify your supervisor if you witness an injury or accident.
- 4) Supervisors and volunteers must complete the First Report of Injury form and submit it to Risk Management within 24 hours- even if the volunteer does not think medical attention is needed



If a volunteer is injured while performing their assigned task, the supervisor should:

- 1) Attend to the injured person if possible without putting oneself in harm's way and call 911 if needed
- 2) Be notified immediately and:
 - a. Ensure that you collect witness statements to injury or accident
 - b. Notify Risk Management at (352) 494-4536 or (352) 494-4530
 - c. Notify Fleet Management at (386) 462-1975 or (352) 213-4828 if a vehicle needs to be towed
- 3) Take photographs of the scene and of the injury if possible
- 4) Complete the First Report of Injury form and submit it to Risk Management within 24 hours with the volunteer- even if the volunteer does not think medical attention is needed
- 5) Complete a Property Damage Report if needed
- 6) Email information to the Risk Management primary email: jlemons@alachuacounty.us



Examples of injuries to report include:

- 1) Injury to volunteer or another person
- 2) Minor injuries that may not require immediate medical attention
- 3) Vehicle accidents
- 4) Other occurrences, no matter how minor

At no time should the volunteer leave the scene of the accident until the police are contacted and until a supervisor or Risk Management gives approval for the volunteer to leave. Volunteers should not speak to anyone at the scene of the accident except responding rescue personnel, the police, their supervisor, or Risk Management.

Workers' Compensation

Following Florida Statutes Chapter 440, Alachua County provides medical benefits for their volunteers if injured while volunteering. If you are injured while performing your volunteer task, call 911 immediately if there is a medical emergency. If an injury is NOT a medical emergency, notify your supervisor immediately. Contact Darlene Ryon at (352) 494-4530 or email: dryon@alachuacounty.us for additional information.



Background Investigation

Alachua County volunteers may be subjected to varying levels of background checks based on their position and department before approval and assignment. Federal and state laws allow, and occasionally require, volunteers to complete a criminal record check, including Florida State and National sexual predator/offender database. Fingerprinting may be required to complete these background checks and may need to be taken more than once after the initial screening the volunteer is long-term.



Confidentiality

Volunteers may witness an incident, be entrusted with information, or have access to personal records or files that are deemed confidential. Alachua County expects that any volunteer exposed to such information will respect and honor the privacy rights of those individuals and will not disclose confidential information. Violating confidentiality is a severe breach of trust and, in some cases, the law. Violating the Agreement and disclosure of confidential information may result in termination of the volunteer position, civil action, or criminal prosecution. If there is any question as to whether information or files are considered confidential, volunteers should consult their supervisor.

Policy Against Harassment

Alachua County actively works to provide a work environment that is free of verbal or physical conduct that unreasonably harasses, disturbs, or interferes with an employee or volunteer work or that creates an offensive, intimidating, or hostile work environment.

All County employees and volunteers are to avoid any activity which harasses or disrupts their co-workers, subordinates, or the general public. Any physical or verbal conduct that is harassing or disruptive because of a person's race, national origin, religion, sex, disability, pregnancy, age, or military status is prohibited.

Sexual harassment in the workplace violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and is strictly forbidden, including sexual harassment involving members of the same sex. Any sexually harassing or offensive conduct, regardless of employment or volunteer rank, is prohibited. Violating this anti-harassment policy through harassment or conduct may result in discipline up to and including termination. Such behavior that violates this anti-harassment policy includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) Unwanted physical contact or offensive conduct of a sexual nature including flirtation, advances, and propositions
- 2) Verbal harassment about an individual's sex, sexual orientation or interests, sexual innuendos, or offensive jokes or descriptions of personal sexual conduct
- 3) Demeaning, degrading, or insulting comments about physical appearance
- 4) Displaying in the workplace photos or other material which are demeaning, derogatory, intimidating, or sexually suggestive
- 5) Demeaning, insulting, sexually suggestive, or otherwise offensive written, recorded, telephonic, or electronically transmitted messages

If harassment occurs:

- 1) Document the incident by writing details such as the time and date of the incident, the location where it happened, who was present, who witnessed the incident, and what was said or done
- 2) Report the incident orally and/or in writing to your supervisor, the department head, Human Resources Department, Equal Opportunity Office, or the Alachua County Attorney's Office
- 3) All complaints of sexual harassment will promptly be investigated and kept confidential to the extent possible



No employee or volunteer will suffer retaliation for having made such a report or complaint in good faith. Any employee who feels that he/she is being retaliated against for filing a claim or participating in an investigation must report the retaliation to the Equal Opportunity Office immediately.

Violations of the County's Workplace Harassment Policy may result in termination.



Drug-Free Workplace

The volunteer is responsible for being familiar with and abiding by the County's Drug-Free Workplace Policy, which can be found at <https://www.alachuacounty.us/depts/hr/pages/pmanual.aspx?PolicyId=591>. Alachua County prohibits the following behavior:

The manufacture, use, possession or distribution of illicit or controlled substances during work hours is strictly prohibited.

Being under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs during work hours, and being under the influence of legal drugs to the extent that normal faculties are significantly impaired on the job, is strictly prohibited.

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is grounds for discipline, including termination.

The Hazard Communication Standard/Right-to-Know Law

Important details concerning 29 CFR 1910.1200

Volunteers/interns have a right to know about exposure to hazardous/toxic substances in the workplace.

Departments will provide volunteers/interns with information about the hazardous/toxic substances with which they work and will train volunteers/interns in safe handling practices and emergency procedures.

Volunteers/interns must not be knowingly exposed to any unnecessary danger or hazards in the workplace and must not perform any functions requiring a license or certification unless they have a current license or certification to do so.



Other Policies

Employment Status of Volunteers

Volunteers are not subject to any provisions of state law relating to public employment, to any collective bargaining agreement between the unit of county government or constitutional county officer and an employees' association or union or to any laws relating to hours of work, rates of compensation, leave time, or employee benefits, except as provided under Florida Statute 125.9504.

However, all volunteers must comply with applicable rules of the unit of county government or county constitutional officer.

Emergency Preparedness

It is critical for you to know the correct action to take before, during, and after an emergency or natural disaster. The official Hurricane Season is from June 1 to November 30. Please ask your supervisor to provide you with:

- A review of your department's emergency preparedness plan
- Who to contact before, during, and after an event
- Alternative work schedules
- When to report back to the site location



Use of Social Media and Photos

We understand that many of our volunteers and interns are on social media. We are too. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter. However, it is important for our employees, volunteers and interns to present themselves in a professional manner. Please abide by the following:

- Volunteers and interns may not represent themselves as members of the Alachua County workforce or volunteer/intern team on social networking sites regarding matters specific to their official duties.
- Volunteers and interns shall not disclose any confidential or proprietary information of the County on any personal social media platforms, including the use of County logos or other branding.
- Volunteers and interns shall not create unauthorized social media sites that intend to represent or present itself as a County-sponsored social media platform.

