



Alachua County VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK





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Introduction

Welcome to the Alachua County BoCC Volunteer Program! Our new Volunteer Program is a dynamic platform connecting individuals with various volunteer opportunities across the County Departments. Whether you're interested in contributing your skills on a one-time basis or engaging in a long-term commitment, there are numerous ways to make a meaningful impact within our community.

We Thank You for your dedication to serving others and protect the environment. Together, we can make a difference!

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.

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to establish clear and efficient procedures for the operation of the Alachua County Volunteer Programs. It serves as a resource to facilitate communication between the volunteers and the departments, ensuring that volunteers are well-informed and equipped to fulfill their roles. The handbook also outlines the roles and responsibilities of departments and volunteers, emphasizing the importance of collaboration in fostering a creative and safe environment.

Alachua County Types and Status of Employment

Volunteers are not subject to any 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 to volunteers under Florida Statute 125.9504.

Procedure No.: [EP 4-02](#), County Policies

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Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is defined as:

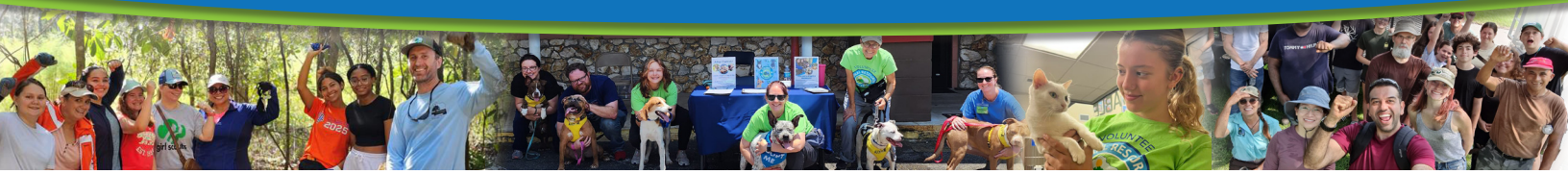
- An individual who offers their services freely, whether on a regular basis or for specific one-time events within the volunteer program.
- An individual who dedicates time and effort to perform voluntary service in various departments of the county.
- An individual who seeks to gain practical experience in specific fields relevant to their studies or personal interests by participating in the county's volunteer program.
- An individual who volunteers their time to gain valuable experience, skills, and networking opportunities that may enhance their employability prospects.
- An individual who may need to fill a community service requirement (High School students mandated by a class).

Role of Volunteers

The following are fundamental responsibilities applicable to all volunteers.

- Perform tasks and duties established by the County and the department event organizer.
- Maintain Confidentiality: Volunteers are required to keep all sensitive information confidential, respecting the privacy and security of individuals and the organization. [Policy No.: 2-1](#), County Policies.
- Ethical Conduct: Volunteers must not exploit non-public information for personal gain or the benefit of others outside of their volunteer role. [Policy No.: 2-1](#), County Policies
- Communication of Absences: Volunteers should notify the event organizer if they are unable to attend or will be late for their scheduled volunteer shift.
- Adhere to Sign-In Procedures: Volunteers must record their arrival and departure using the designated methods established by the Alachua County or event organizer.
- Wear Identification Tag: The event organizer will provide an identification tag or pin. Volunteers are expected to always wear their identification visible during their volunteer activities for easy identification and security purposes. [Procedure No.: AP 2-5](#), County Policies

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Special Types of Volunteers

Minors as Volunteers

Alachua County welcomes minors to participate in our volunteer program to explore potential career paths and develop valuable skills. The Department Director with the approval of the Human Resources Director, will determine if a minor under the age of 18 will be allowed to volunteer. A minor volunteer is someone under the age of 18 who offers volunteer service on a one-time, occasional, or ongoing basis under the supervision of the department event organizer.

Volunteers under the age of 16 must have a parent or guardian present during their volunteering activities. Exceptions are made for volunteers who are part of sponsor programs. In such cases, they must be under the supervision of an adult chaperone, counselor, teacher, or instructor.

The department event organizer, as a County representative, ensures the safety, welfare, and proper guidance of minor volunteers throughout their participation in volunteer activities. They play a critical role in facilitating a positive and enriching experience for our young volunteers. To apply for volunteer work, the following forms are required:

1. Minor Application
2. Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Regular-service Volunteer

Individuals aged 18 years or older who participate in specific voluntary service activities on an ongoing or continual basis, with or without supervision of an event organizer. Before starting their service, volunteers in this category must complete the following forms:

1. Application
2. Adult Volunteer Release Agreement for Individuals Form



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Occasional-service Volunteer

Individuals aged 18 years or older who offer to provide one-time or non-involved occasional voluntary service with or without supervision of an event organizer. Volunteers under this category must complete 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

External groups or organizations providing one-time or occasional voluntary service, comprising of more than one person with or without the supervision of an adult event organizer. To participate in this role, each volunteer needs to complete the following forms:

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

County Employees—Volunteering for County Programs

County employees may volunteer their services to the County if the work they perform as a volunteer is outside their scope of duties as County employees.

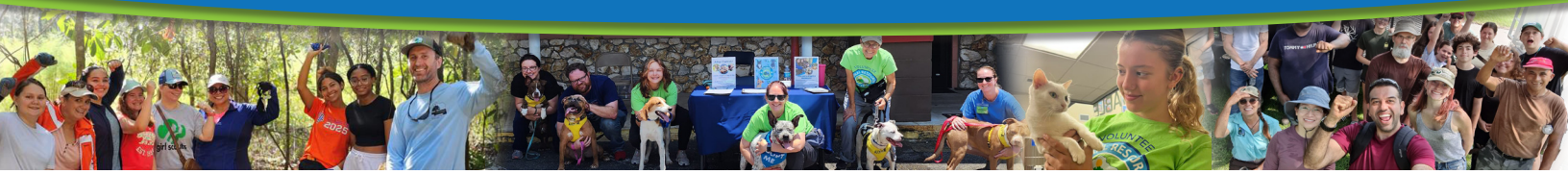
Departments are encouraged to utilize the skills and talents of employees for County-sponsored volunteer activities.

This service is accepted provided the volunteer service is:

1. Totally voluntary
2. Involves tasks that are outside of the scope of normal staff duties
3. Is provided outside of the employee's usual working hours.



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Role of Departments

Departments play a crucial role in the success of the Alachua County Volunteer Program. Their involvement in planning, coordinating, and overseeing volunteer opportunities ensure effective utilization of volunteer resources and fosters a positive experience for volunteers. This section outlines the specific responsibilities of departments.

- Plan, develop, oversee, and implement volunteer opportunities.
- Assign an event organizer within their department to closely collaborate with and oversee the volunteer.
- Ensure volunteers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfill their roles effectively.
- Provide comprehensive instructions and training to ensure volunteers perform tasks correctly and safely.
- Recruit volunteers by posting volunteer opportunities on the County Volunteer Program software.
- Ensure that volunteers comply with the Alachua County Volunteers guidelines.
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date volunteer records, including requested information and acknowledgment forms.
- Maintain attendance records.
- Keep relevant departments informed of the volunteer activity's status, any accidents or injuries related to it, and ongoing volunteer utilization.
- Continuously recognize and show appreciation for the volunteer's contributions by organizing awards, recognitions, and other forms of appreciation to celebrate volunteers' efforts and achievements.



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Tracking Volunteer Hours

Tracking volunteer hours is a crucial measure of the success of our volunteer program and is essential when applying for funding grants. Therefore, it is important for volunteers to check-in and out using the actual time they arrived and left, rather than the time they were scheduled to arrive and leave.

The volunteer software provides the convenience of online signing and can be accessed through a phone or any internet-enabled device. This feature allows volunteers to complete necessary onboarding information, waivers, or agreements electronically, without the need for printing, scanning, or mailing documents. Additionally, it generates reports and analytics on volunteer activities, providing valuable insights into volunteer engagement.

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. Breaching confidentiality constitutes a serious breach of trust and may result in legal consequences. [Policy No.: 2-1](#), County Policies.

Violation of the Release Agreement and disclosure of confidential information may lead to termination of the volunteer position. If volunteers have any doubts about the confidentiality of information or files, they should seek guidance from the event organizer.

Florida Sunshine Law

Alachua County is committed to transparency and accountability in its operations. As such, all employees are bound by Florida's Sunshine Law, which grants the public access to governmental proceedings and records. This includes all documents and materials generated or received in connection with official County business, such as emails, meeting notes, sound recordings, photographs, text messages, and more. [Regulation Number: 07-01](#), County Policy

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Harassment

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

All County employees and volunteers are to avoid any activity which harasses or disrupts co-workers, subordinates, or the public. Any actions or words that is harassing or disruptive because of a person's race, national origin, religion, sex, disability, pregnancy, age, or military status is prohibited. [Policy No.: 2-1](#), County Policies.

Any volunteer who feels that they are being retaliated against filing a claim or participating in an investigation must report the retaliation to the Equal Opportunity Office immediately at 352-374-5275.

Safety

Alachua County is dedicated to ensuring the safety of its volunteers and members of the community by providing a secure environment. Volunteers will undergo orientation and training sessions by the departments which will encompass safety and health-related information.

In instances where personal protective equipment (PPE) is necessary, volunteers will receive adequate training and be equipped by the department before commencing their tasks.

It is the responsibility of each volunteer to adhere to the provided training, use safety equipment appropriately, and promptly report any unsafe working conditions or practices to the event or the Alachua County Safety Officer. For inquiries or concerns regarding safety, please contact the Alachua County Safety Officer at (352) 538-0736. [Policy No.: 6-1](#), County Policies



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Driving

Volunteers are not permitted to operate County vehicles under any circumstances, but they are allowed to ride as a passenger when serving in the function of their volunteer role. [Policy No.: EP 6-6](#), County Policies

Injury Reporting Procedure for Volunteers

If a volunteer is injured while performing their assigned task or witnesses an injury to another person, the volunteer should:

1. Immediately notify the department event organizer of the injury or incident
2. Call 911 if it's a life-threatening emergency
3. The event organizer and volunteers must complete the Incident/Accident Form and 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.
4. If medical attention is requested, the volunteer will be given directions on authorized medical treatment facilities and appointment times.

Volunteers injured during volunteer activities are covered by [Workers' Compensation Florida Statute 440](#). All medical care for the injury will be coordinated by the Risk Management Office.

All volunteers under workers' compensation are subject to its rules and regulations including post injury drug and alcohol testing. All volunteers seeking medical care will be tested for drugs and alcohol. The County does not permit the use of marijuana acquired through a medical marijuana certificate. Any CBD product that results in a positive drug test will be treated as such. [Policy No: EP 6-6](#)



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Tobacco Workplace Policy

The use of tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), and any other tobacco-related products, is prohibited inside all County properties. Smoking is prohibited in or near all Alachua County buildings except in designated smoking areas. [Policy No.: 6-11](#), County Policies

Use of Social Media and Photo

At Alachua County we recognize the prevalence of social media and encourage our volunteers to follow us on platforms like Facebook and X. However, it's important for all members of our workforce, including volunteers and interns to maintain professionalism and adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Volunteers shall not represent themselves as Alachua County employees on social media sites. Personal opinions expressed online should be clearly distinguished from official County statements.
2. Volunteers 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.
3. Volunteers shall not create unauthorized social media sites that intend to represent or present County-sponsored social media platform.
4. Any official communication channels should be established and managed by designated County personnel to ensure accuracy and consistency in messaging. [Procedure No.:28](#) County Policies



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Information Technology

The Alachua County Information and Telecommunication Services Department reserves the right to ensure that all technology resources are used in accordance with the County guidelines. All installed software and hardware must be owned or leased by Alachua County. Distribution or copying of any software owned or licensed by Alachua County is strictly prohibited.

Using information technology resources for illegal activities, personal gain, political activities, or any inappropriate or offensive purposes is prohibited. [Procedure No.: AP 10-4](#) County Policies

Use of County Equipment

Alachua County equipment is defined as, but may not be limited to, cellular telephones, audiovisual equipment, electronic equipment, vehicles, tools, and maintenance equipment or any other County equipment. Any County equipment that is lost, damaged, vandalized or stolen must be immediately reported to the respective County event organizer and any vandalized or stolen equipment must also be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency and a written report obtained.

A copy of the law enforcement report along with the Alachua County Event Coordinator Incident/Accident Report will then be processed in accordance with the Alachua County Claims Review Committee Policies and Procedures.

[Regulation Number: 02-10](#)
County Policies



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