



G.I.V.E.

"Government Involving Volunteer Energy"

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Sarasota County Government
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Dedicated to Quality Service

Welcome to Sarasota County Government. You have joined a special group of people who, as unpaid staff members, play a significant role in linking the efforts of our paid professionals with the public we serve. Your commitment demonstrates the importance you place on your community's well being.

We realize your time is valuable so our commitment to you is that we will do our utmost to make your experience with Sarasota County meaningful and pleasant.

Sarasota County continues to experience tighter budgets and greater demands for services from the public. To help balance the two, Sarasota County is enlisting the talents of volunteers to help our staff provide quality service to over 315,000 permanent residents. In partnership with you, we can accomplish our goal in a cost-effective manner.

As a volunteer member of our team, we hope you will feel at home and enjoy the wide range of experiences that await you. We look forward to getting to know you as we work together to provide quality services, programs, and activities for the residents of Sarasota County.

As goodwill ambassadors, you will be remembered for your selfless dedication and caring in the role of volunteer. Thank you for sharing your time, talents, and experience with us.

James L. Ley
County Administrator

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MISSION

The Board of County Commissioners adopted the following mission on April 20, 1993:

The Mission of Sarasota County Government is to provide and enhance quality programs, services and facilities that reflect the goals of the community while always promoting health, safety, public welfare and quality of life for our citizens

VISION

Our Vision is to be a customer focused, continuously improving, accountable team.

VALUES

- Treat everyone with care, respect, and dignity.
- Take pride and ownership in what you do and strive to continuously improve the process.
- Be a team player and work together toward common goals and commit to everyone's success.
- Build a foundation of trust by keeping your word, doing what is right and leading by example
- Openly exchange information, ideas, and concerns in a clear, honest, and helpful manner.
- Listen, communicate, then listen again.

POLICY

The Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners is committed to the principle of volunteerism. Volunteers are a valuable resource in enhancing the County's ability to deliver quality services, which might not otherwise be available to the public, in a cost-effective manner.

Sarasota County Government also recognizes that citizens should be given the opportunity to serve local government through volunteer efforts. Volunteers can serve in advocacy, direct service and administrative roles.

VOLUNTEER RIGHTS

The time, talents, and spirit you bring to Sarasota County Government contribute significantly to our citizens' wellbeing and we are most appreciative. As a volunteer, Sarasota County will attempt to assure you:

1. Recognition and respect as a co-worker.

2. A position that will complement your personal preferences, personality, and experience.
3. An orientation to the County, its services and programs.
4. Training to perform competently the duties assigned.
5. Guidance and direction by your immediate supervisor.
6. Confidentiality regarding your records and personal information.
7. An orderly, designated place to work and access to necessary equipment.
8. Consideration of you and your suggestions.
9. Recognition and acknowledgement of your contributions as a volunteer.

SPECIFICS . . .

The following definitions apply according to ss 125.9501-125.9506:

“Volunteer” means a person who, of his or her own free will, provides goods or services to any unit of county government or to any constitutional county officer without receiving monetary or material compensation.

“Regular-Service Volunteer” means a person engaged in specific voluntary service activities on an ongoing or continual basis.

“Occasional-Service Volunteer” (also called “Episodic Volunteer”) means a person who offers to provide a one-time or occasional voluntary service.

“Material donor” means a person who provides funds, materials, employment, or opportunities for clients of county government without receiving monetary or material compensation.

It is further understood that persons working with County units shall be considered as unpaid independent volunteers and shall not be entitled to unemployment compensation.

The County maintains its exclusive right to recruit, assign, and release volunteers and to determine the utilization of volunteers in order to extend the County’s delivery of quality services to the public.

Volunteers will be utilized to augment paid staff. Paid staff are necessary for continuity and effective delivery of services. Volunteers shall assist staff in their duties, enhancing and extending service delivery.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SARASOTA COUNTY

The Community Involvement Coordinator within the Administrative Services Business Center will be responsible for implementing this Program.

Each unit will assign at least one staff person who will be responsible for coordinating volunteer activities within his/her area.

Management/supervision and line staff will cooperate and participate in the implementation of this program.

Worker's Compensation Insurance will be provided.

Sarasota County will provide well defined work assignments of a meaningful nature.

Sarasota County will develop guidelines governing the recruitment, screening, training, responsibility, utilization and supervision of volunteers.

Sarasota County will provide sufficient orientation, training and supervision for volunteers to understand their responsibilities and perform job duties adequately.

Sarasota County will work to ensure a receptive climate for citizen volunteers.

Sarasota County will provide for recognition of volunteers who have offered continuous and outstanding service to County administered programs.

The Coordinator will issue annual reports to the Board of County Commissioners on program activities.

The Community Involvement Coordinator's Office will provide a centralized point of contact for citizens who desire involvement in County Government services.

Staff, whether within the unit utilizing the volunteer or within the Coordinator's Office, will interview interested volunteers and arrange for placement.

Follow-up will be conducted by staff responsible for the volunteer from referral through placement.

Volunteer program Information will be developed, publicized and disseminated in the community.

Staff will not knowingly expose volunteers to unnecessary danger or hazards in the work environment.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers shall:

- work within the rules established herein.
- keep to their assigned work schedule, as diligently as if they were paid employees.

- perform tasks assigned by their supervisor and approved by the responsible department manager.
- maintain strict confidentiality with any information to which they may have access within their volunteer jobs.
- be 16 years of age or older. Children under 16 years of age must be pre-approved by a department manager and have adult supervision.
- maintain records of their volunteer time, which will include their name, dates worked, hours of service and tasks assigned.
- wear a badge identifying them as a “Volunteer” during work periods.
- abide by County Rules and Regulations.
- attend Volunteer Orientation, which will include an overview of Sarasota County, video message from County Administrator, discussion of volunteer/staff relationship and expectations, benefits, Right-to-Know, Workers’ Compensation and Safety information.
- be dressed in neat and clean attire, appropriate for the activity/job assigned and work location.
- maintain a high level of work standard and ethic.

Volunteers who are public officers or employees will not be permitted to voluntarily perform services which are the same as or similar to duties for which they are paid to perform by the same public agency.

Volunteers will not be permitted to drive County vehicles or operate County equipment without proper licensing or certification and prior approval by Risk Management.

Volunteers agree to be trained for the jobs to which they are assigned, including safety aspects.

When personal protection equipment is required for the position, the volunteer must either provide his own, or be properly equipped by the department, and trained in the use of the equipment prior to engaging in any such work.

Volunteers will report in with their supervisors at the beginning and end of each work session. This is especially important in case of an emergency.

BENEFITS

Sarasota County offers the following benefits, which will vary from time-to-time

Workers Compensation, medical benefits only, in accordance with Chapter 440, Florida Statutes. (No wage loss, Unemployment Compensation benefits, health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, or social security will be provided.)

In-house training, seminars and computer classes, subject to space available.

Reimbursement for mileage (at the same rate as employees) when travel is necessary and approved as part of volunteer duties. To and from the workplace will not be reimbursed.

Tax Deductions may apply as follows (*check with your tax professional for specifics*)

- Dues, fees, or assessments paid to qualified organizations
- Out-of-pocket expenses paid in rendering services without compensation
- Automobile expenses
- Per diem allowance
- Expenses of attending a convention for an organization as its chosen representative for which you have not received reimbursement
- Cost of uniforms as well as their upkeep, if the uniform is required to be worn while volunteering.

PROCEDURES

Application – An individual wishing to serve as a volunteer must complete an application form and worker's compensation form.

Interview – Staff will interview those applying to ascertain appropriate placement.

Catalog of Needs – A list of volunteer opportunities, published periodically, from which individuals may choose work assignments. This list is the result of Job Description and Volunteer Request forms submitted by units.

Orientation – Each regular volunteer may attend an orientation meeting which will include: an overview of Sarasota County Government, policies and procedures, a tour of the facilities and any other information determined pertinent to the well being of volunteers and staff.

Absences – If a volunteer is scheduled, but circumstances arise which prevent his/her participation, notification to the supervisor, with as much advanced notice as possible, is requested.

Recording Volunteer Hours – Recording volunteer hours on the appropriate County form/log is the responsibility of the volunteer. These forms will be provided and are to be submitted to the supervisor on a weekly basis (or at the end of a special event) as determined by the unit to which the volunteer is assigned.

Phone and Personal Public Contact – Volunteers are to be courteous and helpful when answering the telephone or greeting the public. If a caller or visitor becomes agitated, the volunteer should remain polite and request the assistance of a supervisor or staff member to speak with the individual. Any messages taken in person or over the telephone must be provided to the intended recipient in written or telecommunications form.

Problem Solving – Problems may arise from time-to-time during a volunteer assignment. The volunteer is encouraged to discuss any problems with his/her supervisor, remembering communication is an important key to problem solving. If a problem cannot be resolved to all parties' satisfaction, the Community Involvement Coordinator may be asked by either party to mediate.

Transfers – If the work assignment is not providing sufficient satisfaction, challenges, or learning opportunities, the volunteer may request a different assignment, which the Coordinator will try to accommodate.

Termination - As regrettable as it may be, occasionally a volunteer may be dismissed for reasons which may include the following:

- Attendance – absences are too frequent, arrives late and departs early too often, doesn't notify of absences
- Poor attitude – may be cynical, cannot accept suggestions or criticism, negative to the public and/or employees, too social or disruptive, won't accept responsibility for actions
- Inadequate job performance – requires too much supervision, poor skill level, difficulty with job duties, doesn't follow through or complete assignments
- Reporting to work while under the influence of, or in possession of, alcohol or illegal drugs
- Failure to follow volunteer program policy or department rules

Injury – If a person is injured while performing his/her volunteer duties, he/she must report it immediately to the supervisor, who will take appropriate action.

GOOD SAMARITAN ACT

1. The follow is a portion of the Good Samaritan Act (768.13) which addresses immunity from civil liability :
 - a. Any person, including those licensed to practice medicine, who gratuitously and in good faith renders emergency care or treatment at the scene of an emergency outside of a hospital, doctor's office, or other place having property medical equipment, without objection of the injured victim or victims thereof, shall not be held liable for any civil damages as a result of such care or treatment or as a result of any act or failure to act in providing or arranging further medical treatment where the person acts as an ordinary reasonably prudent man would have acted under the same or similar circumstances.
 - b. Any hospital licensed under chapter 395, any employee of such hospital working in a clinical area within the facility and providing patient care, and any person licensed to practice medicine who in good faith renders medical care or treatment necessitated by a sudden, unexpected situation or occurrence resulting in a serious medical condition demanding immediate medical attention, for which the patient enters the hospital through its emergency

room or trauma center, shall not be held liable for any civil damages as a result of such medical care or treatment unless such damages result from providing, or failing to provide, medical care or treatment under circumstances demonstrating a reckless disregard for the consequences so as to affect the life or health of another.

2. The immunity provided by this paragraph does not apply to damages as a result of any act or omission of providing medical care or treatment:
 - a. Which occurs after the patient is stabilized and is capable of receiving medical treatment as a non-emergency patient, unless surgery is required as a result of the emergency within a reasonable time after the patient is stabilized, in which case the immunity provided by this paragraph applies to any act or omission of providing medical care or treatment which occurs prior to the stabilization of the patient following the surgery, or,
 - b. Unrelated to the original medical emergency.
3. Any person, including those licensed to practice veterinary medicine, who gratuitously and in good faith renders emergency care of treatment to an injured animal at the scene of an emergency on or adjacent to a roadway shall not be held liable for any civil damages as a result of such care or treatment or as a result of an act or failure to act in providing or arranging further medical treatment where the person acts as an ordinary, reasonably prudent man would have acted under the same or similar circumstances.

RECOGNITION

Every opportunity will be utilized to thank Volunteers and recognize their contribution to Sarasota County. Activities may be organized at an overall program level, event level, and/or individually by each department. The following are some of the options:

- Uniform – tee shirts, golf shirts, other
- Volunteer Badge – Basic “Volunteer” badge given to all; after 100 hours the badge will display Volunteer’s name
- Certificates –
 - a. Special Service Award – to short term volunteers
 - b. Departmental Appreciation Certificates – to individuals contributing above and beyond for a sustained period of time
 - c. Bronze Certificate of Appreciation – after 50 hours
 - d. Silver Certificate of Appreciation – after 100 hours
 - e. Gold Certificate of Appreciation – after 300 hours
- Appreciation/Thank You Card – casual recognition
- Volunteer Banquet – annually by department

- Volunteer of the Month or Quarter – awarded at Board of County Commissioners' Meeting
- Volunteer of the Year – awarded at Board of County Commissioners' Meeting during National Volunteer Week

CLOSING

Congratulations! You have made it through the most difficult portion of volunteering – familiarization with the rules and expectations. Now the reward of beginning your volunteer experience with Sarasota County is at hand.

The next step will be on-site training and orientation by your employee/supervisor at the location of your assignment.

It is our collective goal to make your experience with Sarasota County rewarding and enjoyable. With your help, we **can** make a difference.

Thank you for joining our team.