

**Oklahoma Department of Corrections**  
**Volunteer Services**  
**Volunteer Code of Conduct**

As partners with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, volunteers are expected to maintain a standard of conduct that upholds the public trust and reflects the highest ethical standards. Volunteers will:

1. Devote full attention and effort to their work and responsibilities while performing their volunteer service;
2. Engage in conduct which affords respect, courtesy and preserves the dignity of others;
3. Refrain from conduct which is corrupt, illegal, serves to denigrate, demean or disregard the welfare of others;
4. Promote and model exemplary behavior;
5. Comply with all laws, rules, regulations, agency policies and procedures that apply to any aspect of volunteer service;
6. Avoid any conduct, interest or relationship that is in conflict with, or detrimental to, proper and effective service as a volunteer;
7. Serve in a manner which contributes to and supports a safe and healthful environment; and
8. Promptly and truthfully report any actions which are not in accordance with agency policies and procedures, violate volunteer rules and guidelines, endanger others or undermine the values of the agency.

Any volunteer whose actions violate this code of conduct may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with OP-090211, Section II. K. item 4.

## Oklahoma Department of Corrections Volunteer Services Rules for Volunteer Service

### ID Requirements

1. Volunteers must have their Volunteer ID to enter a facility or pick up inmates. IDs must be worn at all times while on facility grounds or while serving at an offsite volunteer activity. If a volunteer loses or forgets their ID a facility may allow the volunteer to use a valid photo ID and issue a visitors badge to be worn while on site.
2. Lost or stolen volunteer IDs must be reported immediately to the facility last visited and as soon as possible to the Agency Volunteer Services office

### Access to Facilities

1. Arrive at the facility at the proper time and observe the time frames given.
2. Report to central control when entering and exiting the facility; sign in and out there.
3. Be prepared to be searched whenever you enter a facility. Anything brought into a facility is subject to search. Vehicles on facility grounds are subject to search.
4. Volunteers are only allowed to go to specifically designated locations in the facility for the volunteer activity, program or service. Proceed directly from central control to your program site and directly back after the program or activity.

### Program Material and Donations

1. Material for programs or activities must be approved before being brought into a facility.
2. All donations must be arranged and approved in advance through the facility Chaplain/Volunteer Coordinator.
3. Do not bring any contraband into the correctional facility or off center activity involving an inmate. Contraband is defined in OP-040109 entitled "Control of Contraband and Physical Evidence" and covered in detail during volunteer training.
4. If a volunteer needs to bring in medications that may be needed by the volunteer during the activity it must be approved in advance. Only the dosage which might be needed during the activity will be allowed and it must be in the original prescription bottle.

5. Nothing will be left at the institution without prior approval.
6. Never carry letters or messages, written or verbal, for an inmate into or out of the institution. Inmates must not be used to deliver messages.
7. Purses, bags and other containers will be transparent and no larger than approximately one cubic foot in size. Program related items that cannot be transported in clear containers will only be allowed with the approval of the facility head.

### **Interactions with Inmates, Staff and Other Volunteers**

1. All activities must be approved in advance.
2. Professional relationships with inmates must be maintained at all times. Volunteers are not to fill the role of friends or family. If it appears that an inappropriate relationship is forming, the volunteer will be suspended. Sexual relationships with ex-inmates are strongly discouraged. Sexual relationships with inmates or ex-inmates within 180 days of discharge are prohibited.
3. Be positive in your communications and interactions with staff, inmates and other volunteers. Derogatory comments about any racial, ethnic, faith group or other volunteer groups are prohibited.
4. Inquiries by inmates regarding facility issues should be referred to facility staff.
5. Issues or concerns related to your volunteer service should be brought to the Program Leader, facility Chaplain/Volunteer Coordinator, facility Administration or the agency Volunteer Services Unit, not to inmates.
6. Disagreements between volunteers or staff should be dealt with out of the sight and sound of inmates. Any disagreements that cannot be settled should be brought to the Program Leader, facility Chaplain/Volunteer Coordinator, facility Administration or the agency Volunteer Services Unit.
7. Confidentiality is important. However, any information regarding a threat to the safety of the inmate, others or the security of the facility must be reported immediately to the facility Chaplain/Volunteer Coordinator. If the facility Chaplain/Volunteer Coordinator is unavailable it must be reported immediately to security staff.
8. Treat every inmate in a fair and consistent manner. Favoritism should be avoided.
9. Volunteers are not to discuss their personal information or family matters with inmates.
10. Inmates are not allowed access to any personal addresses, social security numbers or other personal identification information. Volunteers may provide

- organizational addresses or a P.O. Box for written correspondence. All written correspondence must follow the same rules regarding interactions with inmates.
11. Volunteers are not allowed to personally give or loan money or anything of value, directly or indirectly to an inmate with whom you serve or their family. Hobby craft items may only be purchased in accordance with the correctional facility's local procedures.
  12. Volunteers are not allowed to personally accept or receive a gift, money or anything of value, directly or indirectly from an inmate with whom you serve or their family.
  13. Volunteers are prohibited from selling products or services to inmates.
  14. Model appropriate language and do not use offensive language.
  15. Quickly comply with the instructions of staff or correctional officers. Bring any concerns to the Program Leader, the facility Chaplain/Volunteer Coordinator, facility Administration or the agency Volunteer Services Unit.
  16. Volunteers will cooperate with any agency investigation.
  17. While inmates may be allowed to help facilitate volunteer led activities, maintain control of the program. Inmates should not control meetings.
  18. Maintain a professional appearance appropriate to the type of service you are providing. Contact your Program Leader, facility Chaplain/Volunteer Coordinator or facility Administration if you have any questions regarding appropriate attire.
  19. Volunteers are prohibited from taking photographs or making audio/video recordings of activities inside the institution or of inmates unless it is approved in advance and proper releases are signed in accordance with OP-020108 entitled "Information Requests and Release of Information from Agency Records and Media Access to the Department of Corrections."

### **Transporting Inmates**

1. Volunteers may be approved to transport inmates at Community Corrections facilities to funerals, hospital visits, programs, approved activities, medical appointments or to obtain ID information, housing or employment under the following conditions:
  - a. There must be at least one ODOC volunteer for every 8 inmates.
  - b. There must be at least one ODOC volunteer of the same gender as the inmates.
2. Report to the security office when signing out inmates for all activities and when returning inmates back to the facilities.
3. There are to be no stops at any store, fast food restaurant or personal address while going to and returning from any activity.
4. In the event of a vehicle accident:
  - a. Assess the situation.
  - b. Call 911.

- c. Contact the facility immediately.
- d. Remain on the scene until a police report is taken.
- e. Submit a written report to the facility security staff upon arrival back to the facility.

### **Offsite Activity/Meeting Rules**

- 1. Volunteers are expected to provide close supervision of inmates to ensure they abide by all rules and regulations. They are not to be engaged in sexual activity, use alcohol or illegal substances, use the activity as a means to receive visitors or engage in illegal or inappropriate behavior.
- 2. Inmates are not allowed to make or receive phone calls, personal visits or mail any items while participating in any off center activity.
- 3. Inmates are not allowed to bring any property back into the facility – money, clothes, food or unauthorized medications/drugs or alcohol.
- 4. Family members may be allowed to attend activities with inmates. However, they are not to have time alone and their interactions must be monitored. Family members are not allowed to give the inmate anything except food which must be approved by the volunteer group.

### **Reporting Requirements**

- 1. Immediately report any potential threat to the safety and security of any person or of the facility to central control or the nearest Correctional Officer.
- 2. Contact facility staff immediately in the event of any medical emergency, escape or concern. Immediately contact the facility In the event of a medical emergency or escape during an offsite activity. In the case of a life threatening situation immediately call 911.
- 3. Volunteers are required to notify the facility Chaplain or Volunteer Coordinator and the Agency Volunteer Services Unit if they are arrested, charged with a crime or convicted of a felony or misdemeanor.
- 4. Volunteers are required to notify the facility Chaplain/Volunteer Coordinator if they have a family member or friend incarcerated at the facility where they serve.
- 5. Volunteers are required to notify the facility Chaplain/Volunteer Coordinator if they request to be placed on an inmate's visiting list at a facility where they serve.
- 6. Update information whenever your name, address, phone number or e-mail addresses change.

### **Rules for Religious Volunteers**

1. The following rules and guidelines apply to all volunteers that are providing Religious Services or Faith Based Programs:
2. The Oklahoma Department of Corrections will not give preference to one religion over another or religion over non-religion.
3. All religious groups are expected to treat other groups with respect.
  - a. Be positive about your beliefs without being negative about other beliefs.
  - b. In order to maintain the safety and security of correctional facilities, use of derogatory language when referring to other groups of people or advocating religious, racial or national hatred is not allowed. Those that violate this prohibition may be suspended from providing religious services.
4. Meeting space for religious activities is shared with all faith groups.
5. Religious/Special events must be requested in advance through the facility Chaplain/Volunteer Coordinator.
6. State agencies cannot purchase religious material. Donations of religious items are welcome and should be arranged through the facility Chaplain/Volunteer Coordinator.

### **Employing Inmates or Ex-Offenders**

1. Volunteers that are part of a business or non-profit organization may hire inmates or ex-offenders under the following conditions:
  - a. There is a clearly defined application and selection process that is transparent and fair.
  - b. Taxes are deducted from the employee's pay check and the employee receives the W2 forms necessary to file taxes.
  - c. To employ inmates in work release facilities the volunteer must follow the guidelines set forth in OP-090110 entitled "Work Release."
  - d. Notify the Agency Volunteer Services office.
2. Hiring inmates or ex-offenders within 180 days of release from an institution to perform personal services (e.g. lawn care, home maintenance or haircuts) is prohibited.