

**POLICY 900**  
**COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

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## **900 COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

### **900.01 Goal**

The goal of the Clermont County Board of Developmental Disabilities' Community Relations Department is to communicate the mission and philosophy of the Board to the citizens of Clermont County; to provide an array of recreational and social activities for our consumers age 13 and above; and to coordinate and supervise the Board's Volunteer Program.

#### **Responsibilities**

The Community Relations Department may be responsible for, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Media Relations
- Levy Campaigns
- The Beacon (newsletter)
- CERKL (Online Newsletter)
- Press Releases (local papers)
- Annual Action Plan (surveys to parents/community/staff, compiling results, distribution of plan and follow-up)
- Annual Report (plan/design/distribute)
- CCBODD Monthly Activities
- Disabilities Awareness Month Activities
- CCBODD Recognition Dinner
- Clermont County Fair Booths
- Ready Fest (Public Schools)
- Chamber of Commerce Activities
- Seasonal/Holiday Activities
- Maintain Speakers Bureau and Tours
- CCBODD Program Brochures, Website, and Social Media Pages
- Grant Writing/Fundraising including yearly fundraisers that support the respite program, levy campaign, and other programs/services.
- Volunteer Reception Center – Organization and implementation in emergency/disaster situations
- Presence on other committees/with other groups in the Clermont County area

**901 COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

The practice of Community Relations is essential for organizations that want to develop profitable relationships with individuals and groups.

The Community Relations Director of the Clermont County Board of Developmental Disabilities has the overall responsibility for community relations and communication. Additionally, all staff, parents and members of the Board of DD are also responsible for community relations. Each person is an ambassador, carrying impressions of the purpose, culture and value of the organization to everyone he/she knows in the community.

Strategies used for community outreach might include using media relations, community relations, publications, special events or other tools to reach various publics.

**902 RECREATIONAL/SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

Person centered planning is a process which enables persons with disabilities and their families to communicate their wants and needs to us so we can help them get the supports they need for a better place in their communities and a better place in life.

One of the wants and needs often communicated to Board personnel is the need for recreational and social activities. The Clermont County Board of Developmental Disabilities takes a holistic approach to providing needs for individuals other than work.

The Community Relations Department provides day/evening/weekend recreational/leisure/social activities. Throughout the month several activities are held, providing our consumers the ability to choose an activity that suits them.

These activities are mostly held in the community, with only a few held at program sites each year. Program participants age 13 years and up are invited to attend their choice of activities that are of an interest to them. All activities are accessible and provide the supports necessary to assure a safe and successful activity. Consumers needing personal care assistance must be accompanied by someone who can assist them in their personal needs. Activities are planned through activity surveys and the requests made by individuals/families in various venues: Client Council Meetings, at community outings, etc.

## **903 THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

### **A. OVERALL POLICY ON UTILIZATION OF VOLUNTEERS**

The achievement of the goals of the Board of DD is best served by the active participation of citizens of the community. The Board of DD accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels of the Board and within all appropriate programs and activities. All staff are encouraged to assist in the creation of meaningful and productive roles in which volunteers might serve and to assist in recruitment of volunteers from the community.

### **B. PURPOSE OF VOLUNTEER POLICIES**

The purpose of these policies is to provide overall guidance and direction to staff. These policies are intended for internal management guidance only, and do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement.

### **C. ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT**

The productive utilization of volunteers requires a planned and organized effort. The function of the Volunteer Program is to provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer management within the Board of DD, and to direct and assist staff and volunteer efforts to jointly provide more productive services. The Volunteer Program shall also bear responsibility for maintaining a liaison with other volunteer-utilizing programs in the community and assisting in community-wide efforts to recognize and promote volunteering. The Community Relations Director/Designee shall bear primary responsibility by planning for effective volunteer utilization, for assisting staff in identifying productive and creative volunteer roles, for recruiting suitable volunteers, and for tracking and evaluating the contributions of volunteers to the Board.

### **D. DEFINITION OF "VOLUNTEER"**

A "volunteer" is anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the Board. A "volunteer" must be officially accepted and enrolled by the Board prior to the performance of the task. Unless specifically stated, volunteers shall not be

considered as "employees" of the Board.

#### **E. SPECIAL CASE VOLUNTEERS**

The Board of DD also accepts as volunteers those participating in student community service activities, student intern projects, alternative sentencing or diversion programs, corporate volunteer programs, and other volunteer referral programs. In each of these cases, however, a special agreement must be in effect with the organization, school, or program from whom the special case volunteers originate and must identify responsibility for management and care of the volunteers.

#### **F. SERVICE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE BOARD**

The Board of DD accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the Board. Volunteers agree that the Board may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the Board of DD.

The volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to sever the volunteer's relationship with the Board. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the Community Relations Director.

#### **G. VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to this Board, its staff, and its consumers and students. Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equal co-workers, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation, and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the philosophy, mission, and goals of the Clermont County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

#### **H. SCOPE OF VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT**

Volunteers may be utilized in all programs and activities of the Board of DD, and serve at all levels of skill. Volunteers shall not, however, be utilized to displace any paid

employees from their positions.

## **I. MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS**

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer with the Board of DD, including dates of service, positions held, duties performed, evaluation of work, and awards received. Volunteers shall be responsible for submitting all appropriate records and information to the Community Relations Director or his/her Designee in a timely and accurate fashion.

Volunteer personnel records are public information, as are DD Staff files.

## **J. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No person who has a conflict of interest with any activity or program of the Board of DD, whether personal or philosophical, shall be accepted or serve as a volunteer with the Board's Volunteer Program. This is investigated and determined through the DD Service and Support Division.

## **K. REPRESENTATION OF THE BOARD**

Prior to any action or statement which might significantly affect or obligate the Board, volunteers must seek prior consultation and approval from the Superintendent or Designee. These actions may include, but are not limited to, public statements to the press, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations. Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the Board as specifically indicated within their job descriptions and only to the extent of such written specifications.

## **L. CONFIDENTIALITY**

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 single staff, volunteer, consumer, student, or other person or involves overall Board business.

Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's

relationship with the Board or other corrective action.

#### **M. WORKSITE**

An appropriate worksite shall be established prior to the enrollment of any volunteer. This worksite shall contain necessary facilities, equipment, and space to enable the volunteer to effectively and comfortably perform his/her duties.

#### **N. DRESS CODE**

As representatives of the Board of DD, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to consumers and students and to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.

#### **O. TIMESHEETS**

Individual volunteers are responsible for the accurate completion of timesheets. Timesheets shall be submitted to the Community Relations Director or his/her Designee on a monthly basis.

#### **P. POSITION DESCRIPTIONS**

Volunteer staff, just as paid staff, require a clear, complete, and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the position which they are expected to fill. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a position description must be developed for each volunteer position. This position description will be given to each accepted volunteer and utilized in subsequent management and evaluation efforts. Position descriptions shall be reviewed and updated at least every two years, or whenever the work involved in the position changes substantially.

All position descriptions shall include a description of the purpose and duties of the position, a designated supervisor and worksite, a timeframe for the performance of the job and a listing of job qualifications.

#### **Q. VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS**

Requests for volunteers shall be submitted in writing by interested staff, complete

with a draft position description and a requested timeframe. All parties should understand that the recruitment of volunteers will not take place until such time that a need (volunteer assignment) has been established. The Community Relations Director/Designee reserves the right to refuse to recruit or place any volunteers until staff are prepared to make effective use of volunteer resources.

## **R. RECRUITMENT**

Volunteers shall be recruited by the Community Relations Director or his/her Designee on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding the volunteer involvement of the community. Volunteers shall be recruited without regard to gender, handicap, age, race, or other condition. The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment shall be suitability to perform a task on behalf of the Board of DD. Volunteers may be recruited through either an interest in specific functions or through a general interest in volunteering which will later be matched with a specific function. No final acceptance of a volunteer shall take place without a specific written volunteer position description for that volunteer and successful criminal records check.

## **S. RECRUITMENT OF YOUTH**

Volunteers who have not reached the age of majority must have written consent of a parent or guardian prior to volunteering. The volunteer services assigned to a minor should be performed in a non-hazardous environment and should comply with all appropriate requirements of child labor laws. Youth volunteers must be at least 12 years of age and can volunteer to work with students or adults.

Youths under the age of 18 (whether individual or group volunteers) will volunteer with adult participants only in closely monitored situations. The Community Relations Director shall work closely with volunteers under the age of 16 to help them select volunteer assignments that match their individual interests.

Youth who are assisting with craft projects will not be allowed to assist the child/adult from the Clermont DD program with materials or projects that would be potentially harmful to the volunteer. Youth volunteers will be closely monitored throughout the completion of any project or activity.



## **T. INTERVIEWING**

Prior to being assigned to a position, all volunteers will be interviewed to ascertain their suitability for and interest in that position. The interview should determine the qualifications of the volunteer, their commitment to fulfill the requirements of the position, and should answer any questions that the volunteer might have about the position.

## **U. CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK**

As appropriate for the protection of consumers and students, volunteers 18 years of age and older shall be asked to submit to a criminal background check as required by law. Volunteers who do not agree to the background check shall be refused assignments.

## **V. CERTIFICATE OF ABILITY**

Any potential volunteer who indicates that he or she is under the care of a physician for either physical or psychological treatment may be asked to present a certificate from the physician as to the volunteer's ability to satisfactorily and safely perform their volunteer duties. Volunteers under a course of treatment which might affect volunteer work will not be accepted without a written verification of suitability from their physician. Any volunteer who, after acceptance and assignment by the Board, enters a course of treatment which might adversely impact upon the performance of volunteer duties shall consult with the Community Relations Director/Designee.

## **W. PLACEMENT**

In placing a volunteer in a position, attention shall be paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and to the requirements of the volunteer position. No placement shall be made unless there is a volunteer position already in place and the requirements of both the volunteer and the supervising staff can be met.

## **X. ACCEPTANCE AND APPOINTMENT**

Service as a volunteer with the Board of DD shall begin with an official notice of acceptance or appointment to a volunteer position. Notice may only be given by an authorized representative of the Board, who will normally be the Community Relations

Director/Designee. No volunteer shall begin performance of any position until he or she has been officially accepted for that position and have completed all necessary screening, paperwork, and orientation. At the time of final acceptance, each volunteer shall complete all necessary enrollment paperwork and shall receive a copy of the job description and agreement of service with the Board and complete the orientation process.

**Y. RE-ASSIGNMENT**

Volunteers who are at any time re-assigned to a new position shall be interviewed for that position and shall receive all appropriate orientation and training for that position before they begin work. In addition, any screening procedures appropriate for that specific position must be completed, even if the volunteer has already been working with the Board.

**Z. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

Volunteers shall not perform professional services for which certification or licensing is required unless currently certified or licensed to do so. A copy of such certificate or license shall be maintained by the Community Relations Department.

**AA. LENGTH OF SERVICE**

All volunteer positions shall have a set term of duration. It is highly recommended that this term shall not be longer than one year, with an option for renewal at the discretion of both parties. All volunteer assignments shall end at the conclusion of their set term, without expectation or requirement of re-assignment of that position to the incumbent.

Volunteers are neither expected nor required to accept further service in a position at the end of their set terms, although they are welcome to do so in most cases, but may instead seek a different volunteer assignment within the Board programs, or may retire from volunteer service.

**BB. ORIENTATION**

All volunteers will receive a general orientation given by the Community Relations Director, on the nature and purpose of the Board of DD, an orientation on the nature and

operation of the program or activity for which they are recruited, and a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of the position which they are accepting in that effort.

**CC. ON-THE-JOB TRAINING**

Volunteers will receive specific on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. The timing and methods for delivery of such training should be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.

**DD. STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

Staff members with responsibility over delivery of services should have an active role in the design and delivery of both orientation and training of volunteers. Those staff who will be in a supervisory capacity to volunteers shall have primary responsibility for design and delivery of on-the-job training to volunteers assigned to them.

**EE. VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT IN ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

Experienced volunteers should be included in the design and delivery of volunteer orientation and training.

**FF. CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Just as staff, volunteers should attempt to improve their levels of skill during their terms of service. Additional training and educational opportunities should be made available to volunteers during their connection with the Board. This continuing education may include both additional information on performance of their current volunteer assignment as well as more general information, and might be provided either by the Board or by assisting the volunteer to participate in educational programs provided by other groups.

**GG. REQUIREMENT OF A SUPERVISOR**

Each volunteer who is accepted to a position with the Board of DD must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer.

This supervisor shall be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

**HH. VOLUNTEERS AS VOLUNTEER SUPERVISORS**

A volunteer may act as a supervisor of other volunteers, provided that the supervising volunteer is under the direct supervision of a paid staff member.

**II. VOLUNTEER/STAFF RELATIONSHIPS**

Volunteers and staff are considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programs of the Board, with each having an equal but complimentary role to play. It is essential to the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understand and respect the needs and abilities of the other.

**JJ. STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN VOLUNTEER EVALUATION**

Affected staff should be involved in all evaluation and work assignments of volunteers with whom they are connected.

**KK. LINES OF COMMUNICATION**

Volunteers are entitled to all necessary information pertinent to the performance of their work assignments. Primary responsibility for ensuring that the volunteer receives such information will rest with the Community Relations Director and/or direct supervisor of the volunteer.

Lines of communication should operate in both directions, and should exist both formally and informally. Volunteers should be consulted regarding all decisions which would substantially affect the performance of their duties.

**LL. ABSENTEEISM**

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regular scheduled and timely basis. If expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers should inform the Community Relations Director as far in advance as possible so that alternative

arrangements may be made. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer's work assignment or term of service.

**MM. EVALUATIONS**

Volunteers shall receive periodic evaluations to review their work. The evaluation session is utilized to review the performance of the volunteer, to suggest any changes in work style, to seek suggestions from the volunteer on means of enhancing the volunteer's relationship with the Board, to convey appreciation to the volunteer, and to ascertain the continued interest of the volunteer serving in that position. Evaluations should include both an examination of the volunteer's performance of position responsibilities and a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have concerning the position or project with which the volunteer is connected.

The evaluation session is an opportunity for both the volunteer and the Community Relations Director to examine and improve their relationship.

**NN. CORRECTIVE ACTION**

In appropriate situations, corrective action may be taken following an evaluation. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, re-assignment of a volunteer to a new position, suspension of the volunteer, or dismissal from volunteer service.

**OO. DISMISSAL OF A VOLUNTEER**

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the Board of DD or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with Community Relations Director. The Community Relations Director will consult with the Superintendent before dismissal of a volunteer.

**PP. REASONS FOR DISMISSAL**

Possible grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of

property or misuse of Board equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of consumers, students, or co-workers, failure to abide by Board policies and procedures, failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

**QQ. NOTICE OF DEPARTURE OR RE-ASSIGNMENT OF A VOLUNTEER**

In the event that a volunteer departs the Board, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, or is re-assigned to a new position, it shall be the responsibility of the Community Relations Director or his/her Designee to inform affected staff and consumers that the volunteer is no longer assigned to work with them. In cases of dismissal for cause, this notification should be given in writing and should clearly indicate that any further contact with the volunteer is outside any scope of relationship with the Board of DD.

**RR. RESIGNATION**

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the Board at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice of their departure and a reason for their decision.

**SS. EXIT INTERVIEWS**

Exit interviews, where possible, should be conducted with volunteers who are leaving their positions. The interview should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving the position, suggestions the volunteer may have to improving the position, and the possibility of involving the volunteer in some other capacity with the Board.

**TT. COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT**

Staff who are supervising volunteers are responsible for maintaining regular communication with the Community Relations Director on the status of volunteers, and are responsible for the timely provision of all necessary paperwork to the Department. The Department should be informed immediately of any substantial change in the work or status of a volunteer and must be consulted in advance before any corrective action is taken.

Staff supervising volunteers who are involved in an accident or who obtain an injury during their volunteer service must seek appropriate First Aid Treatment. This can be administered by visiting the nurse at any Clermont DD facility, or through staff certified in First Aid if the accident/injury takes place in the community. Clermont DD staff must report the accident/injury immediately to the following: The staff person's immediate supervisor, director/designee of the department in which the volunteer is assigned, and to the Director of Community Relations/designee. If the volunteer is under the age of 18, the Director of Community Relations/designee will notify the volunteer's parents/legal guardian. School personnel will also be notified if the volunteer is participating in a school program.

#### **UU. ACCESS TO BOARD PROPERTY AND MATERIALS**

As appropriate, volunteers shall have access to Board property and materials necessary to fulfill their duties, and shall receive training in the operation of any equipment. Property and materials shall be utilized only when directly required for Board purposes. This policy includes access to and use of Board vehicles if the volunteer holds the necessary license.

#### **VV. INSURANCE**

Liability insurance is provided for all volunteers engaged in agency business. (Volunteers are encouraged to consult with their own insurance agents regarding the extension of their personal insurance to include community volunteer work.)

#### **WW. RECOGNITION**

An annual volunteer recognition event will be conducted to highlight and reward the contribution of volunteers to the agency. In addition, volunteers will be nominated for local and regional/state awards where appropriate.

#### **XX. INFORMAL RECOGNITION**

All staff and volunteers responsible for volunteer supervision are encouraged to undertake ongoing methods of recognition of volunteer service on a regular basis

throughout the year. These methods of informal recognition should range from simple "Thank You's" to a concerted effort to include volunteers as full participants in program decision making and implementation.

**YY. VOLUNTEER CAREER PATHS**

Volunteers are encouraged to grow and develop their skills while serving with the Board, and are to be assisted through promotion to new volunteer jobs to assume additional and greater responsibilities. If so desired by the volunteer, the Board should assist the volunteer in maintaining appropriate records of volunteer experience that would assist the volunteer in future career opportunities, both paid and volunteer.