



Pasco County, Florida

VIP Manual

BCC Volunteer in Pasco



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Welcome and Thank You for Becoming a VIP!!!

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to our volunteer team and thank you in advance for the outstanding personal contributions you will make. There are a number of different volunteer opportunities within Pasco County.

This handbook contains important information that will assist you as a volunteer. Please take the time to read this manual because it provides a lot of helpful information.

Volunteers span a variety of ages, come from diverse ethnic backgrounds and have a multitude of skill levels, but each has one thing in common; they care about the community. You are very important to the success of Pasco County. We recognize that your time is very valuable, and we are proud that you chose to spend it helping your community and neighbors. Thank you again for giving your time.

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide overall direction to volunteers and staff involved with volunteer and management efforts. Pasco County reserves the right to change these guidelines at any time. The information included in this manual pertains only to the departments of the Pasco County Board of County Commissioners that participate in the Pasco County VIP (Volunteer in Pasco) program. This manual does NOT apply to any volunteer program conducted by the Constitutional Officers, School Board, or the six municipalities (cities) in Pasco County.

Interviewing and Placement

In order to volunteer for Pasco County, a person should review the available positions and complete the county-wide (Board of County Commissioners) volunteer application. Applicants may then be contacted by the department for an interview or informational orientation session. A background check is conducted and upon successful clearance, a start date is provided to the volunteer applicant.

Interviewing potential volunteers helps determine interests and abilities of the potential volunteer and their suitability to a particular position. Volunteers will be placed in an assignment that utilizes skills, interests, abilities, and experience. The volunteer will be provided with a job description of the accepted assignment in writing, on the county website or through other means.

Background Check

Federal and state laws allow, and in some cases, require criminal record checks of volunteers. All Pasco County volunteers are subject to varying levels of background checks based on the position.

Training

Once you begin your volunteer duties, you will get proper training and regular evaluations.

Volunteers will be provided the training necessary to successfully fulfill the volunteer job duties to which they are assigned.

Personal Information

Volunteers are responsible for updating personal data, such as change of address, contact telephone number, etc. with the program supervisor as soon as possible.

Resignation/ Termination

Volunteers are greatly appreciated and valued in Pasco County. When you feel that your time for volunteering has come to an end, notify your program supervisor of your decision and the effective date. Volunteers may resign at any time. Volunteers may provide notice of resignation in writing or verbally.

Pasco County may terminate a volunteer at any time, with or without notice, and for any reason. A volunteer may be dismissed when counseling has failed to achieve improvement or when a serious offense has been committed. Some actions warrant immediate termination. These include, but are not limited to, theft, drug/alcohol issues, document alteration/falsification, sabotaging or willfully damaging Pasco County property or that of other volunteers and/or staff, insubordination, fighting or provoking a fight, or carrying a concealed weapon.

Volunteer Protection Laws

The Federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 provides immunity for harm caused by the volunteer's acts or omissions if 1) the volunteer was acting within the scope of his/her responsibility at the time of act/omission, 2) the harm was not caused by willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual harmed by the volunteer and 3) the

harm was not caused by the operation of a motor vehicle, aircraft, or other vehicle for which an operator's license or insurance is required by the state.

Conduct

Volunteers are required to maintain high standards of good behavior and efficient service in the performance of their assignments, based on reasonable standards of performance and conduct.

Volunteers must:

1. Follow all applicable policies and procedures as indicated in this volunteer handbook.
2. Be a dependable team player, work well with the public, keep an open mind, and be flexible and willing to learn and try new things.
3. Be willing to be trained and guided during their time of service.
4. Remain objective with customers and other community members when representing Pasco County as a volunteer.
5. Be careful not to solicit political, religious or other personal opinions.
6. Be on time.
7. Be positive and respectful to patrons and co-workers.
8. Do their best to complete all assignments and if for any reason are unable to do so, must advise a program supervisor.
9. Contact the program supervisor or department staff member, informing them of any absences (supervisor contact information will be provided).

Dress Code

Volunteers as well as staff are representatives of Pasco County and need to present a positive image to the public. Attire should be comfortable and appropriate for the assigned task(s). Revealing clothing such as bare midriffs, spaghetti straps, halter or tube tops, mini skirts, low necklines, and clothing with inappropriate messages are not permitted. For some positions, shorts or capris may be acceptable. The respective department will determine whether these types of clothes are appropriate for your volunteer position. For safety reasons, no flip flops are allowed and closed-toed shoes are preferred.

Code of Ethics

All volunteers are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards and to conduct themselves in a manner above reproach at all times.

Volunteers who have direct dealings with customers shall treat those individuals with courtesy and in a respectful manner.

Volunteers must:

1. Communicate any concern or questions to a staff member as soon as possible, especially on matters of personal or customer safety.
2. Respect all property belonging to Pasco County, special event sites, and property belonging to other volunteers, staff, and customers.
3. Uphold Pasco County's core values: service excellence, quality, integrity, innovation, and respect.

The above list is not intended to be all inclusive.

Harassment Policy Information

It is the policy of Pasco County to provide a work environment free from verbal or physical conduct that unreasonably harasses, disturbs or interferes with a volunteer's work performance or that creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile work environment.

County volunteers are expected to avoid any activity which harasses or disrupts the work of their co-volunteers, co-workers, subordinates or the general public. Any verbal or physical conduct which harasses another volunteer, employee, subordinate or member of the general public with whom volunteers may have contact, because of that person's race, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, age or military status, is prohibited.

In particular, sexual harassment is strictly forbidden, including harassment of members of the same sex. Sexual harassment in the workplace is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Any sexually harassing or offensive conduct, whether by managers, supervisors, employees or non-employees who enter the county's workplace, is prohibited. Such prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

1. Unwanted physical contact or offensive conduct of a sexual nature, including flirtations, advances or propositions.

2. Harassment concerning an individual's sex, sexual interest or orientation, sexual innuendos and offensive jokes or descriptions of personal sexual conduct.
3. Demeaning, degrading or insulting comments about a person's physical appearance.
4. Displaying in the workplace photos or other materials which are demeaning, insulting, intimidating, or sexually suggestive.
5. Demeaning, insulting, sexually suggestive or otherwise offensive written, recorded, telephonic or electronically transmitted messages.

Pasco County does not tolerate discrimination or harassment by anyone towards the staff, volunteers, or customers. Any concerns should be reported to the program supervisor immediately. If they are not properly addressed, report the matter to the Personnel Director. Corrective actions, up to and including termination may be taken against the offender if the complaint is determined to be founded, or, against anyone knowingly filing a false complaint.

Drug Free Workplace

Pasco County Government is a Drug Free Workplace. Use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace is prohibited, as is the abuse of any drug or alcohol or reporting to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace. Volunteers found to have violated this policy will be immediately terminated from the volunteer program.

Confidentiality

To the extent permitted by law, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer for Pasco County, whether this information involves a customer, the customer's family, staff member, volunteer, other person, or program business.

Volunteers may not use or release information acquired as a result of their volunteer services if it is confidential by statutory provision or officially designated as confidential.

Upon leaving a voluntary position for any reason, all property of the county, including, but not limited to, all proprietary and confidential information, must be returned.

Safety

Pasco County has adopted methods and procedures reasonably necessary to protect the life, health, safety and welfare of the employees, volunteers and general public working in or on or frequenting county buildings and property.

It is the responsibility of all volunteers to properly use the safety equipment provided by the county and to report unsafe working conditions or practices to the program supervisor.

Driving Eligibility

Volunteers shall not operate a county vehicle but they can ride as a passenger.

Health and Medical

On a scheduled day, volunteers who are unable to complete their assignments are requested to notify the program supervisor as soon as possible to ensure continuity of the program. Continued or prolonged absence may result in discontinuation of the assignment. In addition, communicable health conditions must be reported to the program supervisor before reporting for service.

Personal injuries occurring while volunteering must be reported immediately to the program supervisor. A county incident reporting form will be completed. Witnessing an injury or accident must be reported immediately to the program supervisor. Witness statements may also be requested and obtained through the county incident reporting form.

Incident/Accident Reporting

All incidents and accidents are to be reported immediately to the program supervisor.

Incidents and accidents include:

1. Injury to the volunteer or another person
2. Vehicle accidents
3. Damaged, lost or stolen property
4. Other occurrences, no matter how minor

Gifts/ Gratuities

No County employee or volunteer shall accept any gratuity, material or edible, from anyone doing business with the County. This policy, especially applicable during the holiday season, applies throughout the year and shall include, but not limited to: flowers, candy, food, wine, liquor, anything free or discounted (meals or otherwise). Discounts that apply to all County employees and/or volunteers are acceptable.

All employees or volunteers found to be violating the above directive will be subject to termination.

Conclusion

The VIP manual was created to provide consistent communication with volunteers across all departments of the Pasco County Board of County Commissioners.

The departments retain the right to:

1. Conduct varying levels of background checks.
2. Require specific training.
3. Require specific abilities and skills.
4. Require a supplemental application in addition to the county wide application.
5. Provide a supplemental, department specific volunteer manual.

Thank you!