

Guidelines for Assisting People to Volunteer

DHHS, OADS is providing this information as a resource regarding people with disabilities volunteering in their community. We believe strongly that people have the capacity to be involved, give back and bring their skills to places that are in their community. We also know that people need the support to be educated about options, find volunteer opportunities and may receive support to learn their roles and responsibilities.

Volunteers

People involved in religious, public service or non-profit businesses as volunteers, giving their time to something that is meaningful to them for no monetary compensation.

Volunteer Service, Volunteer Activity, Volunteer Opportunity

Are all ways of describing what the relationship is between the person and the place they are giving their time and expertise.

Types of Places to Volunteer

Places generally fall into a non-profit, public service or religious category. People cannot volunteer in a for profit business. People cannot “waive” their rights and offer to volunteer in a for profit business or in a position that would typically be filled by someone who would be paid. Volunteering in integrated community locations is preferred. People may do volunteer activities that meet the guidelines but are done in their home or elsewhere such as mailings, phone solicitation etc...

Volunteer Positions

The position or duties must be ones that a volunteer would do. Having a written Volunteer Position Description, being assigned through a Volunteer Coordinator, going through a Volunteer/match site are all helpful. A person cannot do duties/tasks that an employee would normally be paid to do. There must be no employee –employer relationship as defined by The Department of Labor. It is preferred that volunteer opportunities are based on individual interests and done in one on one or small group (less than 4 people) in a place.

Hours Volunteering

Most volunteer situations are limited hours (not full time) and usually do not occur daily but maybe once or twice a week.

Support to Volunteer

People can be assisted to volunteer through a Community Supports model under either Section 21 or Section 29 Waiver. The volunteer activity should be documented in the person-centered plan and what the support is needed for.

People can also receive natural unpaid supports from the site they are volunteering.

Resources on Volunteering

<http://www.volunteermaine.org/>

A searchable Maine based web site for local volunteer opportunities.

<http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/142/default.html>

A University of Minnesota, Institute for Community Integration newsletter highlighting volunteering by people with disabilities. Resource lists, links and downloadable questions to ask about volunteering.

<http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/index.php>

The National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP) is a Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) training and technical assistance provider. Through comprehensive training, technical assistance, and product dissemination, NSIP strives to ensure meaningful service experiences for all Americans, regardless of their abilities.

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/rights.htm>

Information from The Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.