

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Division of Inmate Services

VOLUNTEER SERVICES FACT SHEET

The Volunteer Services Program was established in the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) to facilitate citizen involvement in accordance with South Carolina State Government Volunteers Act, Section 8-25-10, et seq. Code of Laws of South Carolina. As used in this act, a volunteer shall mean any person who of his/her own free will, provides goods or services without any financial gain, to the SCDC and/or the inmates in the SCDCs' custody. Material donor shall mean a person who, without financial gain, provides funds, materials, or opportunities for inmates in the SCDCs' custody.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS:

Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. Persons under the age of 18 may be allowed to provide volunteer services/activities provided they receive advance approval from the affected Warden of the facility where the service is to be performed and they are accompanied by their parent or legal guardian. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

CLASSIFICATION OF VOLUNTEERS:

1. Guest Volunteer refers to any volunteer person or group who provides a specific service or program on a one-time only or a basis where there is little opportunity to develop interpersonal relationships with inmates, i.e., singing groups worship services etc. (Note: A service or program may consist of more than one day or one institution).
2. Registered Volunteer refers to any volunteer whose application has been approved and who provides regularly scheduled services to the SCDC which would provide an opportunity for close interpersonal contact with inmates to develop.

TIPS FOR VOLUNTEERS:

1. **Be Yourself--**
Respond humanely, honestly, and sincerely. Inmates can tell when you mean what you say.
2. Remember this is a Correctional Facility --
You are providing a service for incarcerated men/women. Rules and regulations in this setting have a purpose. Follow them.
3. Be Dependable and Courteous --
Be on time for your volunteer service program. When you recognize that you may be late, let the affected staff member or the Volunteer Coordinator know ahead of time.
4. Be Careful About Physical Contact--
The SCDC places limits on the type of physical contact allowed between inmates and others. A handshake usually is the only form of contact allowed.
5. Bring a Valid and Current Photo ID --
Make sure all information is current and accurate.
6. Dress Properly --
You must follow the same dress code requirements for authorized visitors. Refer to specific SCDC policies and procedures concerning inmate visitation for these requirements.
7. Stay With Your Group --
Don't linger or stray off, stay in the area where you are supposed to be. Avoid areas you have not been authorized to enter. In living units, remember that an inmate's room or cell is his/her bedroom, so be respectful.
8. Do Not Take Anything In or Out of a Facility --
You must have approval from the Warden, Duty Warden, Volunteer Coordinator, or the affected staff member before taking anything from an inmate. This mean even a Bible, a letter, a stamp, a piece of gum, and especially money.
9. You are in a drugfree working environment --
You may be subject to reasonable suspicion and/or accident and unsafe practice drug testing. If you should test positive for an illegal substance or refuse to submit to such testing, then your volunteer service privileges with the SCDC will be revoked indefinitely.
10. Ask Questions --
If you are uncomfortable or have any questions about any volunteer activity, talk to the Volunteer Coordinator, the affected staff member or any institutional employee.

REPORT ANY INFORMATION WHICH INDICATES A DANGER TO THE INMATE OR THREAT TO SECURITY!
IF ASKED TO LEAVE BY SECURITY STAFF, EXIT QUICKLY WITHOUT QUESTION!!!