

Volunteer Program

336.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

It is the policy of this department to use qualified volunteers for specified tasks and duties in order to create efficiencies for the Department and improve services to the community. Volunteers are intended to supplement and support, rather than supplant, licensed officers and civilian personnel. Volunteers can be an important part of any organization and have proven to be a valuable asset to law enforcement agencies. Volunteers help to increase department responsiveness, delivery of services and information input, and provide new program opportunities. In addition, volunteers bring new skills and expertise to the Department and prompt new enthusiasm.

336.1.1 DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEER

An individual who performs a service for the Department without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered. This may include unpaid chaplains, unpaid officers, interns, persons providing administrative support and youth involved in a law enforcement Explorer Post, among others.

336.1.2 VOLUNTEER ELIGIBILITY

Requirements for participation as an Columbia Heights Police Department volunteer include:

- (a) Residency in the City of Columbia Heights.
- (b) At least 18 years of age for all positions other than Explorer.
- (c) At least 14 years of age for Explorer.
- (d) A valid driver's license if the position requires vehicle operation.
- (e) Liability insurance for any personally owned equipment, vehicles or horses utilized during volunteer work.
- (f) No conviction of a felony, any crime of a sexual nature, any crime related to assault, any crime related to dishonesty, or any crime related to impersonating a law enforcement officer.
- (g) No conviction of a misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor crime within the past 10 years, excluding petty misdemeanor traffic offenses.
- (h) The applicant must not have any mental illness or chemical dependency condition that may adversely affects the person's ability to serve in the position.
- (i) Physical requirements reasonably appropriate to the assignment.
- (j) A personal background history and character suitable for a person representing the Department, as validated by a background investigation.

The Chief of Police may apply exceptions for eligibility based on organizational needs and the qualification of the individual.

Columbia Heights Police Department

Policy Manual

Volunteer Program

336.2 VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

336.2.1 VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

The function of the Volunteer Coordinator is to provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer management within the Department, and to direct and assist staff and volunteer efforts to jointly provide more productive services. The Volunteer Coordinator or designee shall be responsible for the following:

- (a) Recruiting, selecting and training qualified volunteers for various positions.
- (b) Maintaining records for each volunteer.
- (c) Tracking and evaluating the contribution of volunteers.
- (d) Maintaining the volunteer handbook and outlining expectations, policies and responsibilities for all volunteers.
- (e) Maintaining a record of volunteer schedules and work hours.
- (f) Completion and dissemination as appropriate of all necessary paperwork and information.
- (g) Planning periodic recognition events.
- (h) Administering discipline when warranted.
- (i) Maintaining liaison with other volunteer-utilizing programs in the community and assisting in community-wide efforts to recognize and promote volunteering.

336.2.2 RECRUITMENT

Volunteers should be recruited on a continuous and ongoing basis in accordance with department policy on equal opportunity nondiscriminatory employment. A primary qualification for participation in the application process should be an interest in, and an ability to assist the Department in serving the public.

Requests for volunteers should be submitted in writing by interested staff to the Volunteer Coordinator through the requester's immediate supervisor. A complete position description and a requested time frame should be included in the request. All parties should understand that the recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting assignments. The Volunteer Coordinator may withhold assignment of any volunteer until such time as the requesting unit is prepared to make effective use of volunteer resources.

336.2.3 SCREENING

All prospective volunteers should complete the volunteer application form. The Volunteer Coordinator or designee should conduct a face-to-face interview with the applicant.

A documented background investigation shall be completed on each volunteer applicant and shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- (a) Traffic and criminal background check

Columbia Heights Police Department

Policy Manual

Volunteer Program

(b) Employment

(c) References

A volunteer whose assignment requires the use of, access to or places him/her in the vicinity of criminal histories, investigative files or information portals, shall require submission of prints and clearance through the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA).

336.2.4 SELECTION AND PLACEMENT

Service as a volunteer 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 Department, who will normally be the Volunteer Program Manager. No volunteer should begin performance of any position until he/she has been officially accepted for that position and completed all necessary screening and paperwork. At the time of final acceptance, each volunteer should complete all necessary enrollment paperwork and will receive a copy of the job description and agreement of service with the Department. All volunteers shall receive a copy of the volunteer handbook and shall be required to sign a volunteer agreement.

Volunteers should be placed only in assignments or programs that are consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities and the needs of the Department.

336.2.5 EMPLOYEES WORKING AS OFFICERS

Qualified employees of this department, when authorized, may also serve as reserve officers. However, the Department must not utilize the services of a or volunteer in such a way that it would violate employment laws or labor agreements (Example: a detention officer working as an officer for reduced or no pay). Therefore, the Coordinator should consult the Human Resources prior to an employee serving in a volunteer capacity (29 CFR 553.30).

336.2.6 TRAINING

Volunteers will be provided with an orientation program to acquaint them with the department, personnel, policies and procedures that have a direct impact on their work assignment.

Volunteers should receive position-specific training to ensure they have adequate knowledge and skills to complete tasks required by the position and should receive periodic ongoing training as deemed appropriate by their supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.

Depending on the assignment, Training may include:

- (a) Role of the volunteer.
- (b) Department policies.
- (c) Training specific to the procedure manual for the volunteer position.
- (d) Discrimination and harassment training.
- (e) CPR/first aid.
- (f) Search and rescue techniques.
- (g) Scenario-based searching methods.

Columbia Heights Police Department

Policy Manual

Volunteer Program

- (h) Evidence preservation.
- (i) Basic traffic direction and control.
- (j) Roadway incursion safety.
- (k) Self-defense techniques.
- (l) Vehicle operations, including specialized vehicles.

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 626.8466, the Department may establish training, licensing and continuing education requirements for its reserve officers.

Training should reinforce to volunteers that they should not intentionally represent themselves as, or by omission infer that they are licensed officers or other full-time members of the Department. They shall always represent themselves as volunteers.

All volunteers shall comply with the rules of conduct and with all orders and directives, either oral or written, issued by the Department. Whenever a rule, regulation or guideline in this manual refers to a licensed officer, it shall also apply to a volunteer unless by its nature it is inapplicable.

336.2.7 FITNESS FOR DUTY

No volunteer shall report to work or be on-duty when his/her judgment or physical condition has been impaired by alcohol, medication, other substances, illness or injury.

Volunteers shall report to their supervisor any changes in status that may affect their ability to fulfill their duties. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) Driver's license
- (b) Medical condition
- (c) Arrests
- (d) Criminal investigations
- (e) All law enforcement contacts

All volunteers shall adhere to the guidelines set forth by this department regarding drug and alcohol use.

336.2.8 DRESS CODE

As representatives of the Department, volunteers are responsible for presenting a professional image to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.

Volunteers shall conform to approved dress consistent with their duty assignment. Uniforms authorized for volunteers should be readily distinguishable from those worn by licensed officers. No volunteer shall wear his/her uniform or identifiable parts of that uniform while off-duty.

Columbia Heights Police Department

Policy Manual

Volunteer Program

Volunteers shall be required to return any issued uniform or department property at the termination of service.

336.3 SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS

Each volunteer who is accepted to a position with the Department must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor will be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer and should be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

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

Functional supervision of volunteers is the responsibility of the supervisor in charge of the unit where the volunteer is assigned. Following are some considerations to keep in mind while supervising volunteers:

- (a) Take the time to introduce volunteers to employees on all levels.
- (b) Ensure volunteers have work space and necessary office supplies.
- (c) Make sure the work is challenging. Do not hesitate to give them an assignment or task that will tap these valuable resources.

336.4 DATA PRACTICES

With appropriate security clearance, volunteers may have access to private and confidential information, such as criminal histories or investigative files. Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, the duties of the position or department policy, all information shall be considered confidential. Only that information specifically identified and approved by authorized personnel shall be released. Confidential information shall be given only to persons who have a need and a right to know as determined by department policy and supervisory personnel.

Each volunteer will receive training in data practices and be required to sign a nondisclosure agreement before being given an assignment with the Department. Subsequent unauthorized disclosure of any private or confidential information, verbally, in writing or by any other means, by the volunteer is grounds for immediate dismissal and possible criminal prosecution.

Volunteers shall not address public gatherings, appear on radio or television, prepare any article for publication, act as correspondents to a newspaper or other periodical, release or divulge any information concerning the activities of the Department, or maintain that they represent the Department in such matters without permission from the proper department personnel.

336.5 PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Volunteers will be issued an identification card that must be worn at all times while on-duty. Any fixed and portable equipment issued by the Department shall be for official and authorized use only. Any property or equipment issued to a volunteer shall remain the property of the Department and shall be returned at the termination of service.

Columbia Heights Police Department

Policy Manual

Volunteer Program

336.5.1 VEHICLE USE

Volunteers assigned to duties such as vacation house checks or other assignments that require the use of a vehicle must first complete the following:

- (a) A driving safety briefing.
- (b) Verification that the volunteer possesses a valid driver's license.
- (c) Verification that the volunteer carries current vehicle insurance.

The Volunteer Coordinator should ensure that all volunteers receive safety briefing updates and license and insurance verification at least once a year.

When operating a Department vehicle, volunteers shall obey all rules of the road, including seat belt requirements.

Volunteers should not operate a marked patrol car unless there is a prominently placed sign indicating that it is out of service and is being operated for maintenance purposes only; that it is operated during a POST-approved skills course; that it is being used to transport prisoners or equipment; or is being used to provide supplementary assistance under the direction of an on-duty licensed officer (Minn. Stat. § 169.98 Subd. 1b. Volunteers are not authorized to operate a Department vehicle under emergency conditions (lights and siren).

336.5.2 RADIO AND MDC USAGE

Volunteers shall successfully complete state and federal database access training and radio procedures training prior to using the law enforcement radio or MDT and shall comply with all related provisions. The Volunteer Coordinator should ensure that radio and database access training is provided for volunteers whenever necessary.

336.6 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES/TERMINATION

A volunteer may be removed from the volunteer program at the discretion of the Chief of Police. Volunteers shall have no property interests in their continued appointment.

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

336.6.1 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 and solicit the volunteer's suggestions on improving the position. When appropriate, the interview should also include a discussion on the possibility of involvement in some other capacity with the Department.

336.7 EVALUATION

An evaluation of the overall volunteer program will be conducted on an annual basis by the Volunteer Coordinator. Regular evaluations should be conducted with volunteers to ensure the

Columbia Heights Police Department

Policy Manual

Volunteer Program

best use of human resources available, to ensure personnel problems can be identified and dealt with promptly and fairly and to ensure optimum job satisfaction on the part of volunteers.

336.8 EMERGENCY CALL-OUT FOR VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL

The Volunteer Coordinator shall develop a plan outlining an emergency call-out procedure for volunteer personnel.