

# BENTON COUNTY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

## I POLICY

Benton County actively promotes a relationship between volunteers and staff who will support them in their efforts to foster stewardship of our community and social programs, and to enhance community engagement and delivery of services to the citizens of Benton County. The Volunteer Program promotes participation by individuals and groups within Benton County.

## II PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide overall guidance, structure and direction to staff and volunteers throughout the volunteer process. This policy does not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. Benton County reserves the right to change this policy and its exhibits at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy.

## III SCOPE

Unless specifically stated otherwise, this policy applies to all volunteers in all programs and projects undertaken on behalf of Benton County and to all sites of operation.

The Benton County Sheriffs Office maintains and administers its own volunteer programs such as the Sheriffs Posse and Reserve Deputies. Other than the requirement to report volunteer hour to the Benton County Human Resources Department volunteer programs maintained and administered by the Benton County Sheriffs Office are exempt from this policy.

## IV DEFINITIONS

"Volunteer" is anyone age 14 and up, who, without compensation or other consideration, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of Benton County. A Volunteer must be officially registered and/or enrolled by Benton County prior to performance of the task. Volunteers shall not be considered as "employees" of Benton County.

"Committee/Commission/Board Member" (herein Committee Member) is a Volunteer who is appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to serve on a designated Committee, Commission or Board. Committee Members may receive a stipend and/or expense reimbursement pursuant to the documents creating the Committee/Commission/Board they serve on.

## V ATTACHMENTS

The following documents, forms, and applications are attached to this policy for reference. These forms are to be available to the public at the applicable Department, event, or on the County website, and may be updated as necessary without the need to update the remainder of this policy.

Appendix A- Scope of Volunteer Service and Time Sheet  
Appendix B- Volunteer Application  
Appendix C- Participant Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Release  
Appendix D- Volunteer Service Agreement  
Appendix E- Application for County Boards/Commissions/Committees

Sheriffs Posse Volunteers have a separate application form available on the Benton County Sheriffs website

## VI UTILIZATION OF VOLUNTEERS

Benton County accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers within all appropriate programs and activities as determined by the County. All staff members, as well as others in leadership roles are encouraged to assist in the creation of meaningful and productive roles for volunteers.

Volunteers under the age of 14 will not be accepted. The parents and/or guardians of volunteers ages 14-17 will be required to sign the Participant Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Release.

## VII TYPES OF VOLUNTEERS

The following volunteer opportunities are available within Benton County:

- a. Non-elected committee, commission and board members. Appointment and governance of non-elected committee, board and commission members shall be governed by the appropriate RCW, any relevant or applicable section of Benton County Code or the Resolution creating said committee, commission or board.
- b. One-time volunteers. One-time volunteers are those volunteers who will participate in a particular event that is not on-going in nature.
- c. Continuous volunteers. Continuous volunteers are those individuals who will provide volunteer services on an ongoing, regular basis.
- d. Volunteer organizations. Volunteer Organizations are organizations such as Rotary clubs, Lions clubs, Friends of Badger Mountain, Boy/Girls Scouts, or any other formally organized group whether for profit or not for profit who agree to undertake a volunteer project for Benton County.

- e. Employees as volunteers. Employees may provide volunteer services to Benton County provided that the volunteer service is provided without any coercive nature, is provided outside usual working hours, and does not involve work which is within the scope of the individuals' normal staff duties.

## VIII SCOPE OF VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Volunteers may be used in many programs and activities within Benton County. Volunteers shall not be used to displace any paid employees from their positions. A Scope of Volunteer Service description will be provided to every individual outlining:

- a. Specific duties for the specific volunteer program.
- b. Time sheet and time recording requirements.
- c. Reporting and supervision responsibilities.
- d. Training requirements.
- e. Personal protective equipment required.

## IX APPLICATION, INTERVIEW & SCREENING OF VOLUNTEERS

- a. Application.

Volunteer applicants shall complete and submit the appropriate application for the type of volunteer service to which they are applying. Applications and required forms may be available for electronic submission on the County's website or from the specific Department or Project Coordinator.

(i) Continuous volunteers are required to complete and submit a Volunteer Application and a Participant Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Release form prior to beginning any volunteer activities.

(ii) One-time volunteers are required to complete and submit a Volunteer Application and sign the Participant Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Release form prior to or at each volunteer event.

(iii) Non-elected committee, commission or board members are required to complete and submit an application specific to boards, commissions, and committees.

(iv) Volunteer organizations are required to submit a letter of interest describing the nature of the volunteering activity they wish to be involved in. All volunteer organization activities require compliance with Section IX(e)- Contracts for Volunteer Organizations.

b. Interview.

Prior to being assigned or appointed to a position, all volunteers will be interviewed to ascertain their suitability for and interest in the position.

- (i) Supervising staff should participate in interviewing and placement of volunteers whenever possible. Final assignment of a potential volunteer should be reviewed and approved by the appropriate supervisor.
- (ii) Upon acceptance for but prior to placement, the volunteer must sign the Volunteer Service Agreement.

c. Screening.

Additional screening will be required of volunteers that are involved in any of the following type of activities:

- (i) Driving County vehicles.
- (ii) Working with confidential information.
- (iii) Working in a position of public trust.
- (iv) Working in direct contact with at-risk clients, including but not limited to, children under the age of 18, developmentally disabled persons, the frail, or the elderly.

These screenings may include driving record checks, reference checks, direct background investigations, and/or criminal investigation to check for history of abuse and/or sexual deviant behavior or other crimes. These checks will be filed and renewed every two (2) years for on-going volunteer members who require these types of checks.

All volunteers requiring additional screening shall submit adequate information to allow the County to conduct these checks. Volunteers who refuse permission to conduct these checks or who fail to submit the appropriate information will not be accepted for placement in these positions.

d. Recordkeeping.

The following records for volunteers (except Sheriff's Office volunteers) will be maintained by the Human Resources Department in accordance with the appropriate state record retention schedule.

- (i) Signed application
- (ii) Signed volunteer agreement
- (iii) Documentation of hours worked

- (iii) Background check (if required for the specific type of volunteer service)
- (iv) Current Abstract of Driving Record (if required for the specific type of volunteer service)
- (v) Training documentation (if required for the specific type of volunteer service)

e. Contracts for Volunteer Organizations.

- (i) Contracts will be developed with volunteer organizations (as described in Section VII.(d)) that provide volunteer workers.
- (ii) Contracts will require the volunteer organization to hold harmless, defend and indemnify Benton County from any claims by the volunteers or liability caused by the volunteers. Volunteer organizations shall be required to carry liability insurance in the types and amounts determined by the Risk Manager and name Benton County as an additional insured.
- (iii) Records of volunteer organization letters of interest and approved contracts will be maintained by the Human Resources Department.
- (iv) Volunteer organizations are not permitted to pay their employees who are providing those services for work performed during volunteer hours. For example, a construction company that is volunteering its staff to build a new shed at a park cannot pay those staff their regular or overtime wages for time spent working on the shed. This is not considered volunteer work under Washington State Law. However, this situation may be able to be considered a donation. Contact the project coordinator to determine eligibility.

**X SUPERVISION AND TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS**

a. Supervision.

- (i) Volunteers shall have clearly identified supervision responsible for direct management. Supervision may be a staff person, a trained adult volunteer, or other designated person. The 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. An adult must supervise volunteers under the age of 18.
- (ii) Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all recordkeeping requirements for volunteers are kept up to date with the Human Resources Department as outlined in Section IX(d).

b. Training.

- (i) The County will provide adequate instruction and, where necessary, training to ensure all workers perform tasks properly and safely and provide individual volunteers with adequate knowledge of County rules and requirements. If required, personal protective equipment should be provided by the County and is required to be worn when necessary to complete the work assigned. The timing and methods of training will be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the positions and the capabilities of the volunteers.
- (ii) Staff that will be in a supervisory capacity for volunteers shall have primary responsibility for design and delivery of on-the-job training to volunteers assigned to them.
- (iii) Departments utilizing volunteer services may develop specific operating procedures for volunteers to supplement training and instruction.

**XI EQUIPMENT AND HEAVY MACHINERY**

Volunteers will not be allowed to use or operate Benton County power tools or heavy equipment.

**XII 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 must be on file with Benton County in the Human Resources Department.

**XIII USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLES**

Personal vehicles will not be used for volunteer services within Benton County. Exception. Volunteer organizations may use organizational vehicles and equipment when providing volunteer services requiring specialized equipment and machinery. In such cases, the volunteer organization shall assume the risk of damage to the equipment and/or machinery.

**XIV INSURANCE**

a. Liability and Accident Insurance.

- (i) Liability and accident insurance is provided for all volunteers over the age of 14, except Volunteer organizations (as described in Section VII.(d)) engaged in volunteer work with Benton County.
- (ii) The County self-insures its liability and accident insurance.
- (iii) Non-County owned vehicles are not covered under Benton County insurance coverage and the privately owned vehicle owner's insurance is primary coverage.

b. Volunteer Injuries.

- (i) County Departments engaging volunteers are responsible for tracking and recording the hours worked by volunteers.
- (ii) Volunteer hours will be reported quarterly to the Human Resources Department for reporting to the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. This will ensure that medical expenses incurred by a volunteer due to an injury suffered while performing volunteer duties will be covered by Benton County's self-insured workers' compensation program.
- (iii) Volunteer injuries shall be reported immediately or within 24 hours to the Human Resources Department and Risk Management via the County incident reporting form.