



Department of  
**Children's Services**



# Volunteer Service Procedures Manual

Tennessee Department of Children's Services | Policy | April 2024



# DCS Volunteer Services Procedures Manual

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## Introduction

The use of volunteers promotes community partnerships to protect children, develop youth, strengthen families, and build safe communities. Volunteers are valued at the Department of Children's Services (DCS) as additional resources who enhance programs and help provide non-formal services for the children and families served by the department. Volunteers offer support in any area of the department where there are identified needs. Volunteers do not supplant DCS staff in providing services but contribute to the agency through offering their distinct talents, skills, and resources. The success of volunteer involvement is an integrative effort of agency staff and community members intended to promote the mission of the Department of Children's Services.

## Qualifications for TNDCS Volunteers

- ◆ Volunteers must be 18 years old.
- ◆ In DCS Youth Development Centers (YDC), volunteers are required to be 21 years old.
- ◆ Immediate or extended relatives including parents, siblings, in-laws, aunts, uncles, and grandparents, of children who are in the custody of DCS will not be allowed to serve as volunteer with DCS.

**Note:** All volunteers must complete a thorough background investigation prior to their approval for service.

## Volunteer Coordinators

Each DCS Regional Office/YDC has an assigned staff member designated as the volunteer coordinator to recruit, manage, and provide support to volunteers. The Individual Performance Plan of the volunteer coordinator must reflect responsibility and accountability for the Volunteer Service Program.

## Volunteer Coordinator Duties:

1. Identify the needs for volunteers throughout the Region/YDC.
2. Volunteer recruitment.
3. Interview and screen potential volunteers.
4. Perform background and reference checks.
5. Provide orientation and training.
6. Conduct supervision and activity planning.
7. Maintain volunteer records.
8. Act as liaison with community, DCS staff, and volunteers.
9. For the YDC, ensure the facility advisory board meets at least annually.

Volunteer coordinators are responsible for assigning volunteers to DCS staff for supervision and monitoring of activities, and for providing support throughout this process.

## Recruitment

Volunteer coordinators will annually engage DCS staff about their needs for volunteers and focus recruitment efforts based on staff feedback and needs. Volunteer coordinators are encouraged to attend Community Advisory Boards and other community gatherings to promote a presence from DCS in the community. Visibility of the volunteer coordinators in the community connects community resources to DCS and raises awareness about the mission and values of the department.

## Placement, Supervision, and On-the-Job Training

Volunteer coordinators will identify a placement in a regional YDC office for each volunteer based on the identified needs. Volunteer coordinators will assign volunteers to DCS staff to be responsible for their direct supervision. The supervising DCS staff members and the volunteer coordinators will be responsible for providing on-the-job specific training for each volunteer.

## Volunteer Types and Requirements

All background screens must be completed prior to the volunteer beginning their service. Results from the completed background checks must be documented on form CS-0687, Background Check History and IV-E Eligibility Checklist and filed with supporting results documentation in the volunteer's file. All volunteer types serving three (3) or more days a year must receive the certification letter from Central Office HR and be registered with the Division of Claims.

The following is the breakdown of different volunteer types and their requirements.

### 1. Regular In-service Volunteers:

Regular in-service volunteers serve DCS on a regular basis defined by more than three days a year. Regular in-service volunteers participate directly in the operation of DCS programs under the supervision of paid DCS staff and may have contact with children and families. A regular in-service volunteer must:

- a) Have TBI/FBI Fingerprint Check (For a detailed description regarding the fingerprint check, refer to the Protocol for Fingerprint Process and Analysis),
- b) Have Criminal Records Check (Local Law Enforcement) for all places of residence within the immediate six (6) months preceding application to volunteer,
- c) Have Current Child Welfare System Check submitted on form [\*CS-0741, Database Search Results\*](#),
- d) Have Internet Records Clearance Checks:
  - ◆ National Sex Offender Registry Clearance
  - ◆ Department of Health Abuse Registry Clearance
  - ◆ Drug Offender Registry Clearance
  - ◆ TN Felony Offender Registry Clearance
- e) Have reference checks,
- f) Receive a DCS identification badge, if applicable
- g) Complete orientation,
- h) Receive training (see training section)
- i) Have a volunteer file containing all signed documentation,
- j) Complete activity reports, and
- k) Go through the volunteer separation process by turning in the ID badge, if issued.

Regular In-Service Volunteers will complete the following forms:

1. [\*CS-0319, Application for Service as a Volunteer\*](#)
2. [\*CS-1221, Waiver Agreement and Statement for Criminal History Checks \(VECHS\)\*](#), or agency equivalent form.
3. [\*CS-0691, Fingerprint Card Information\*](#)
4. [\*CS-1056, Verification of Policy Understanding for Interns and Volunteers\*](#)
5. [\*CS-0551, Volunteer Job Description\*](#)
6. [\*CS-0744, Employee Confidentiality Statement\*](#)
7. [\*CS-0940, Employee/Volunteer/Contractor Acknowledgement and Notification of Prison Rape Elimination Act\*](#)
8. [\*CS-0925, Tuberculosis Self-Assessment for YDC Employees\*](#) (YDC volunteers only)

9. [CS-1120, Self-Declaration of Sexual Abuse/Sexual Harassment for YDC Employees](#) (YDC volunteers only)

Volunteer coordinator will complete the following forms for regular in-service volunteers:

1. [CS-1067, Volunteer File Cover Sheet](#)
2. [CS-0741, Database Search \(Current Child Welfare System Check\)](#)
3. [CS-0687, Background Check and IV-E Eligibility Checklist](#)
4. [CS-0751, Background Clearance Check](#) (Local Criminal History)
5. [CS-0891, Disclosure Statement, Supervisory/Personal Telephone Reference Checks](#) Part III. Telephone Reference Check
6. [CS-0921 Waiver of Criminal Convictions](#) (if applicable)

## 2. Occasional In-service Volunteers:

Occasional in-service volunteers serve on occasion defined as less than three days a year and do not have direct contact with the children and families served by the department. Their responsibilities fall into the advisory or consulting category and direct supervision is not required. Volunteer coordinators are not required to complete the TBI/FBI Fingerprinting or reference checks but must complete other background checks on form CS-0687 Background Check and IV-E Eligibility Checklist:

- Internet Records Clearance Checks,
- Local Background Checks, and
- Database Checks (Current Child Welfare System).

The following documentation is required:

- [CS-0319, Application for Service as a Volunteer](#) (volunteer completes)
- [CS-0744, Employee Confidentiality Statement](#) (volunteer completes)
- [CS-0940, Employee/Volunteer/Contractor Acknowledgement and Notification of Prison Rape Elimination Act](#) (volunteer completes)
- [CS-0741, Database Search \(Current Child Welfare System\)](#) (Volunteer Coordinator completes)
- [CS-0687, Background Check and IV-E Eligibility Checklist](#) (Volunteer Coordinator completes)
- [CS-0751, Background Clearance Check](#) (Volunteer Coordinator completes)

## 3. Job Shadow Volunteers

Volunteers who request to job shadow with the department may do so for no more than three days a year, but they may have direct contact with children and families. Job shadow volunteers must be supervised by DCS staff at all times when in direct contact with children or families. Volunteer coordinators are not required to complete the TBI/FBI Fingerprinting or reference checks but must complete other background checks on form [CS-0687, Background Check and IV-E Eligibility Checklist](#):

- Internet Records Clearance Checks,
- Local Background Checks, and
- Database Checks (Current Child Welfare System).

Volunteers who job shadow shall not have access to TFACTS or any confidential records. For volunteers who wish to shadow a DCS worker in order to gain understanding of the work performed by the department the following documentation is required:

- [CS-0319, Application for Service as a Volunteer](#) (volunteer completes)
- [CS-0744, Employee Confidentiality Statement](#) (volunteer completes)
- [CS-0940, Employee/Volunteer/Contractor Acknowledgement and Notification of Prison Rape Elimination Act](#) (volunteer completes)
- [CS-0741, Database Search \(Current Child Welfare System\)](#) (Volunteer Coordinator completes)
- [CS-0687, Background Check and IV-E Eligibility Checklist](#) (Volunteer Coordinator completes)
- [CS-0751, Background Clearance Check](#) (Volunteer Coordinator completes)

#### 4. Active Foster Parents as Volunteers

The following documentation is required for foster parents who request to volunteer with the agency:

- [CS-0319, Application for Service as a Volunteer](#) (volunteer completes)
- [CS-0551, Volunteer Job Description](#) (volunteer completes)
- [CS-0744, Employee Confidentiality Statement](#) (volunteer completes)
- [CS-0940, Employee/Volunteer/Contractor Acknowledgement and Notification of Prison Rape Elimination Act](#) (volunteer completes)
- [CS-1120, Self-Declaration of Sexual Abuse/Sexual Harassment for YDC Employees](#) (volunteers completes)
- [CS-0741 Database Search \(Current Child Welfare System\)](#) Verification of active foster home, not presently on suspended admissions (Volunteer Coordinator completes)

#### Support Advisors and Consultants

Support advisors and consultants provide direct and indirect services to DCS and may or may not have contact with children and families. For example, Tennessee Promise Students who organize a playroom and individuals who help with the clothes closet provide non-direct services and Community Advisory Board (CAB) Members or individuals who help with Walk Me Home activities provide direct services where DCS staff is present. Their responsibilities fall into the advisory or consulting category and direct supervision is provided by DCS staff. Volunteer coordinators will keep a list of contact information with name, address, and phone numbers of support volunteers in an ongoing Excel Spreadsheet. The adult leader over a group of students (under the age of 18) must sign a confidentiality statement.

#### Interns

College students who apply to be an intern with the department will go through the requirements of a regular in-service volunteer according to Department of Children's Services Volunteer Services Program and the sponsoring college/university guidelines. This includes legal interns, Master's program Title IV-E students and all interns affiliated with a college or university.

Interns must:

- a) Have TBI/FBI Fingerprint Check (For a detailed description regarding the fingerprint check, refer to the Protocol for Fingerprint Process and Analysis),
- b) Have Criminal Records Check (Local Law Enforcement) for all places of residence within the immediate six (6) months preceding application to volunteer,
- c) Submit copy of driver's license, vehicle registration and proof of automobile insurance if they own vehicle. If they don't own vehicle, they will mark the appropriate box on [CS-0319, Application for Service as a Volunteer](#)
- d) If they own a vehicle, have driving records check to include current valid driver license and a check of moving violations records in their state of residency, if available.
- e) Have Current Child Welfare System Check submitted on [form CS-0741, Database Search \(Current Child Welfare System\)](#)
- f) Have Internet Records Clearance Checks:
  - National Sex Offender Registry Clearance
  - Department of Health Abuse Registry Clearance
  - Drug Offender Registry Clearance
  - TN Felony Offender Registry Clearance
- g) Have reference checks,
- h) Have a copy of [Volunteer Certification Letter](#) issued by Central Office HR in their file
- i) Receive a DCS identification badge, if applicable



- j) Complete orientation,
- k) Receive training (see training section)
- l) Have a file containing all signed documentation,
- m) Be assigned to a DCS staff member who acts as a supervisor, and
- n) Go through the separation process by turning in the ID badge, if issued.

Interns will complete the following forms:

- 1. [CS-0319, Application for Service as a Volunteer](#)
- 2. [CS-1221, Waiver Agreement and Statement for Criminal History Checks \(VECHS\)](#) or agency equivalent form.
- 3. [CS-0691, Fingerprint Card Information](#)
- 4. [CS-1056, Verification of Policy Understanding for Interns and Volunteers](#)
- 5. [CS-0551, Volunteer Job Description](#)
- 6. [CS-0744, Employee Confidentiality Statement](#)
- 7. [CS-0940, Employee/Volunteer/Contractor Acknowledgement and Notification of Prison Rape Elimination Act](#)
- 8. [CS-1120, Self-Declaration of Sexual Abuse/Sexual Harassment for YDC Employees](#) (YDC volunteers only)

Volunteer coordinator will complete the following forms for interns:

- 1. [CS-1067, Volunteer File Cover Sheet](#)
- 2. [CS-0741, Database Search \(Current Child Welfare System Check\)](#)
- 3. [CS-0687, Background Check and IV-E Eligibility Checklist](#)
- 4. [CS-0751, Background Clearance Check](#) (Local Criminal History)
- 5. [CS-0891, Disclosure Statement, Supervisory/Personal Telephone Reference Checks](#) Part III. Telephone Reference Check
- 6. [CS-0921, Waiver of Criminal Convictions](#) (if applicable)

## **Maintaining Volunteer Files**

All volunteer files are uploaded by the volunteer coordinators to the region specific "Active" file folder on the L drive. Volunteer files must be uploaded to the shared drive at the time the department receives the volunteer certification letter from Central Office HR. Volunteer coordinators are responsible for keeping the files on the shared drive current, uploading updated forms and background check results, etc.

The Volunteer Coordinator must provide written justification to Central Office Child Programs for any volunteer that has not been active for six (6) consecutive months. If the Volunteer Coordinator fails to provide sufficient justification, Central Office Child Programs staff will issue a volunteer termination letter and the volunteer file will be closed. Volunteer files shall be closed automatically if the volunteer has not been active for 12 consecutive months. Volunteer Coordinators will reclaim the identification badges of inactive volunteers and submit them to Central Office HR. Inactive files will be maintained in the region/YDC specific "Closed" folder on the L drive for two (2) years and then destroyed.

The file for any volunteer who is dismissed or denied from service will be archived in the region/YDC specific file folder. Information and files pertaining to an individual volunteer or to a group of volunteers are maintained according to all applicable DCS and State of Tennessee policies and procedures governing files and records.

Incomplete application(s) should be handled as follows:

- Send a notification letter to the applicant requesting the specific information required to be submitted within 30 days from the date the application was received.

- If the requested information is not submitted within 30 days from the date the application was submitted, the application can be filed “incomplete”.
- The incomplete application can be destroyed sixty-one (61) days from the date the application was submitted.

## Certification

The Volunteer Coordinator must complete the required paperwork, background and reference checks and submit the volunteer file to the designated Central Office Child Programs staff for approval. Upon receipt of the volunteer file, the designated Central Office Child Programs staff will review the file to ensure all background checks have been completed according to policy and that the file contains complete and accurate forms. Once the designated Central Office Child Programs staff has determined the file is complete and all background checks have been conducted within the required timeframe, the volunteer’s file will be submitted to the DCS Central Office HR. The DCS Central Office HR contact will then issue the certification letter and send it to the email address for the Division of Claims, the regional/YDC Volunteer Coordinator, and the designated Central Office Child Programs staff. The application materials and Certification Letter must be maintained in the volunteer’s file on the L drive.

## Annual Background Checks and Performance Review

Volunteer coordinators are required to conduct annual background checks on any volunteer that’s serving three (3) or more days a year. The following is a detailed listing of the documentation and background checks that must be completed annually with results maintained in the volunteer’s file:

- Current Child Welfare System Check submitted on form [\*CS-0741, Database Search \(Current Child Welfare System Check\)\*](#)
- Internet Records Clearance Checks
  - [\*Drug Offender Registry Clearance\*](#)
  - [\*TN Felony Offender Registry Clearance\*](#)
  - [\*National Sex Offender Registry Clearance\*](#)
  - [\*Department of Health Abuse Registry Clearance\*](#)
- Volunteer assessment annually, or more frequently if needed, on form [\*CS-0933 Volunteer Annual Assessment\*](#)
- [\*CS-0940, Employee/Volunteer/Contractor Acknowledgement and Notification of Prison Rape Elimination Act\*](#)
- [\*CS-1120, Self-Declaration of Sexual Abuse/Sexual Harassment for YDC Employees\*](#).

## Central Office Child Programs Role

Central Office Child Programs staff provides ongoing oversight of the volunteer program and support to the regional volunteer coordinators. Child Programs staff collaborates with Central Office HR and Legal and discusses recommendations for program updates with them.

The designated Central Office Child Programs staff completes the following:

- Reviews all new volunteer files. Requests any necessary revisions. Approves files that have complete, timely and accurate information.
- Submits approved files to Central Office HR for certification.
- Maintains a tracking log of all active volunteer files.
- Tracks completion of annual background checks and volunteer performance assessments.
- Monitors the Volunteer Coordinator Monthly Reporting (see below) and follows up on missing or incomplete information.
- Issues termination letter for volunteers who have been inactive for six months or longer without



- approved justification.
- Schedules and facilitates quarterly statewide Volunteer Coordinator meetings.

## Identification Badges and Parking Decals

Identification Badges can be made at the Regional/YDC office level or secured from William R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower. Volunteer coordinator will follow their regional or facility safety guidelines.

Parking Decals (if needed) can be secured from William R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower by completing the State Employee Parking Decal Information Form and submitting the same when securing the identification badge.

## Training

All volunteers and interns are required to complete PREA training prior to service and annually thereafter, and sign [CS-0940 Employee/Volunteer/Contractor Acknowledgment and Notification of PREA](#) as verification of completion.

Training can be accessed at <https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/training/provider-training/provider-staff-training.html> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueTbsAb28vc>.

De-Escalation Micro-Learning included in De-Escalation Package for Volunteers is recommended for all volunteers and interns who work directly with children. Additional training resources are also included in this training package that can be accessed at <https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/training/cw-resources/volunteer-resources.html>.

## End of Service

It is important that all identification badges and parking decals that were issued are collected at the end of the volunteer's service. Volunteer Coordinators are responsible for obtaining the identification badges and sending them to the Central Office HR point person. If Volunteer Coordinator is unable to reach the volunteer and collect their identification badge, Volunteer Coordinator must document their efforts and place documentation in the volunteer's file on the L drive.

Central Office Child Programs staff will issue a termination letter if volunteer is inactive for six (6) consecutive months and there is no approved justification for their inactivity.

Volunteer Coordinators will issue a Volunteer Termination Letter to all other volunteers when their service ends.

Volunteer Coordinators will provide all volunteer types with an opportunity to complete an exit survey to provide feedback about their experience as a DCS volunteer.

## Incident Reporting

Inappropriate conduct, problems, or concerns on behalf of the volunteer needs to be reported to the Volunteer Coordinator and the Regional Administrator or Superintendent to determine the course of action. Volunteers will follow DCS Protocol for staff and IV-E Students will follow steps outlined with the IV-E Program. For the YDC, the Superintendent has the authority to curtail, postpone, or terminate the services of a volunteer or volunteer organization when there is a documented reason to do so.

## Volunteer Services at DCS Youth Development Centers

All requirements, rights, and responsibilities, for DCS volunteers, also apply for volunteers at the Youth Development Centers (YDCs). However, there are additional specifications for volunteers at the YDCs. The Department of Children's Services has adopted a zero-tolerance policy toward sexual abuse and sexual harassment in conformity with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). Any intern or volunteer who engages in

sexual abuse will be prohibited from contact with youth and will be reported to law enforcement if the conduct is criminal.

## Identification Badges at the YDCs

In the YDC, identification badges are controlled through a central location and must be turned in on a daily basis. Identification badges are permanent property of the YDC and must not be removed from the premises. Each day of service, volunteers must provide a photo identification (i.e., driver's license) and be issued a volunteer badge before entering the facility and must surrender the badge when leaving the facility.

## Tuberculosis Screening at the YDCs

Pursuant to DCS Policy [4.15, Employee Health Care and Communicable Disease Prevention and Control](#), volunteers who serve at the YDC that have routine contact with youth must be screened for tuberculosis prior to service and annually thereafter. Volunteers will complete [CS-0925 Tuberculosis Self-Assessment for YDC Employees](#). All instructions for completing this form must be followed. A copy of the completed form must be placed in the volunteer's file.

## Liability

Volunteers are not covered under the Worker's Compensation Insurance. However, the Tennessee Claims Commission covers volunteers after their Volunteer Certification Letter is filed with the Division of Claims. Volunteers who are registered with the board of claims shall be afforded the same protections, legal representation authorization and immunities as state employees pursuant to title 8, chapter 42, and § 9-8-307 for civil or criminal actions brought against them within the scope and course of their activities. If a volunteer incurs damages during their service and needs to make a claim they must complete TR-0235 Claim for Damages form and submit it to the Division of Claims.

A volunteer can file a liability claim if another state employee's negligent actions caused them injury or property damage. The volunteer can file the claim electronically by visiting our website at: <https://treasury.tn.gov/Services/Claims-and-Risk-Management/TORT-Liability>.

## Volunteer Coordinator Monthly Reporting

Each Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for developing a system for the collection of the volunteer activity report monthly and should use the information submitted on the activity reports to compile the monthly activity report. After completing the monthly report, the forms must be filed in the region/YDC specific "Monthly Reports" folder on the DCS shared drive. A copy of the monthly report must be forwarded to the designated Central Office Child Programs contact by the 6<sup>th</sup> of each month.

The monthly report must include:

1. Names of all active volunteers
2. Number of hours of service for each volunteer