

Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Policy 4.05 Volunteers and Practicum Students	Effective: 4/24/26
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VOLUNTEERS AND PRACTICUM STUDENTS

POLICY

The Board recognizes that volunteers and practicum students are a valued part of the programs for people with developmental disabilities. However, they are not to be counted in the staffing ratio for direct service staff. Volunteers are encouraged to add their talents, expertise and assistance to program staff by providing the extra personal touch so important to our clients.

Practicum students provide an opportunity to evaluate potential future employees in real-world settings before making a hiring decision. Students often bring current academic knowledge, new ideas, and innovative approaches that can enhance team problem-solving.

The Superintendent shall approve all policies and proposals relating to volunteers and practicum students. Volunteers and Practicum Students shall not be used in place of employed staff, and are not authorized to act as representatives of the Board.

Volunteers and Practicum Students will be subject to the same background checks and parameters as employees at the expense of the Board, and be required to comply with ORC 5123.2-02 and 109.572 as it pertains to excluded offenses, database checks, and criminal background checks

The Human Resources Department will coordinate all required training for Volunteers and Practicum Students. Training for Volunteers who work forty (40) or more hours annually is in compliance with ORC 5123-4-01.

All Volunteers will be under the supervision of the HR Director. Practicum students will be assigned to observe/shadow a specific employee, but will be under the supervision of the designated employee's Supervisor.

Persons interested in becoming a Volunteer can complete a Volunteer Inquiry Form located on the Board's website. The Human Resources Department will follow up on all Volunteer inquiries as well as the various Board functions that may benefit from using a Volunteer.

Students interested in pursuing a Practicum experience can complete a Practicum Student Placement Request Form located on the Board's website.

Guidelines shall be provided to each volunteer and practicum student at the time of his or her orientation. Every practicum student and volunteer is also required to wear an ID badge at all times while serving.

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No Volunteer or Practicum student will be permitted to work with the Board if he/she is included in any of the databases described 5123.2.02, or has a conviction for, pleads guilty to, or is found eligible for intervention in lieu of conviction or any of the offense listed in ORC 109.572 if the corresponding exclusionary period as specified 5123-2-02 of the Administrative Code has not elapsed.

All provisions of Board Policy 4.53 Criminal Offense apply to volunteers and practicum students. The Superintendent or designee shall determine whether the offense prohibits the volunteer from continuing his/her volunteerism, or the practicum student continuing his/her placement.

Historical Resolution Information		Reviewer(s):
Date	Resolution Number	Director of Human Resources Communications Manager
1/28/20	01-07-20	
3/28/23	03-15-23	
3/24/26	03-xx-26	

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VOLUNTEERS AND PRACTICUM STUDENTS

PROCEDURES

I. Definitions and Basic Concepts

A. Definitions

1. Volunteer - Anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of or on behalf of the Board. This includes, but is not limited to family members, students, staff and interested citizens.
2. Practicum Student - An individual who is currently enrolled in a college, university, etc. and is interested in completing the school's requirement of field experience by working with the DD population.
3. Affiliation Agreement - An approved Affiliation Agreement with the corresponding College or University is required for all practicum placements

B. Minimum Requirements for Volunteers and Practicum Students

1. Must be at least 18 years of age.
2. Placements are contingent upon the receipt of acceptable background checks.
3. Expenses incurred in checking references and background checks will be covered by the Board. Any physical limitations should be disclosed before beginning the volunteer experience or practicum placement.

C. Confidentiality

1. Volunteers and practicum students are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary information and/or privileged information concerning the individuals served.
2. Volunteers and practicum students having access to records and/or documentation relating to persons served shall sign a confidentiality agreement.

II. The Volunteer and Practicum Student Process

A. Requests

1. Requests to be a volunteer or practicum student with the Board shall be submitted to the Human Resources Director.
2. A work description will be given to each accepted volunteer upon placement.

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3. A practicum student will be assigned to a specific staff person upon placement. In conjunction with Supervisory staff, the staff person working with the practicum student will be briefed on the specific requirements of the practicum.

A. One Time Special Events

1. All special events which will utilize volunteers shall be registered with the Communications Office.
2. An event coordinator must be identified for each special event/activity and will maintain any completed forms.

B. Application

1. All volunteers or practicum students will be expected to complete the Board's application for the volunteer or practicum experience.
 - a. [Volunteer Application Form](#)
 - b. [Request for Practicum Placement Form](#)
 - c. [School Program Observation Request Form](#) – on-site observations that are four (4) hours or less.

C. Interview

1. Individual applicants for on-going volunteer service shall be interviewed, as appropriate, by the department's representative and/or the requesting staff.

D. Background Checks

1. Volunteers and practicum students shall be checked against the seven required registries that all employees of the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities are checked. In addition any volunteer or practicum student will be required to provide a set of fingerprints so that a criminal records check can be performed at Board expense.
2. All volunteers and practicum students are required to complete an affidavit listing all prohibited offenses. The document includes language stating that the volunteer or practicum student must notify the County Board within 14 calendar days if charged with, convicted of, pleads guilty to, or is found eligible for intervention in lieu of conviction for any disqualifying offense.
3. Volunteers participating in a one-time special event **or** not having unsupervised access to a child or individual receiving services may not be required to undergo a criminal background check.

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E. Orientation and Training

1. Volunteers who provide more than 40 hours of service working directly with individuals served by the County Board during a calendar year receive training in the following areas:
 - a. The role and responsibilities of the County Board regarding services including person-centered planning, community participation and integration, self-determination, and self-advocacy;
 - b. Rights of Individuals Served;
 - c. Requirements of rule 5123-17-02 including a review of health and welfare alerts issued by the department;
 - d. An overview of emergency procedures;
 - e. Overview of Stark DD;
 - f. Confidentiality;
 - g. Universal Precautions.
2. Practicum Students and all other Volunteers will be assigned training through our Learning Management System under the designated Relias Training plan.

F. Supervision and Evaluation

1. Supervisory staff supervising the volunteer or practicum student is responsible for ensuring that they receive information relevant to his/her assignment, monitors the duties and provides feedback/evaluation to the person as needed.

G. Termination of Assignment

1. By the volunteer or practicum student: Volunteers and practicum students may resign at any time. Volunteers and practicum students are requested to provide advance notice of their departure and a reason for their decision to the supervising staff person. The Supervisory staff person will then notify the Human Resources Director of a volunteer or practicum student's departure.
2. By the Board: Reasons for dismissal of a volunteer or a practicum student may include, but are not limited to: abuse or mistreatment of individuals served or coworkers, gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property, or misuse of agency equipment or materials, failure to meet standards of performance, unacceptable background check, and failure to perform assigned duties.

III. Volunteer and Practicum Student Files

- A. The Human Resources Department shall maintain secured files for each volunteer and practicum student.