COUNTY OF WARREN

VOLUNTEER POLICY

1.1 Overall Policy on Utilization of Volunteers

The achievement of the goals of Warren County (County) government is best served by the active participation of citizens of the community. To this end, the County accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels of County government and within all appropriate programs and activities. All County staff persons are encouraged to assist in the creation of meaningful and productive roles in which volunteers might serve and to assist in recruitment of volunteers from the community.

1.2 Purpose of Volunteer Policies

The purpose of these policies is to provide overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer involvement and management efforts. These policies are intended for internal management guidance only, and do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. The County reserves the exclusive right to change any of these policies at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy. Changes to or exceptions from these policies may only be granted by the Warren County Board of Commissioners, and must be obtained in advance and in writing. Areas not specifically covered by these policies shall be determined by the County Manager.

1.3 Scope of Volunteer Policies

Unless specifically stated, these policies apply to all non-elected volunteers in all programs and projects undertaken on or on behalf of County, and to all departments and sites of operation of the County.

1.4 Definition of 'Volunteer'

A 'volunteer' is anyone who without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the County. A 'volunteer' must be officially accepted and enrolled by the County agency or department prior to performance of the task. Unless specifically stated, volunteers shall not be considered as 'employees' of the County.

1.5 Special Case Volunteers

The County also accepts as volunteers those participating in student community service activities, student intern projects, alternative sentencing or diversion programs, corporate volunteer programs, and other volunteer referral programs. In each of these cases, however, a special agreement must be in effect with the organization, school, or program from whom the special case volunteers originate and must identify responsibility for management and care of the volunteers.

1.6 Service at the Discretion of the County

The County accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the County. Volunteers agree that the County may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the County.

The volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to sever the volunteer's relationship with the County. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the volunteer's supervisor.

1.7 Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to the County, its staff, and its clients. Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equal co-workers, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation, and the right to recognition for work done.

In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the goals, policies and procedures of the County.

1.8 Scope of Volunteer Involvement

Volunteers may be utilized in all programs and activities of the County, and serve at all levels of skill and decision-making. Volunteers should not, however, be utilized to displace any paid employees from their positions.

Volunteer Management Procedures

2.1 Maintenance of Records

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer with the County, including dates of service, positions held, duties performed, evaluation of work, and awards received. Volunteers and appropriate staff shall be responsible for submitting all appropriate records and information to the Department or Agency Head in a timely and accurate fashion.

Volunteer personnel records shall be accorded the same confidentiality as staff personnel records.

2.2 Conflict of Interest

No person who has a conflict of interest with any activity or program of the County, whether personal, philosophical, or financial shall be accepted or serve as a volunteer with the County.

2.3 Representation of the County

Prior to any action or statement which might significantly affect or obligate the County, volunteers should seek prior consultation and approval from appropriate staff. These actions may include, but are not limited to, public statements to the press, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations. Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the County as specifically indicated within their job descriptions and only to the extent of such written specifications.

2.4 Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a single staff, volunteer, client, or other person or involves overall County business.

Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the County or other corrective action.

2.5 Worksite

An appropriate worksite shall be established prior to the enrollment of any volunteer. This worksite shall contain necessary facilities, equipment, and space to enable the volunteer to effectively and comfortably perform their duties.

2.6 Dress Code

As representatives of the County, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to citizens and within the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.

2.7 Timesheets

Individual volunteers are responsible for the accurate completion and timely submission of timesheets.

Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

3.1 Position Descriptions

Volunteer staff, just as paid staff, require a clear, complete, and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the position which they are expected to fill. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a position description must be developed for each volunteer position. This position description will be given to each accepted volunteer and utilized in subsequent management and evaluation efforts. Position descriptions should be reviewed and updated whenever the work involved in the position changes substantially.

All position descriptions shall include a description of the purpose and duties of the position, a designated supervisor and worksite, a timeframe for the performance of the job, a listing of job qualifications, and a description of job benefits. The Human Resources Director is available to assist staff in the development of volunteer jobs and position descriptions.

3.2 Staff Requests for Volunteers

Requests for volunteers shall be submitted in writing by interested staff, complete with a draft position description and a requested timeframe. All parties should understand that the recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting jobs and by advance notice.

3.3 Recruitment

Volunteers shall be recruited by the County on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding the volunteer involvement of the community. Volunteers shall be recruited without regard to gender, handicap, age, race or other condition. The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment shall be suitability to perform a task on behalf of the County. Volunteers may be recruited through either an interest in specific functions or through a general interest in volunteering which will later be matched with a specific function. No final acceptance of a volunteer shall take place without a specific written volunteer position description for that volunteer.

3.4 Recruitment of Minors

Volunteers who have not reached their age of majority must have the written consent of a parent of guardian prior to volunteering. The volunteer services assigned to a minor should be performed in a non-hazardous environment and should comply with all appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

3.5 Interviewing

Prior to being assigned or appointed to a position, all volunteers will be interviewed by the Department or Agency Head to ascertain their suitability for and interest in that position. The interview should determine the qualifications of the volunteer, their commitment to fulfill the requirements of the position, and should answer any questions that the volunteer might have about the position. Interviews may be conducted either in person or by other means.

3.6 Health Screening

In cases where volunteers will be working with clients with health difficulties, a health screening procedure may be required prior to volunteer assignment. In addition, if there are physical requirements necessary for performance of a volunteer task, a screening or testing procedure may be required to ascertain the ability of the volunteer to safely perform the task.

3.7 Criminal Records Check

As appropriate for the protection of clients, volunteers in certain assignments may be asked to submit to a background criminal check. Volunteers who do not agree to the background check may be refused assignment.

3.8 Certificate of Ability

Any potential volunteer who indicates that they are under the care of a physician for either physical or psychological treatment may be asked to present a certificate from the physician as to their ability to satisfactorily and safely perform their volunteer duties. Volunteers under a course of treatment which might affect their volunteer work will not be accepted without written verification of suitability from their physician.

Any volunteer who, after acceptance and assignment by the County, enters a course of treatment which might adversely impact upon the performance of their volunteer duties should immediately consult with the Department or Agency Head.

3.9 Placement

In placing a volunteer in a position, attention shall be paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and to the requirements of the volunteer position. No placement shall be made unless the requirements of both the volunteer and the supervising staff can be met: no volunteer should be assigned to a 'make-work' position and no position should be given to an unqualified or uninterested volunteer.

3.10 Staff

Participation in interviewing and placement wherever possible, staff who will be working with the volunteer should participate in the design and conduct of the interview. Final assignment of a potential volunteer should not take place without review and approval of appropriate staff with whom the volunteer will be working.

3.11 Acceptance and Appointment

Service as a volunteer with the County 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 County who will normally be the Department or Agency Head. No volunteer shall begin performance of any position until they have been officially accepted for that position and have completed all necessary screening and paperwork. At the time of final acceptance, each volunteer shall complete all necessary enrollment paperwork and shall receive a copy of their job description and agreement of service with the County.

3.12 Probationary Period

All volunteer placements shall initially be done on a trial period of 30 days. At the end of this period a second interview of the volunteer shall be conducted, at which point either the volunteer or appropriate staff may request a re-assignment of the volunteer to a different position or may determine the unsuitability of the volunteer for a position within the County.

3.13 Re-Assignment

Volunteers who are at any time re-assigned to a new position shall be interviewed for that position and shall receive all appropriate orientation and training for that position before they begin work. In addition, any screening procedures appropriate for that specific position must be completed, even if the volunteer has already been working with the County.

3.14 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 should be maintained by the Department or Agency Head.

3.15 Length of Service

All volunteer positions shall have a set term of duration. It is highly recommended that this term shall not be longer than one-year, with an option for renewal at the discretion of both parties. All volunteer assignments shall end at the conclusion of their set term, without expectation or requirement of re-assignment of that position to the incumbent.

Volunteers are neither expected nor required to accept further service in a position at the end of their set term, although they are welcome to do so in most cases, but may instead seek a different volunteer assignment within the County, or may retire from volunteer service.

3.16 Leave of Absence

At the discretion of the supervisor, leaves of absence may be granted to volunteers. This leave of absence will not alter or extend the previously agreed upon ending date of the volunteer's term of service.

Volunteer Training and Development

4.1 Orientation

All volunteers will receive a general orientation on the nature and purpose of the Department or Agency of assignment, an orientation on the nature and operation of the program or activity for which they are recruited, and a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of the position which they are accepting in that effort.

4.2 On-the-Job Training

Volunteers will receive specific on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. The timing and methods for delivery of such training should be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.

4.3 Staff Involvement in Orientation and Training

Staff members with responsibility over delivery of services should have an active role in the design and delivery of both orientation and training of volunteers. Those staff who will be in a supervisory capacity to volunteers shall have primary responsibility for design and delivery of on-the-job training to volunteers assigned to them.

4.4 Volunteer Involvement in Orientation and Training

Experienced volunteers should be included in the design and delivery of volunteer orientation and training.

4.5 Continuing Education

Just as staff, volunteers should attempt to improve their levels of skill during their terms of service. Additional training and educational opportunities should be made available to volunteers during their connection with the County. This continuing education may include both additional information on performance of their current volunteer assignment as well as more general information, and might be provided either by the County or by assisting the volunteer to participate in educational programs provided by other groups.

4.6 Conference Attendance

Volunteers are authorized to attend conferences and meetings which are relevant to their volunteer assignments, including both those of the County and of other organizations. Prior approval from the volunteer's supervisor should be obtained before attending any conference or meeting if attendance will interfere with the volunteer's work schedule or if reimbursement of expenses is sought.

Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation

5.1 Requirement of a Supervisor

Each volunteer who is accepted to a position within the County must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This 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.

5.2 Volunteers as Volunteer Supervisors

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

5.3 Volunteer/Staff Relationships

Volunteers are staff and considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programs of the County, with each having an equal but complementary role to play. It is essential for the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.

5.4 Acceptance of Volunteers by Staff

Since individual staff is in a better position to determine the requirements of their work and their own abilities, no volunteer will be assigned to work with a staff person without the consent of that staff person. Since volunteers are considered a valuable resource in performing the County's work, staff is encouraged to seriously consider creative ways in which volunteers might be of service and to consult with the Department or Agency Head if they feel in need of assistance or additional training.

5.5 Staff Volunteer Management Training

An orientation on working with volunteers will be provided to all staff. In-service training on effective volunteer utilization will be provided to staff highly involved in volunteer management.

5.6 Volunteer Involvement in Staff Evaluation

Examination of their effective utilization of volunteers may be a component in the evaluation of staff persons who are assigned to work with volunteers. In such cases, supervisors should ask for the input and participation of volunteers in evaluating staff performance.

5.7 Staff Involvement in Volunteer Evaluation

Affected staff should be involved in all evaluation and work assignments of volunteers with whom they are connected.

5.8 Lines of Communication

Volunteers are entitled to all necessary information pertinent to the performance of their work assignments.

Accordingly, volunteers should be included in and have access to all appropriate memos, materials, and meetings relevant to the work assignments. To facilitate the receipt of this information on a timely basis, volunteers should be included on all distribution schedules and should be assigned a site or mailbox for receipt of information distributed in their absence. Primary responsibility for ensuring that the volunteer receives such information will rest with the direct supervisor of the volunteer.

Lines of communication should operate in both directions, and should exist both formally and informally.

Volunteers should be consulted regarding all decisions which would substantially affect the performance of their duties.

5.9 Absenteeism

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regularly scheduled and timely basis. If expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers should inform their staff supervisor as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements may be made. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer's work assignment or term of service.

5.10 Substitution

Volunteers may be encouraged to find a substitute for any upcoming absences which might be filled by another volunteer. Such substitution should only be taken following consultation with a supervisor and care

should be taken to find a substitute who is qualified for the position. Substitutes may only be recruited from those who are currently enrolled as volunteers with the County.

5.11 Standards of Performance

Standards of performance shall be established for each volunteer position. These standards should list the work to be done in that position, measurable indicators of whether the work was accomplished, and appropriate timelines for accomplishment of the work. Creation of these standards will be a joint function of staff and the volunteer assigned to the position, and a copy of the standards should be provided to the volunteer along with a copy of their job description at the beginning of their assignment.

5.12 Evaluations

Volunteers shall receive periodic evaluations to review their work. The evaluation session is utilized to review the performance of the volunteer, to suggest any changes in work style, to seek suggestions from the volunteer on means of enhancing the volunteer's relationship with the County, to convey appreciation to the volunteer, and to ascertain the continued interest of the volunteer in serving in that position. Evaluations should include both an examination of the volunteer's performance of position responsibilities and a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have concerning the position or project with which the volunteer is connected.

The evaluation session is an opportunity for both the volunteer and the County to examine and improve their relationship.

5.13 Written Basis for Evaluation

The position description and standards of performance for a volunteer position should form the basis of an evaluation. A written record should be kept of each evaluation session.

5.14 Staff Responsibility for Evaluation

It shall be the responsibility of each staff person in a supervisory relationship with a volunteer to schedule and perform periodic evaluation and to maintain records of the evaluation.

5.15 Corrective Action

In appropriate situations, corrective action may be taken following an evaluation. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, re-assignment of a volunteer to a new position, suspension of the volunteer, or dismissal from volunteer service.

5.16 Dismissal of a Volunteer

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules, policies and procedures of the County or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignments are subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with supervisory staff. Prior to dismissal of a volunteer, staff should seek the consultation and assistance of the Department or Agency Head.

5.17 Reasons for Dismissal

Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of County-owned equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of citizens or co-workers, failure to abide by County policies and procedures, failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

5.18 Concerns and Grievances

Decisions involving corrective action of a volunteer may be reviewed for appropriateness. If corrective action is taken, the affected volunteer shall be informed of the procedures for expressing their concern or grievance.

5.19 Notice of Departure or Re-Assignment of a Volunteer

In the event that a volunteer departs the County, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, or is re-assigned to a new position, it shall be the responsibility of the Department or Agency Head to inform those affected staff and clients that the volunteer is no longer assigned to work with them. In cases of dismissal for cause, this notification should be given in writing and should clearly indicate that any further contact with the volunteer is outside any scope of relationship with the County.

5.20 Resignation

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

5.21 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, suggestions the volunteer may have to improving the position, and the possibility of involving the volunteer in some other capacity with the County.

5.22 Evaluation of County Volunteer Utilization

The Department or Agency Head shall conduct an annual evaluation of the utilization of volunteers by the County Department or Agency. This evaluation shall include information gathered from volunteers, staff, and clients.

Volunteer Support and Recognition

6.1 Reimbursement of Expenses

Volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred while undertaking business for the County. The Department or Agency Head shall distribute information to all volunteers regarding specific reimbursable items. Prior approval must be sought for any major expenditure.

6.2 Access to County Property and Materials

As appropriate, volunteers shall have access to County property and materials necessary to fulfill their duties, and shall receive training in the operation of any equipment. Property and materials shall be utilized only when directly required for County purposes. This policy does not include access to and use of County-owned vehicles.

6.3 Insurance

Liability and accident insurance is provided for all volunteers engaged in County business. Volunteers are encouraged to consult with their own insurance agents regarding the extension of their personal insurance to include community volunteer work. Specific information regarding such insurance is available from the Clerk to the Board or County Safety Officer.

6.4 Informal Recognition

All staff and volunteers responsible for volunteer supervision are encouraged to undertake on-going methods of recognition of volunteer service on a regular basis throughout the year. These methods of informal recognition should range from simple "Thank You's" to a concerted effort to include volunteers as full participants in program decision making and implementation.

6.5 Volunteer Career Paths

Volunteers are encouraged to grow and develop their skills while serving with the County, and are to be assisted through promotion to new volunteer jobs to assume additional and greater responsibilities. If so desired by the volunteer, the County should assist the volunteer in maintaining appropriate records of volunteer experience that would assist the volunteer in future career opportunities, both paid and volunteer.

Adopted this the 11th day of September 2006.

Warren County Board of Commissioners

Ulysses S. Ross, Chairman

ATTEST:

Angelena Kearney-Dunlap, Clerk to the Board