

# VOLUNTEER SERVICES PROGRAM

## Minnesota Sex Offender Program

Issue Date: 2/7/23

Effective Date: 3/7/23

Policy Number: 410-5043

**POLICY:** The Minnesota Sex Offender Program (MSOP) provides all clients with the opportunity to participate in activities utilizing community volunteers, within budgetary and security constraints.

**AUTHORITY:** Minn. Stat. § 246.014, subd. (d)

**APPLICABILITY:** MSOP, program-wide

**PURPOSE:** To maintain procedures governing the volunteer services program.

### DEFINITIONS:

Immediate family – refer to MSOP Division Policy 420-5100, “Visiting” definition of “visitor.”

Spiritual support – refer to MSOP Division Policy 420-5300, “Spiritual Practices.”

Valid identification (ID) – refer to MSOP Division Policy 410-5032, “Event Letters.”

Volunteer – a screened and trained person authorized to provide services within the facility for a specific purpose.

Volunteer services coordinator/designee – a staff member responsible for coordinating the facility’s Volunteer Services Program.

### PROCEDURES:

- A. The facility volunteer services coordinator/designee recruits volunteers from all cultural and socioeconomic groups of the community, based on facility needs and volunteer qualifications.
- B. The facility volunteer services coordinator/designee:
  1. specifies the lines of authority, responsibility and accountability for community volunteer programming;
  2. ensures and documents community volunteers are informed and trained on facility policies, including security procedures;
  3. ensures and documents completed required background studies on all community volunteers entering the facility as outlined in DHS Administrative Policy, “Background Reviews Policy;”
  4. maintains a file for each community volunteer including the Volunteer File Checklist (410-5043c):
    - a) Volunteer Application (410-5043a);
    - b) background study clearance(s);
    - c) Volunteer Programming Annual Review and Observation (410-5043b); and

5. escorts volunteers in and out of the facility and supports volunteers during program delivery (including maintaining boundaries).

C. Volunteer Application and Approval

1. Volunteer applicants must be at least 18 years old.
2. Volunteers may not be related to a client at any MSOP site.
3. Volunteers performing in a professional capacity (e.g., chaplain, pastor, or priest) must provide a relevant license or certificate. Volunteers performing services not requiring a license or certificate must provide a letter of organizational affiliation.
4. Former MSOP employees must have approval from the facility director in consultation with the facility clinical director, before applying to become a volunteer.
5. Volunteer applicants complete and sign a Volunteer Application (410-5043a) and submit it to the facility volunteer services coordinator/designee.
  - a) By completing the application, the volunteer applicant agrees to abide by MSOP policy and Minnesota data practices statutes, including the use of private data and/or protected health information.
  - b) The facility volunteer services coordinator/designee forwards information for the volunteer applicant to provide background study information as outlined in DHS Administrative Policy, "Background Reviews" and ensures completion of a criminal history check on each volunteer applicant (as outlined in MSOP Division Policy 410-5032, "Event Letters") before reviewing the application further.
  - c) For applicants with a criminal history, the facility volunteer services coordinator/designee refers the applicant to the facility director, who consults with the facility clinical director for approval.
6. Volunteers may not have direct contact with clients until the facility volunteer services coordinator/designee receives first notice of background study results (refer to DHS Administrative Policy, "Background Reviews").
7. If a background study has disqualified the volunteer from providing direct service to clients, the facility volunteer services coordinator/designee refers to DHS Administrative Policy, "Background Reviews."
8. The facility volunteer services coordinator/designee notifies volunteers of final approval or denial of volunteer status, and completes the volunteer's application.
9. Applicants requesting to volunteer at more than one MSOP site must indicate this on their application.
  - a) Volunteers who request to provide services at more than one MSOP site are reviewed by the facility volunteer services coordinators/designees at those sites.
  - b) The facility volunteer services coordinator/designee from the originating site processes the application and requests the background study.

- c) The facility volunteer services coordinator/designee from the originating site completes all other procedural requirements outlined in this policy, including first-year volunteer training.
- d) Volunteers complete annual recertification at the originating site, unless approved by the volunteer services coordinator/designee of the originating site.

D. Volunteer Orientation, Training, and Programming Review

1. Volunteers complete orientation training including volunteer expectations as identified in the Volunteer Application (410-5043a) and this policy, along with training required by DCT Policy 115-1045, “Non-Employee Training” prior to providing service within MSOP facilities.
  2. Volunteers serving at multiple sites receive relevant orientation at each site prior to volunteering with clients.
  3. MSOP certifies volunteers annually, which includes a criminal history and background check, check of relevant professional license(s) or certificate(s), and annual training required by DCT Policy 115-1045, “Non-Employee Training.”
  4. The facility volunteer services coordinator/designee documents annual reviews of each volunteer program on the Volunteer Programming Annual Review and Observation (410-5043b).
  5. During their annual certification and programming review process, volunteers are encouraged to submit suggestions for program enhancement.
- E. The facility volunteer services coordinator/designee is the designated contact for all volunteers.
- F. Spiritual volunteers may provide support in the event of death of a client’s immediate family member, or serious illness of the client or client’s immediate family member – refer to MSOP Division Policy 420-5300, “Spiritual Practices.”
- G. Volunteers having officiant credentials filed with a Minnesota county may perform marriages at MSOP facilities. (See MSOP Division Policy 420-5500, “Client Marriage.”)
- H. The number of community volunteers is limited to those required for each activity, as determined by the facility volunteer services coordinator/designee.
- I. Volunteers facilitate programming for one specific spiritual or support group documented in the volunteer’s file.
- J. Volunteers serve at the facilities for the sole purpose of their programs and are not allowed to use their volunteer roles for any purpose (e.g., to solicit and/or conduct business or donations) not outlined in this policy.
- K. Volunteers must not accept gifts, money, articles or special favors from a client, client’s family, or client’s friends.
- L. Volunteers must not give any item to a client, client’s family, or client’s friends, including gifts, money, articles, or special favors, unless permitted under MSOP Division Policy 420-5400, “Donations.”

- M. Volunteers may not engage in direct communication (e.g., telephone, letter, or e-mail) with clients outside of scheduled programming time, or client's family/friends.
- N. Volunteers must not divulge to clients any home telephone numbers, addresses or personal information about themselves, other volunteers, or staff.
- O. Prior to scheduled programming, the facility security director/designee approves all spiritual items utilized for ceremonies or studies. These items are listed on the approved Event Letter (410-5032a) and are inventoried upon entering or leaving the facility.
- P. The facility volunteer services coordinator/designee scans all media provided by volunteers for programming for contraband.
1. The facility volunteer services coordinator/designee provides a reasonable number of copies of study material upon request with a minimum of seven days' advance notice.
  2. Volunteers can provide commercially-produced DVD-R/CD-R per MSOP Division Policy 420-5310, "Use of Controlled Items During Spiritual Ceremonies."
  3. Volunteers can provide non-commercially-produced digital media with appropriate copyright documentation and permission to share via completed Copyright Permissions Documentation (410-5043e).
  4. The facility volunteer services coordinator/designee presents questionable media to the Media Review Committee. (See MSOP Division Policy 420-5230, "Media Possession by Clients.")
- Q. Except as approved by the facility clinical director, the facility volunteer services coordinator/designee schedules volunteer-supported activities outside of core clinical and psychoeducational group hours.
- R. Volunteers who engage in behavior threatening the safety, security, or orderly operation of the facility are subject to permanent removal from the volunteer list and possible criminal prosecution as outlined in section S below.
- S. Volunteers who are the subject of a criminal investigation, charge, arrest and/or conviction, or incarcerated for any reason, must immediately notify the facility volunteer services coordinator/designee, who immediately notifies the facility director/designee. The volunteer must keep the facility volunteer services coordinator/designee informed of the progress and final disposition of the charge. MSOP suspends the volunteer from providing services during this process and the volunteer must also undergo a new background study (refer to DHS Administrative Policy, "Background Reviews.")
- T. A volunteer who has any known history of personal and/or professional association with any MSOP client immediately notifies the facility volunteer services coordinator/designee. The facility volunteer services coordinator/designee completes a Level 1 or 2 Incident Report (410-5300a) (Phoenix) (refer to MSOP Division Policy 410-5300, "Incident Reports") for review by facility executive team to determine appropriate follow-up.
- U. Virtual Meetings
1. When approved by the facility director, a community volunteer may facilitate a spiritual or support group using a virtual platform designated by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

2. Prior to a virtual group meeting occurring, the facility volunteer services coordinator/designee ensures the volunteer completes the Community Volunteer Virtual Group Meeting Agreement (410-5043d).

V. Volunteer Suspension/Termination

1. MSOP may suspend or terminate volunteers for violation of MSOP policies. The facility director/designee in consultation with the facility clinical director determines suspension or termination on a case-by-case basis.
2. The facility director of the investigating site emails all facility volunteer services coordinators/designees a notification of the alleged policy violation(s) and whether volunteer privileges are suspended.
3. The facility director determines whether any follow-up investigation is required regarding the alleged policy violation(s). The investigation includes contacting the volunteer to advise the volunteer of the investigation and to give the volunteer an opportunity to present information on the volunteer's behalf. This may occur via telephone.
4. When the investigation is complete, the facility director/designee verbally notifies the facility volunteer services coordinator/designee and the volunteer of the result. The facility director/designee also sends the volunteer written notification by certified mail.
5. The facility volunteer services coordinator/designee contacts the Master Control supervisor to remove the volunteer's Event Letter (410-5032a) from Master Control.
6. The volunteer has five business days from the date of written notification to file a written appeal. The facility director (in consultation with the facility clinical director) reviews and responds to the appeal in writing within 30 calendar days.

**REVIEW:** Annually

**REFERENCES:** MSOP Division Policy 410-5032, "Event Letters"  
DCT Policy 115-1045, "Non-Employee Training"  
MSOP Division Policy 420-5100, "Visiting"  
DHS Administrative Policy, "Background Reviews"  
MSOP Division Policy 410-5300, "Incident Reports"  
MSOP Division Policy 420-5230, "Media Possession by Clients"  
MSOP Division Policy 420-5400, "Donations"  
MSOP Division Policy 420-5500, "Client Marriage"  
MSOP Division Policy 420-5400, "Donations"  
MSOP Division Policy 420-5300, "Spiritual Practices"  
MSOP Division Policy 420-5310, "Use of Controlled Items During Spiritual Ceremonies"

**ATTACHMENTS:** Volunteer Application (410-5043a)  
Volunteer Programming Annual Review and Observation (410-5043b)  
Volunteer File Checklist (410-5043c)  
Community Volunteer Virtual Group Meeting Agreement (410-5043d)  
Copyright Permissions Documentation (410-5043e)

Event Letter (410-5032a)

**SUPERSESSSION:** MSOP Division Policy 410-5043, "Volunteer Services Program," 7/5/22.  
All facility policies, memos, or other communications whether verbal, written, or transmitted by electronic means regarding this topic.

/s/

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Minnesota Sex Offender Program