



POLICY
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania • Department of Corrections

Policy Subject: SUPERVISION, USE OF CITIZENS		Policy Number: 12.4.01.21
Date of Issue: September 6, 2022	Authority: Signature on File George M. Little	Effective Date: PUBLIC September 13, 2022

I. AUTHORITY

The Authority of the Secretary of Corrections to direct the operation of the Department of Corrections is established by Sections 201, 206, 506, and 901-B of the Administrative Code of 1929, 71 P.S. §§61, 66, 186, and 310-1, Act of April 9, 1929, P.L. 177, No. 175, as amended.

II. PURPOSE

This policy explains the recruitment, selection, training, term of service, termination of services, definition of tasks, responsibilities, accountability, and authority of citizens to assist in the mission of probation and parole supervision.

III. APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to all Department staff and volunteers.

IV. DEFINITIONS

All definitions are located in Policy **12.4.01.01, Glossary**.

V. POLICY

It is Department policy that the community will be engaged to define the concept and practice of community justice. The Department shall actively participate in partnerships with individuals, organizations, and other agencies to prevent victimization, provide conflict resolution, and promote public safety.¹

The Department shall share information consistent with applicable law and provide education to engage in collaborative problem-solving with the community to promote public safety.² The Department, further, shall support efforts to develop community resources that prevent crime.³

It shall be the policy of the Department to encourage volunteer and intern involvement in programs; ensuring recruitment of citizen volunteers whose diversity is reflective of their communities.⁴ The Department recognizes that citizen volunteers add value to probation and parole supervision by augmenting and enhancing community engagement. Volunteers and interns shall agree in writing to abide by all Department policies.⁵ Prospective citizen volunteers shall be subject to background investigations. Prior to assignment, all citizen volunteers shall complete a documented orientation and/or training program.⁶ Upon placement, all citizen volunteers are required to have supervision when involved in Department programs or engaged in direct contact with reentrants. The Department shall also provide against liability or claims in the form of insurance or other legal provisions as authorized by law.⁷

VI. PROCEDURES

A. Citizens Advisory Committee⁸

1. Responsibilities

Each district director is responsible to establish a citizens advisory committee composed of volunteers from the district to meet periodically and:

- a. advise the Department of the issues and concerns of the citizens of this Commonwealth regarding probation and parole;
- b. inform the citizens of the Commonwealth regarding probation and parole and functions of the Department;
- c. assist the district staff in discharging their duties;

¹ 4-APPFS-1A-01

² 4-APPFS-1A-02

³ 4-APPFS-1A-03

⁴ 4-APPFS-1C-03, 4-APPFS-1C-05

⁵ 4-APPFS-1C-07

⁶ 4-APPFS-1C-06

⁷ 4-APPFS-1C-08

⁸ 4-APPFS-1C-04

- d. review public policies/procedures and established programs of the Department;
- e. explore innovative administrative and programmatic ideas; and
- f. develop community resources that may assist reentrants with their adjustment.⁹ See 37 Pa. Code § 77.2.

2. Committee Size, Recruitment, Selection, and Composition

Each district's citizens advisory committee shall consist of at least seven members and no more than 15 members. The district director, who serves as an ex-officio member of the committee, shall select committee members. Committee member recruitment and selection shall provide for representation as listed below.

- a. Male/female, ethnic, and minority representation consistent with the general cultural and socioeconomic segments of the district.
- b. Representation, as feasible, from each of the counties in the district.
- c. Representation from the following categories are suggested:
 - (1) non-professionals, such as students, retired persons, blue-collar workers, and union representatives;
 - (2) professionals (non-criminal justice), such as teachers/professors, social service workers, clergy, and business persons;
 - (3) professionals (criminal justice), such as district attorneys, judges, chief probation officers, and wardens;
 - (4) former reentrants (must not be under supervision while serving in this capacity);
 - (5) victims of crime or advocates;
 - (6) organizational representatives from social clubs, political action groups, and prison societies;¹⁰ and
 - (7) Department supervision staff.
- d. All interested parties must complete a **DC-P 16, Citizen Volunteer Application**. Applications will be forwarded through the chain of command to the Bureau of Investigations and Intelligence (BII) at **CR, BII Investigations**

⁹ 4-APPFS-1A-01, 4-APPFS-1A-03

¹⁰ 4-APPFS-1C-05

for completion of a criminal history record check. The district director will then determine whether to accept the applicant as a volunteer/mentor.

3. Terms of Office

Committee members shall be appointed for two calendar year terms and may be reappointed for additional terms.

4. Termination of Service

Committee members shall agree to self-disclose any circumstances which result in a conflict of interest between themselves and their responsibilities as a Citizen Advisory Committee member to the district director. The examples cited below are provided as a general guideline and are not inclusive:

- a. shall not represent or act as an agent for any private interest, whether for compensation or not, in which the Commonwealth has a direct or substantial interest;
- b. shall not conduct operations or activities that are regulated by the Commonwealth;
- c. shall not be engaged in proceedings before the Commonwealth or in court proceedings in which the Commonwealth is an adverse party; and
- d. formally charged with criminal conduct and has been arrested or named as a defendant in an indictment or in the case of a private complaint, the complaint has been approved by the prosecuting attorney.

5. Officers - Selection, Terms, and Responsibilities

The committee members shall select a chairperson and vice chairperson from among its members to serve one-year terms, and they may succeed themselves for additional terms. The district director/designee may provide a recording secretary for all meetings by naming a parole supervision staff member to serve in this capacity.

The chairperson shall be responsible to conduct the committee meetings and, together with the district director/designee, prepare a meeting agenda before each meeting. The vice chairperson shall perform the chairperson's duties when absent.

6. Committee Meetings

A meeting of the district committee shall be held at least four times each calendar year. The recording secretary shall record and prepare written minutes of each committee meeting. The district director/designee shall be responsible to

circulate the minutes to committee members, all regional directors, the Department of Corrections (DOC) Policy and Legislative Affairs Office director, and to the DOC Communications Office director.

The regional director shall review the minutes from their districts' Citizen Advisory Committee meetings. Innovative practices and issues of significance shall be shared with the Deputy Secretary of Field Services.

7. Committee Guidelines¹¹

Committees should strive to provide assistance to the district by:

- a. developing good public relations;
- b. developing employment opportunities for reentrants;
- c. developing contacts with community service agencies to provide needed services to reentrants;
- d. provide advice and develop position papers on issues relating to Department operations;
- e. provide input into the evaluation of Department services; and
- f. review and support, when possible, legislation to improve probation and parole services.

8. Statewide Meetings of Committee Representatives

A statewide meeting of the chairperson, or designee and one other committee member from each of the district committees shall be held twice each year, within budgetary constraints. The meetings shall include the directors and other appropriate Department staff. Committee members' expenses for attendance at these meetings will be provided by the Department. The purposes of the meetings are to:

- a. hear reports on the work of the Department and its staff during the preceding months;
- b. review pending legislation relating to probation and parole;
- c. discuss and provide input on proposed new programs relating to the work of the Department; and
- d. report on the work of the individual committees since the last statewide meeting.

¹¹ 4-APPFS-1A-01, 4-APPFS-1A-02, 4-APPFS-1A-03

B. Citizen Volunteer Ride-Around Program

The Citizen Volunteer Ride-Around Program is designed to provide citizen volunteers an understanding of the many faceted duties performed by parole agents in the field. Citizen volunteers may participate in educational ride-around exercises with parole supervision staff. Citizen volunteers must sign the **DC-P 16A, Citizen Volunteer Ride-Around Acknowledgment and Release** prior to participation. Citizen volunteers must also agree to a background check prior to participation in the program.

C. Citizen Volunteers/Mentors¹²

Volunteers/mentors are "people who care about people." They give their service to help make the public aware of correctional problems and actively engage themselves in helping to reintegrate reentrants into the community.

1. Program Responsibility

Parole supervision staff will:

- a. develop a working relationship with volunteers/mentors;
- b. carefully identify the tasks which the volunteer can do;
- c. provide the environment, if possible, which will enable the volunteer to use his/her unique abilities;
- d. keep the volunteer informed of pertinent information, as permitted by law, about the reentrant; and
- e. provide encouragement and direction to the volunteers/mentors.¹³

2. Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers/Mentors

Parole agents, because of their many community contacts and knowledge of particular needs of reentrants, should be prime recruiters of volunteers and mentors. They should be recruited from all age groups, races, and vocations.¹⁴

All potential volunteers/mentors must complete a **DC-P 16**. Applications will be forwarded through the chain of command to BII at **CR, BII Investigations** for completion of a criminal history record check. The district director will then determine whether to accept the applicant as a volunteer/mentor.

¹² 4-APPFS-1C-04

¹³ 4-APPFS-1A-02

¹⁴ 4-APPFS-1C-05

3. Former Reentrants as Volunteers/Mentors

Because of past experience, ex-reentrants may serve as volunteers/mentors. As with all volunteers, these individuals will need to be carefully screened so that only those who will have a positive influence on reentrants will be selected. Former reentrants and reentrants currently under supervision must be recommended by the supervising parole agent, approved by the appropriate parole supervisor and district director/designee, and complete the volunteer/mentor orientation program. Generally, individuals with a conviction or record for violent offenses will be eliminated from serving as a citizen volunteer/mentor. However, there may be exceptions with the approval of the district director. It is suggested that when the final supervision interview is conducted with a reentrant who has been especially positive and cooperative during the period of supervision, he/she should be encouraged to participate in the citizen volunteer/mentor program.

4. Training of Volunteers/Mentors

All volunteers/mentors must complete a documented orientation program as prescribed by the Department so they will have a better understanding of the Department and reentrant population.¹⁵ This orientation shall deal with at least the following:

- a. the criminal justice system;
- b. the work of the Department, including the role of parole supervision staff;
- c. understanding the reentrant; and
- d. the tasks, responsibilities, accountability, and authority of the volunteers/mentors.

5. Liability

A person interested in becoming a volunteer must:

- a. agree in writing to abide by all Department policies, particularly those relating to security and confidentiality of information;¹⁶
- b. complete a **DC-P 16** which includes a statement relieving the Department of any injury or liability claims;¹⁷ and
- c. be informed that professional services, such as medical, psychological, psychiatric, etc. may only be performed by certified or licensed professionals.

¹⁵ 4-APPFS-1C-06

¹⁶ 4-APPFS-1C-07

¹⁷ 4-APPFS-1C-08

6. The Roles of Volunteers/Mentors

Volunteers/mentors are assigned to a reentrant on a one-to-one basis and take on the role of friend, supporter, and advocate. Some volunteers/mentors may possess special skills or abilities to provide needed services for reentrants. It is expected that volunteers/mentors will meet routinely with the assigned reentrant and provide feedback to the parole supervision staff as to their interactions with the reentrant.¹⁸

7. The Use of Volunteers/Mentors

- a. The use of the volunteer/mentor is determined as part of the individualized treatment plan for the reentrant.¹⁹ The decision to utilize a volunteer/mentor with a particular reentrant may be determined by Department staff as follows:
 - (1) the institutional parole staff as part of the pre-parole summary and treatment plans;
 - (2) the board member or hearing examiner, based upon the interview with the prospective reentrant, and may be specified as a special condition of parole, if deemed advisable;
 - (3) the parole supervision staff investigating the pre-parole plan; and
 - (4) the assigned parole agent in developing or modifying the reentrant's supervision plans.
- b. In all cases, the recommendation for the use of a volunteer/mentor should include specific objectives for the volunteer/mentor to achieve in working with the reentrant.

8. Assignment of Volunteers/Mentors

- a. Generally, a volunteer/mentor should be assigned to a reentrant when it is considered that there is a need for another positive influence in the life of the individual, to assist the parole supervision staff in meeting some specific problems of the reentrant, and to provide added support for the reentrant without requiring additional contacts by the parole agent.
- b. The descriptions of reentrant situations below provide direction to determine the most appropriate times to assign a citizen volunteer/mentor:
 - (1) reentrants returning to a living situation that is considered a poor environment;

¹⁸ 4-APPFS-1C-03

¹⁹ 4-APPFS-1C-03

- (2) reentrants returning to a community with few friends, weak family ties, or a completely new community;
- (3) reentrants whose residence is located in a remote area;
- (4) reentrants who have developed patterns of dependency on alcohol or other drugs;
- (5) reentrants who have special needs in their educational development or job skills;
- (6) first time reentrants with non-violent crimes;
- (7) reentrants who have a history of difficulty adjusting to authority; and
- (8) female reentrants returning to children, particularly where there is no support in the home.

9. Terminating Volunteer Assignments

The volunteer/mentor assignment should be terminated when:

- a. the relationship between the reentrant and the volunteer/mentor does not appear to be useful and positive;
- b. the reentrant demonstrates a satisfactory adjustment to parole and need for the volunteer/mentor no longer exists; and/or
- c. the reentrant is recommitted to prison and the location of the institution makes it impractical for the volunteer/mentor to relate personally to the reentrant.²⁰

10. Responsibilities of the Parole Agent

Parole supervision staff are key to a successful program that develops a team concept with the volunteer/mentor and the reentrant. A parole agent should use not more than ten active volunteers/mentors. Responsibilities of the parole agent are to maintain periodic contacts with the volunteer/mentor to secure information about the progress of the relationship and the attainment of objectives of the reentrant's supervision plan. The parole agent shall report any significant relationships or activities between the reentrant and the volunteer/mentor and review the effectiveness of the assigned volunteer/mentor at least once a year in the reentrant's progress and conduct report and/or plan.

²⁰ 4-APPFS-1C-04

11. Responsibilities of District Director

The district director is an important key in the attitude of the parole agent in the use of volunteers/mentors. Support and encouragement from the district director usually make the parole agent more receptive to working with volunteers and mentors. Responsibilities of the district director include:

- a. direct parole supervision staff regarding the effective use of volunteers/mentors;
- b. assist parole supervision staff in determining which reentrants are to have volunteers/mentors assigned;
- c. generate a listing of community resource volunteers/mentors;
- d. provide initial and ongoing parole supervision staff training in the use of volunteers/mentors in cooperation with the Training Academy;
- e. provide suggestions, program materials, etc., for in-service training and orientation of volunteers/mentors and provide leadership for some of these sessions;
- f. assist in the recruitment of volunteers/mentors;
- g. be available to assist in maintaining and developing good public relations in the community; and
- h. maintain periodic contact with active volunteers/mentors.

12. Responsibilities of the Deputy Secretary of Field Services

The Deputy Secretary or designee(s) is responsible for the overall direction and implementation of the Citizen Volunteer/Mentor Program, including the responsibilities listed below:

- a. prepare needed supportive materials, such as a volunteer/mentor recruitment brochure and volunteer/mentor orientation materials;
- b. coordinate the volunteer/mentor program within the Office of Field Services;
- c. assign the Office of Field Services to review electronic records during their inspection, to determine if volunteer/mentor procedures are being followed and to make recommendations for improvements, as necessary;
- d. coordinate the development and implementation of cooperative volunteer/mentor programs within the Department as a whole; and

- e. assign the Office of Field Services to oversee the Citizen Volunteer/Mentor Orientation Program and BII to conduct criminal history records check on the **DC-P 16**.²¹

VII. SUSPENSION DURING AN EMERGENCY

The Secretary of the Department of Corrections may suspend this policy in case of an emergency.

VIII. RIGHTS UNDER THIS POLICY

This policy creates no rights under law.

IX. RELEASE OF INFORMATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF POLICY

- A. This policy does not contain information that impacts the security of Department staff or reentrants and may, therefore, be released to the public.
- B. This policy is to be distributed to all Department staff.

X. CROSS REFERENCES

A. Superseded

This policy replaces the previous versions listed below:

4.20
12/01/2004; 02/01/06; 01/14/08
4.01.21, issued 2/13/15

B. Statutes

- 1. Federal – None
- 2. State

61 Pa.C.S. § 6112 (a)(1) & (a)(4)
37 Pa. Code §§ 77.1, 77.2

C. Department Policies

Board Minutes October 5, 1973
12.4.01.01

²¹ 4-APPFS-1C-03

D. American Correctional Association Standards

4-APPFS-1A-01
4-APPFS-1A-02
4-APPFS-1A-03
4-APPFS-1C-03
4-APPFS-1C-04
4-APPFS-1C-05
4-APPFS-1C-06
4-APPFS-1C-07
4-APPFS-1C-08

E. Management Directives – None

F. Report of the Reentry Policy Council – None