

VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY SERVICE

I. Purpose

This Directive establishes the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policy regarding the Volunteer Community Service program. This policy implements [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 13401](#), Responsibilities of Federal Departments and Agencies with Respect to Volunteer Community Service, April 27, 2006.

II. Scope

This Directive applies to all DHS civilian employees.

III. Authorities

- A. E.O. 13401, "Responsibilities of Federal Departments and Agencies With Respect to Volunteer Community Service," April 27, 2006
- B. U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Memorandum – "Participation of Federal Employees in Volunteer Activities," April 6, 2004, with attached "Guidance on Scheduling Work and Granting Time Off to Permit Federal Employees to Participate in Volunteer Activities"

IV. Definitions

- A. **DHS Liaison for Volunteer Community Service ("DHS Liaison")**: the DHS officer or employee designated by the Secretary of DHS pursuant to E.O. 13401 to serve as the agency liaison for volunteer community service.
- B. **President's Volunteer Service Award**: The President's Council on Service and Civic Participation created the President's Volunteer Service Award program as a way to thank and honor Americans who, by their demonstrated commitment and example, inspire others to engage in volunteer service.

C. **Volunteer Community Service**: Non-obligatory service to a public entity or a private, nonprofit organization that is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community and that is engaged in meeting human, educational, or environmental community needs, including churches and other religious entities and community action agencies.

V. Responsibilities

A. **DHS Liaison for Volunteer Community Service** performs the functions enumerated in E.O. 13401.

B. **DHS Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO)**:

1. Promulgates the DHS policy on the Volunteer Community Service program.
2. Assists the DHS Liaison with the administration of, and advises on issues relating to, the DHS Volunteer Community Program.
3. Provides DHS officials and supervisors with technical assistance and consultative services for complex volunteer community service issues.

C. **DHS Component heads**:

1. Develop specific guidelines on community volunteer service necessary to implement this policy within their Component.
2. Designate a Volunteer Community Service Coordinator to work with the DHS Liaison and oversee implementation of the Volunteer Community Service Program within the Component.
3. Prepare, maintain, and report data concerning the Program which is needed by the DHS Liaison or otherwise required by DHS.

VI. Policies and Requirements

It is DHS policy to support and encourage DHS employees to participate in volunteer community service to the maximum extent feasible, in accordance with the following guidelines.

A. Supervisors are encouraged to use the existing human capital flexibilities in scheduling hours of work and scheduling time off for employees to engage in volunteer community service, while giving due consideration to the effect of the employee's absence or change in duty schedule on work operations and productivity. Supervisors must consider any applicable collective bargaining agreements when determining the appropriate employee scheduling to allow for participation in the Volunteer Community Service Program. Consistent with applicable bargaining agreements, regulations and directives, supervisors may consider:

1. **Alternative Work Schedules**: Flexible and compressed work schedules may be established for employees who wish to engage in volunteer activities during normal working hours. Employees may use credit hours to participate in volunteer activities under a flexible work schedule program, where authorized.
2. **Annual Leave/Compensatory Time Off**: Supervisors should be as accommodating as possible when reviewing and approving requests for annual leave or compensatory time off.
3. **Leave Without Pay**: At the discretion of the supervisor, leave without pay (LWOP) may be granted to employees who wish to engage in volunteer activities during normal work hours.
4. **Excused Absence (Administrative Leave)**: Component heads or designees may approve up to 40 hours of administrative leave each leave year for employees to perform voluntary community service when the absence is directly related to the mission of the Department of Homeland Security in either of the following mission areas:
 - a. **Prevention and Protection**: Engage in volunteer activities that will involve detecting, deterring, and mitigating threats to our homeland, including training in prevention and protection. This includes volunteer activities to help safeguard our people and their freedoms, critical infrastructure, and property from acts of terrorism, natural disasters, or other emergencies.
 - b. **Preparedness and Response**: Engage in volunteer activities that involve planning, coordinating, or participating in responses to acts of terrorism, natural disasters, or other emergencies, including training in preparedness and response. This includes participating in national, state, local, and private sector efforts to restore services and rebuild communities after acts of terrorism, natural disasters, or other emergencies.

B. While supervisors may encourage employees to become more involved in volunteer activities, 5 U.S.C. 6132 provides that employees may not be coerced for the purpose of interfering with their legal rights under flexible and compressed work schedules. In addition, supervisors should ensure that decisions do not violate Prohibited Personnel Practices (5 U.S.C. 2302).

C. Supervisors and employees must ensure that employee volunteer activities do not violate conflict of interest laws, ethics regulations, or Hatch Act restrictions.

D. Employees may not use Government facilities or equipment for other than authorized purposes (5 CFR 2635.704). Employees should consult the Office of the General Counsel servicing their Component for information about what is authorized.

E. Employees who perform mission-related DHS-sponsored or skill-enhancing volunteer activities while they are on excused absence may be covered by 5 U.S.C. Chapter 81, Compensation for Work Injuries. Other kinds of absences would likely not be covered by these provisions.

F. The President's Volunteer Service Award may be used to recognize employees who participate in volunteer activities.

VII. Questions

Refer questions or concerns regarding this Directive to the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO).



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Deputy Under Secretary for Management

19 March 2008
Date