



Penn Northeast Conference

# VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL POLICIES For MINISTRY TEAM VOLUNTEERS

## 1. Purpose

Living out the Gospel and our baptismal vows to love God and our neighbor are the foundations for volunteering in the ministries of the Conference.

The purpose of these policies and procedures is to provide the Penn Northeast Conference and the people who volunteer their services in Conference Ministry Team Volunteer positions with an understanding of their obligations and responsibilities towards each other.

## 2. Definitions

**Honorarium** means a one-time payment made to a person to reward or recognize them for a past voluntary service; or for services provided that would not traditionally attract a fee.

**Volunteer** means a person who participates in a Penn Northeast Conference event for the benefit of the organization and others.

Volunteers:

- do not receive payment for the services they provide; and
- must be formally recognized by the Conference Minister in the case of Ministry Teams or the Governing Board in the case of Governance Committees and be authorized to act on their behalf; and
- include, but are not limited to, people:
  - Holding office such as members of the Conference Board or Committees;
  - Serving as Coordinators of Ministry Teams of the Conference
- may not serve on both the Governing Board and as the Coordinator of a Conference Ministry Team. (Those who are currently serving on the Conference Board may remain on the Conference Board until the end of their current term but then will be asked to serve in one capacity (Governance or Ministry) or the other.

## 3. Honorariums

Honorariums cannot be paid to a person on a regular and/or systematic basis. Nor can their service be contingent upon payment of an honorarium.

## 4. Rights and Responsibilities

Both the volunteer and the Conference have responsibilities to each other. The volunteer offers to provide services and the Conference covenants to provide support to the volunteer as they engage in their service.

In return, each has the right to some basic expectations of the other.

Volunteers have the right to:

- Be asked for their permission before any position-related references, police or other background checks are conducted.
- A task or job worthwhile to them
- Know the purpose and “ground rules” of both the Conference and the wider Church.
- Appropriate orientation and training
- A safe place to volunteer their services in and suitable tools.
- Negotiate work assignments based on their needs, skills, and abilities.
- Reimbursement of agreed expenses.
- Be heard and make suggestions.
- To resign from their volunteer role.

The Conference has a right to:

- Expect the volunteer to fulfill the responsibilities to which they commit.
- Select the best volunteer for the job by interviewing and screening all applicants. This might include reference and police checks and, where appropriate, a working with children and/or vulnerable persons’ clearance for all roles that involve direct face to face contact unsupervised with children and/or vulnerable persons.
- Expect volunteers to adhere to their position descriptions and the Conference’s behavioral covenants and ethical practices
- Ensure that volunteers are not serving on the Governing Board, a Governance Committee, or as the Coordinator of a Ministry Team to avoid conflicts of interest.
- Expect volunteers to undertake training provided for them and follow directions in relation to work health and safety.
- Expect loyalty to the Conference and offer only constructive criticism.
- Expect clear and open communication from the volunteer.
- Negotiate work assignments.
- Release volunteers under certain circumstances.

## **6. Procedures for Engaging Volunteers**

*The Conference can be held vicariously liable for the actions of its volunteers. It is therefore imperative that only persons who are formally recognized and authorized by the Conference Minister or an established Conference Ministry Team be permitted to volunteer with the Conference.*

### **General considerations:**

The Conference Minister and the Conference Ministry Team must:

1. Formally recognize and authorize all volunteers; and
  - a. Establish and communicate policies for the recruitment and engagement of volunteers; and

- b. Inform volunteers of the Conference's policies and procedures; and
  - c. Have clear lines of accountability and authority for persons appointed to volunteer roles; and
  - d. Confirm lines of accountability and authority with volunteers through specific job descriptions.
2. The use of volunteers should not compete with, undermine, or displace paid work.
  3. Legislation relating to anti-discrimination and equal opportunity also applies to volunteers.
  4. The Conference has responsibility to ensure the health and safety of volunteers, so far as reasonably practical.

**Before engaging a volunteer:**

1. Ask the volunteer to complete a "*Volunteer Application Form*" and attach copies of relevant documentation.
2. If individuals are volunteering with children or vulnerable people, they must have a PA Child Abuse Clearance, a PA State Police Criminal Record Check, and/or the FBI Fingerprint Check. Unless a volunteer holds these clearances they cannot volunteer in these Conference programs
3. Assess the "*Volunteer Application Form*" and determine whether the person is suitable to undertake the voluntary duties.
4. Make volunteers fully aware of the policies of the Conference including those pertaining to their any special assignments.
5. As volunteers are not mandatory reporters of children and young people at risk of harm, provide a system which allows volunteers to share any such concerns with a representative of the Conference, so that all concerns will be followed up.
6. Provide volunteers with orientation and training. This should include training about the tasks required of the volunteer, how supervision will take place, emergency procedures, confidentiality, job descriptions, child protection matters, and code of behavior for volunteers.

The Conference's liability insurance policy does not cover volunteer's private vehicles. It is essential that volunteers are made aware of this and that any private vehicle driven by a volunteer in the course of their providing voluntary services must be comprehensively insured to provide a reasonable level of insurance coverage for the volunteer.

**During the course of the voluntary relationship:**

1. Volunteers receive no ongoing monetary rewards.
2. The Conference should provide recognition of the services provided by volunteers. This should be done in a form that is meaningful to the volunteer, such as presentation of certificates or "thank you" celebrations as long as it is not "payment in kind", such as food or other material goods as this can blur ethical boundaries and may create employment obligations.

3. The Conference should provide reimbursement for "*out of pocket*" expenses. The procedure for claiming reimbursement should be set out in writing by the Conference.
  - a. Any "*payments*" to volunteers for out of pocket expenses must be made after the fact; are to be substantiated by receipts and are not to be taxed. In this instance volunteers should not receive a statement of earnings.
4. If a Ministry Team volunteer is not satisfactorily meeting the requirements set out in the list of duties, these are proper steps to be taken:
  - a. A formal verbal warning about performance issues will be given and documented.
  - b. If the volunteer's performance does not improve a formal written warning about performance issues will be given and documented.
  - c. If the volunteer's performance does not subsequently improve, the volunteer may be terminated.
  - d. An appeal of any termination may be requested and the appeal will be heard by the Staff and Personnel Committee. Decisions of the Staff and Personnel Committee are final.
  - e. If an egregious behavioral or ethical issues arises, the volunteer may be immediately terminated from their position
5. Volunteers are required to respect the confidentiality of the people with whom they work.