

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Division: Finance and Management
Responsible Office: Human Resources

Date Established: 10/21/2026
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POLICY SUMMARY

This policy is designed to enable Buffalo State University to appoint volunteers, reduce volunteer risk and protect the interests of the University, its volunteers, and the community it serves.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Buffalo State University to appoint volunteers for the occasional use in conduct of its normal operations and for Buffalo State-sponsored programs and activities. All volunteer appointments must be reviewed and approved by Human Resource Management. Buffalo State University volunteers will not perform responsibilities generally assigned to employees represented by collective bargaining agreements. Volunteers of state-sponsored programs appointed in accordance with the procedures outlined below are covered under NYS Worker's Compensation Law and may be entitled to the protections afforded by section 17 of the Public Officers Law. Under section 17 in the event a volunteer is sued in their individual capacity in a civil suit in state or federal court for acts that occurred within the scope of their duties, they would be represented by the Attorney General's Office and under most circumstances would be indemnified if there is a settlement or an award of damages. Volunteers are not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act and are not considered employees for any purpose. Therefore, they are not eligible for compensation or any University benefits as a result of this volunteer association.

1. Departments wishing to utilize volunteers must submit a signed Volunteer Appointment Form describing:
 - a. nature of the work to be performed
 - b. qualifications of the proposed volunteer
 - c. duration of the assignment
 - d. person responsible for supervising the volunteer
2. The department supervisor requesting to use a volunteer is responsible for reviewing the appointment form for completeness and reasonableness, authorizing the request, and submitting it to the appropriate divisional vice president.

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3. The Volunteer Appointment Form must be reviewed by the divisional vice president for reasonableness and need. If the appointment is not approved, it should be returned to the department indicating reasons for non-approval.
4. Human Resource Management has the overall responsibility for administration and authorization to appoint volunteers. The following criteria will be used to determine if the person is eligible for volunteer status:
 - a. Duration of appointment is greater than 3 days, and not greater than 1 year
 - b. Nature of the assignment (a risk assessment based on the duties to be performed)
 - c. Guest speakers and public speakers are not considered volunteers
 - d. Volunteers must be 18 years or older
5. Human Resource Management is responsible for:
 - a. verifying the information contained in the appointment form for completeness and appropriateness of appointment
 - b. notifying divisional vice president and supervisor of the approval status
 - c. authorizing volunteer appointments, providing volunteers with an appointment letter, applicable university policies, and required trainings
 - d. maintaining official records of all campus volunteers according to State regulations. The University will perform pre-appointment background checks on all new volunteers and volunteers reappointed within three years of their last appointment which may include identification, educational credential(s) confirmation, nationwide criminal conviction verification, sexual offender registry status, motor vehicle, and employment background. When processing the volunteer appointment, Human Resource Management will require the volunteer to show proper identification (driver's license, school picture identification or any other form of picture identification) containing a current address. Upon completion of all pre-employment paperwork including volunteer application, oath of office form, and background check release form, a Bengal ID card, parking pass, and network account may be issued.
7. Human Resource Management will maintain a list of all campus volunteers according to State regulations.
8. A volunteer appointment may be terminated at any time with no explanation and without prior notice. It is the responsibility of the supervisor or the department head to notify Human Resource Management at the time a volunteer is no longer active.
9. Volunteers separating from service must return their Bengal ID card to the University. Supervisors must follow the Separation Checklist.

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DEFINITIONS

Buffalo State University volunteers are uncompensated individuals who perform services directly related to the business of the University for their benefit, to support the humanitarian, charitable or public service activities of the volunteer, or to gain experience in specific endeavors. To qualify as a University volunteer, an individual must be willing to provide service according to the procedures of this policy. An individual who provides services to an entity other than the University that may be related to the University, such as the Research Foundation for SUNY or Child Care Center, will not be considered a University volunteer

RESPONSIBILITIES

Buffalo State University volunteers are expected to abide by University policies and procedures and external regulations that govern their actions, including but not limited to those relating to ethical behavior, safety, confidentiality, protected health information, computer use, financial responsibility, and drug use. Volunteers will complete required compliance trainings within 30 days of their appointment date and annually thereafter.

APPLICABILITY

All units that appoint volunteers
Human Resource

RELATED PROCEDURES

[Volunteer Appointment Guidelines](#)

[Volunteer Appointment Form](#)

[Volunteer Application Form](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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APPROVAL

President's Approval 08/07/2025

REVISION HISTORY

Date of change: 05/04/2026

Brief description of edit: Adapted to ADA compliant template