



VOLUNTEER/INTERN HANDBOOK

EXPECT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

**Make an Impact in Your Community
Gain Hands-On Experience
Explore Your Interests
Make New Friends
Learn About Government**

Pinellas County Government

THANK YOU

for becoming a VIP — Volunteer in Pinellas!

We rely on YOU — our dedicated volunteers and interns committed to making a difference — to help us effectively serve citizens and visitors of Pinellas County.

Volunteers in Pinellas (VIPs) are dedicated and prepared to serve the citizens of Pinellas County. Our VIPs span a variety of ages, occupations and backgrounds, and have a multitude of skills. There's a role for everyone.

We want to match your interests, needs and abilities with exciting volunteer and intern opportunities. Matching these diverse offerings to available volunteer and intern opportunities creates a rich and mutually beneficial partnership between you and the community. We want to create a meaningful and genuinely rewarding experience for you.

Once you are placed, your supervisor will hold an individual or group orientation to review department policies and procedures. Training will be provided if required.

You may be subject to a background check depending on your assignment.

If you are under the age of 18, you will have adult supervision and must have a signed and notarized parental consent form.

Welcome to the VIP family, and thank you for making a difference!

WELCOME TO THE VIP TEAM

Dear Volunteers and Interns,

As a Pinellas County volunteer or intern, you join a special group of individuals dedicated to serving fellow citizens. It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to our VIP family and thank you in advance for the outstanding impact you will make in the community.

Pinellas County Volunteer Services was founded in 1992 and today is more than 500 volunteers and interns strong. Our success is due to the dedication of individuals like you who give your time, energy and talents.

Our volunteers and interns have one thing in common — a commitment to make a difference. During your time here, your efforts will have a direct impact on providing a high level of service to the citizens of the County. We recognize that your time is very valuable, and we are grateful you chose to contribute to Pinellas County Government.

There are many volunteer and intern opportunities within Pinellas County. Volunteering is a great way to learn new skills, serve your community and meet new people. We ask you to log your hours in GivePulse to ensure you are eligible for various awards and have appropriate workers' compensation coverage as a volunteer.

Remember to take the time to get to know your site coordinators, fellow volunteers and interns, County employees, the citizens you serve, and most importantly, have fun!

Pinellas County Volunteer Services



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Volunteer Services Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Pinellas County Volunteer Services program is to promote, recruit and place citizen volunteers in their County government and facilitate the involvement of Pinellas County employees in community events and projects.

STATEMENT OF ETHICS

We, the volunteers and interns of Pinellas County, as providers of public service are committed to the highest standards of personal integrity, honesty and competence.



To this end we will...

- ... Assist in providing open and accessible government by giving courteous, responsive service to all citizens equally.*
- ... Accept only authorized compensation for the performance of our duties and respectfully decline any offers of gifts or gratuities from those we encounter through our volunteer service.*
- ... Disclose or report any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.*
- ... Comply with all laws and regulations applicable to the County and impartially apply them to everyone.*
- ... Neither apply nor accept improper influences, favoritism or personal bias.*
- ... Not handle any cash in the gift shops or elsewhere while in the role of a volunteer or intern.*
- ... Use County funds and resources efficiently, including materials, equipment and time.*
- ... Respect and protect the privileged information to which we have access to in the course of our duties.*
- ... Represent responsible government, acting at all times to merit public confidence in ourselves and Pinellas County.*

Your rights as a volunteer/intern

You have the right to be a volunteer/intern regardless of your military status, political affiliation, age, race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, religion, disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law.

You have the right to a competent and thorough interview and an assignment appropriate to your interests, background and abilities.

You have the right to know and learn about the department's policies, programs, employees and plans. You also have the right to receive orientation, ongoing training and supervision.

You have the right to offer suggestions and be heard.

You have the right to an evaluation of your performance. You also have the right to help evaluate the program you serve.

Your responsibilities as a volunteer/intern

Be a dependable team player. Support your volunteer/intern group and staff. This means working well with the public, keeping an open mind, and being flexible and willing to learn and try new things.

Be honest and clear during the initial interview about your interests, skills, expectations and availability.

Be aware of the agency's purpose and the requirements and expectations of your assignment. You may be entrusted with confidential information. It is your responsibility to respect and maintain that confidentiality.

Be dependable, reliable and follow policies and procedures. Discuss what you like and don't like about your position with your supervisor. Participate in training and accept the guidance and direction of your supervisor. If you must be absent, notify your supervisor as far in advance as possible.



BENEFITS OF BEING A VIP

You may use the County's Wellness Center in Clearwater by presenting your badge after attending a short orientation.

You may join the Pinellas Federal Credit Union by presenting your volunteer/intern badge.

You may be eligible for learning opportunities through Pinellas County, when applicable.

You may attend monthly wellness webinars.



Internship Opportunities

Through internships, Pinellas County provides valuable and practical hands-on working and learning experience. High school and college students currently enrolled, in good standing, in an educational program that has a formal academic student internship component may apply for an internship. The internship has to be for academic credit or offered through the school's program.

Recognition

Your contributions and time are valuable. To recognize your efforts, we have implemented a rewards program based on contributed hours. We hold departmental appreciation events throughout the year and highlight our volunteers during National Volunteer Month in April.



ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

It is the policy of Pinellas County to maintain a work environment free from verbal or physical conduct that unreasonably harasses, disturbs, or interferes with a volunteer's performance or that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment based on one's race, color, national origin, religion, gender (including gender identity or gender expression and sexual harassment), sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, age, political affiliation, military status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law.

This policy prohibits harassment that impacts the workplace, no matter where or in what medium or forum it occurs.

Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Unwanted physical contact or offensive conduct of a sexual nature, including flirtations, advances, or propositions;
- Verbal harassment about an individual's gender or sexual interest, sexual innuendos, and offensive jokes or descriptions of personal sexual conduct;
- Demeaning, degrading, or insulting comments about a person's physical appearance or any characteristic enumerated above;
- Displaying photos or other media which are demeaning, insulting, intimidating, or sexually suggestive; and
- Demeaning, insulting, sexually suggestive, or otherwise offensive written, recorded, or electronically transmitted messages.

If you experience harassment, document the incident by writing the date and time of the incident, what was said and done, who was present, where it occurred and witnesses of the incident.

Report the incident orally and/or in writing to your supervisor, another management member, or Human Resources.

[Read the full Anti-Harassment Policy.](#)

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Pinellas County expects all who enter our workplace to be treated with dignity and respect. It is the policy of Pinellas County to address repetitive behavior or persistent conduct a reasonable party would find threatening, intimidating, abusive, coercive, humiliating, and/or malicious. This policy prohibits such conduct whether in the workplace or elsewhere if it impacts the workplace. This policy is intended to address such “workplace bullying” whether group bullying, peer-to-peer bullying, supervisor to subordinate bullying, subordinate to supervisor bullying, or bullying of visitors to our workplace.

Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to, repetitive or persistent:

- Verbal bullying: Ridiculing or maligning a person or his or her family, hurtful or humiliating name calling, persistent or constant public criticism, abusive, or offensive remarks;
- Physical bullying: Pushing, shoving, kicking, poking, tripping; threatening physical contact or damage to a person’s work area or property;
- Gesture bullying: Nonverbal threatening or obscene gestures, or threatening looks;
- Power bullying (could also be labeled favoritism): Applying made up or arbitrary rules to an individual, selectively enforcing workplace rules, threatening or intimidating individuals, preventing access to necessary information, consultation, training, resources, or other opportunities;
- Exclusion bullying: Socially or physically excluding or disregarding a person from work-related activities, such as appropriate meetings and team events.

If you experience bullying, report the incident orally and/or in writing to your supervisor, another management member, or Human Resources.

[Read the full Anti-Bullying Policy.](#)

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY



Pinellas County's Drug-Free Workplace Policy (DFWP) prohibits the use or possession of alcohol and illegal drugs while you are volunteering with Pinellas County. You are required to sign a statement agreeing to Pinellas County's DFWP.

The Pinellas County DFWP prohibits volunteers/interns from:

- Use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation or sale of controlled substances or drugs on County property or in County-supplied vehicles.
- Use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation or sale of controlled substances or drugs off County property during working and non-working hours.
- Testing positive for alcohol or drugs under the provisions of the substance abuse testing procedures in conjunction with a reasonable suspicion, as defined in Section V of the DFWP.
- Refusing to consent to alcohol or drug testing when requested by management.
- Interfering in any manner with specimen collection procedures.
- Use of alcohol during breaks or lunch periods.
- Use of alcohol while off duty wearing a County uniform with County insignia or a County ID.
- Any violation of the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988.

[Read the full Drug-Free Workplace Policy.](#)

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY



Pinellas County is committed to ensuring a safe and secure work environment for all employees, volunteers, customers, and visitors. Workplace violence is prohibited and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Workplace violence is any act or threat/expression of physical violence, or other disruptive conduct that has the purpose or effect of threatening or creating reasonable fear for the safety or well-being of individuals in the work environment. The work environment includes all Pinellas County properties and locations where employees and volunteers are engaged in County business. It can affect and involve employees, volunteers, customers, and visitors.

Behaviors that violate this policy may include, but are not limited to:

- Knowingly or intentionally touching another person in a rude, insolent, or angry manner.
- Engaging in a course of conduct involving verbal, non-verbal or physical harassment of another person that would cause a reasonable person to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, or threatened.
- Communicating a threat to another person with intent to influence the other person to engage in conduct against their will or intentionally communicating a threat to another person resulting in fear or retaliation for a prior lawful act.
- Other harassing behaviors such as stalking or offensive gestures.

The County will respond to any and all complaints alleging violent workplace conduct. If you feel you are a victim of violent workplace conduct, you should advise your supervisor, another management member, or Human Resources immediately. All reports will be investigated promptly and thoroughly, and appropriate actions will be taken.

[Read the full Workplace Violence Policy.](#)

Service Animals

Service animals are permitted, subject to the conditions and limitations provided by Florida law and the Americans with Disabilities Act. According to Florida Statute 413.08, service animals:

- Must be dogs (or miniature horses in Florida)
- Must receive specialized training to perform a specific task or tasks for an individual with a disability

Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

Federal law requires service animals to be allowed in any building or facility where members of the public, program participants, customers, or clients are allowed, even if the business has a "no pets" policy. Service animals are not pets.

Interacting with the Media

If volunteers/interns are confronted or approached by media, they should notify their site coordinator or the nearest staff member. Staff is permitted to provide media with the On-Call Public Information Officer (PIO) business cards.

Hazard Communication Standard/Right-to-Know Law

Important details concerning 29 CFR 1910.1200

Volunteers/interns have a right to know about exposure to hazardous/toxic substances in the workplace.

Departments will provide volunteers/interns with information about the hazardous/toxic substances with which they work and will train volunteers/interns in safe handling practices and emergency procedures.

Volunteers/interns must not be knowingly exposed to any unnecessary danger or hazards in the workplace and must not perform any functions requiring a license or certification unless they have a current license or certification to do so.

VOLUNTEER/INTERN POLICIES

The following basic policies apply to all categories of volunteers and interns. Volunteers and interns:

- Perform duties within the rules set by the responsible supervisor.
- Perform tasks assigned by their supervisor and approved by the responsible administrator.
- Must maintain strict confidentiality concerning any information to which they may have access within their volunteer/intern duties. In some cases, confidentiality agreements are required.
- May not use information generally unavailable to the public and obtained by reason of their volunteer/intern positions for the personal benefit of themselves or others.
- Must be 18 years of age or older, except youth volunteers and interns who must have adult supervision by a long-term volunteer or a Pinellas County employee.
- Shall sign in and out, either electronically in our volunteer management platform GivePulse or on the Volunteer Daily Log. This record is maintained by all departments or facilities to record volunteer/intern names, dates, hours of service and tasks assigned.
- Will receive ID cards from their department upon completion of orientation and must pass a background check.
- May not volunteer/intern to perform services in their own department if they are an employee or public officer.

I loved the experience so much, I decided to become a full-time Emergency Management employee with Pinellas County Government, and I enjoy every day of it!

- Spencer S.

Emergency Management Coordinator

REPORTING AN INJURY

Risk Management staff is available to assist you with any questions regarding a work-related injury. Contact Risk Management at (727) 464-3664.

Volunteers

If you are injured while performing your volunteer task, call 911 immediately if there is a medical emergency. If an injury is NOT a medical emergency:

- 1) Notify your supervisor immediately.
- 2) Call our workers' compensation vendor, Davies, at (877) 879-9296. This dedicated reporting line for Pinellas County Government is available 24/7.

Interns

Interns are NOT covered by workers' compensation. If you are injured while performing your intern task, call 911 immediately if there is a medical emergency.

Other Safety Guidelines

For any safety-related questions, contact Risk Management.

Volunteers/interns may operate a County motor vehicle after successfully completing training required by Risk Management. Upon notification, Risk Management will review the person's driving record to verify the individual has an acceptable record.

Volunteers/interns must be trained and certified on any equipment before being allowed to operate equipment independently.

When personal protective equipment is required, the volunteer/intern must either provide his/her own or be provided the equipment and trained in its use by the department prior to engaging in any such work.

Volunteers/interns may not carry firearms while performing volunteer service on behalf of Pinellas County.

Volunteers/interns are welcome to sign up for safety training offered by Risk Management. Contact your supervisor to learn more.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Log Your Hours

All volunteers and interns are required to sign in and sign out when performing duties for the County. This may be done either electronically in our volunteer management platform GivePulse or by utilizing a log sheet and turning it in to the volunteer site coordinator.

Emergency Preparedness

It is critical for you to know the correct action to take before, during, and after an emergency or natural disaster. The official Hurricane Season is from June 1 to November 30. Please ask your supervisor to provide you with:

- A review of your department's emergency preparedness plan
- Who to contact before, during, and after an event
- Alternative work schedules
- When to report back to the site location

Use of Social Media and Photos

We understand that many of our volunteers and interns are on social media. It is important for our employees, volunteers and interns to present themselves in a professional manner. Please abide by the following:

- Volunteers and interns may not provide posts or comments on behalf of Pinellas County Government on social networking sites.
- Volunteers and interns shall not disclose any confidential or proprietary information of the County on any personal social media platforms, including the use of County logos or other branding.
- Volunteers and interns shall not create unauthorized social media sites that intend to represent or present itself as a County-sponsored social media platform.



VOLUNTEER/INTERN AGREEMENT



By reading this handbook and signing a Commitment and Placement Form, you agree to the following:

- The volunteer/intern understands that they need to enter their hours in GivePulse on a regular basis.
- The volunteer/intern will begin their assignment within 1 month of passing the background check.
- The volunteer knows how to report volunteer injuries and understands that injuries incurred while volunteering for Pinellas County Government may be covered by workers' compensation.
- The intern understands that injuries incurred while interning for Pinellas County Government will NOT be covered by workers' compensation.
- The volunteer/intern understands that after 6 months of no activity in GivePulse, they may be considered inactive and may be subject to a re-onboarding process.
- The volunteer/intern irrevocably consents to and authorizes the use and reproduction of any and all photographs and/or video recordings taken of him/her for any purpose whatsoever, without compensation. All photographic images shall constitute Pinellas County's property, solely and completely.
- The volunteer/intern agrees to abide by the policies of the County agency to which they are assigned.





Pinellas County Volunteer Services

400 South Fort Harrison Avenue

Clearwater, FL 33756

PH: (727) 464-3367

TDD: (727) 464-4062

www.pinellas.gov/volunteer

www.pinellas.gov/intern

www.pinellas.gov/givepulse

4/9/26

