



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL VOLUNTEER/MENTORING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Community Engagement and School Volunteer/Mentoring Programs is to encourage and promote volunteerism within the state and our communities. There are two types of volunteer opportunities, school-based programs, and community-based programs. Both programs are important and meaningful commitments that build relationships and trust with community stakeholders.

School Volunteer/Mentoring Program: Serving as a School Volunteer or Mentor enables us to play an active role in shaping the lives of young people, which could help them reach their highest potential.

Community Engagement Program: Serving in community-based initiatives with community-based partners helps us advance positive outcomes for clients, their families, and communities.

Eligible employees who are approved to participate in these programs shall be granted leave of absence with pay to provide school/mentoring and/or community engagement services during working hours. The Community Engagement Policy is in accordance with G.L. c. 211D, Section 4. The School Volunteer/Mentoring Program is with G.L. c. 29, §31E.

B. ELIGIBILITY

1. All employees who have been employed by the Committee for Public Counsel Services for at least six (6) months and have applied for and received approval from their office/unit head, may participate in the Community Engagement and/or School Volunteer/Mentoring Program.
2. Part-time employees are eligible to participate on a prorated basis, i.e., the maximum number of volunteer hours allowed per month are pro-rated in accordance with the number of hours an employee works per day.
3. Employees who are on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) may not be eligible to participate in a volunteer and/or mentoring program.

C. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **Community Engagement Leave:** Leave that permits eligible employees to provide volunteer services to community programs with the express purpose of building relationships and trust with community stakeholders to improve case and life outcomes for clients and to strengthen the families and communities.
2. **Maximum Allowable Leave (monthly):** The maximum number of leave hours is seven (7) hours or the equivalent of one workday per month (pro-rated for part-time employees). Depending on the needs of the agency and the needs of the programs, the employee may volunteer for one full workday or in increments of two half-days, or for shorter periods, which do not, in total, exceed the equivalent of one workday, per month.

IMPORTANT: The Maximum Allowable Leave is the equivalent of one workday per month, even in cases where employees choose to participate in more than one volunteer program during a given month. If an employee volunteers more than the maximum allowable leave, they must use other accrued leave such as vacation or personal leave.

3. **Mentoring Program:** A community or school-based program to provide young people with "one on one" mentors, i.e., caring adults who are willing to provide support and encouragement to young people who are at-risk. Mentoring opportunities must be secured through the Mass Mentoring program, <https://www.massmentors.org>.
4. **School Volunteer Program:** A program that allows eligible state employees to volunteer within a Massachusetts public school, under requirements established by the school administrator and in accordance with G.L. c. 29, §31E.
5. **Volunteer/Mentoring Leave:** Leave that permits eligible employees to provide volunteer services for an approved program during working hours without loss of salary or benefits.

D. APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

To participate in a volunteer/mentoring program the employee must find an eligible program, fill out the Verification of CPCS Volunteer Services Form, and obtain approval to participate. Forms are available on the intranet at HR Forms <https://intranet.publiccounsel.net/hr/human-resource-forms/>

1. Finding an Eligible Program

- a. Community Engagement Volunteer: Any employee who wishes to participate in a Community Engagement Program should identify a community-based partner that advances positive outcomes for clients, their families and communities.
 - Community-based programs should improve case and life outcomes for clients and to strengthen the families and communities.
 - Some examples include, but are not limited to: Right to Know, food pantries, social service non-profits, courts, local government, and health care providers.
- b. School Mentoring Program: Any employee who wishes to participate in a Mentoring Program should identify a specific program listed within the MassMentoring program, <https://www.massmentors.org/>.
- c. School Volunteer: For any employee who is interested in volunteering at a public school, they should contact the school administrator to discuss any requirements.
- d. Inform Program of Approval Requirements: Employees should inform the chosen program of the following:
 - i. CPCS must approve the leave before the employee can proceed to volunteer.
 - ii. If CPCS approval is received, prospective volunteer/mentors must agree to follow all screening procedures (including a background check) required by the chosen volunteer program.
 - iii. Leave must occur during the employee's regular work hours.
 - iv. The maximum allowable volunteer leave is seven (7) hours per month. (If the employee wants to use more time than seven hours a month the employee must use other accrued leave such as vacation or personal time.)

2. Leave Request Approval

- a. The employee must discuss their interest in the Community Engagement and/or School Volunteer/Mentoring Program with their office/unit head and submit a Verification of CPCS Volunteer Services Form.

- b. The office/unit head reviews the request and either approves or disapproves it, taking into consideration the following criteria:
 - i. Employee eligibility, at least 6 months of employment and the employee is not on a PIP
 - ii. Operational needs of the office/unit
 - iii. The request falls outside the program guidelines
- c. The office/unit head approves the requested leave by checking the applicable box on the request form and signing it.
- d. If the request is disapproved, the supervisor must state the reason for disapproval and forward the form to Human Resources.

3. Verification of Volunteer Services

- a. When the employee has completed their volunteer service, they must verify their volunteer hours performed. To do so, an authorized person from the volunteer/mentor program must sign the Verification of CPCS Volunteer Services Form. The employee must submit the form to HR for review and confirmation.

E. RECORD KEEPING

An employee must submit a Verification of CPCS Volunteer Services Form to their office/unit head each time services are provided. Specific information regarding the date and time of the volunteer/mentoring session is to be included on the form. An authorized person of the chosen volunteer/mentoring program must sign this form.

On timesheets, employees should enter the hours spent volunteering, up to seven hours/month, using the payroll code VOL. The office/unit head must review the reported hours and approve as appropriate. A copy of the completed form should be forwarded to Human Resources.

F. EMPLOYEE STATUS

An employee who is granted paid leave time pursuant to this program shall not be considered to be acting within the scope of employment for the purposes of Chapter 152 of the Massachusetts General Laws (Worker's Compensation); nor shall the Commonwealth be liable for any acts or omissions of said employee while released for volunteer/mentoring leave purposes. Employees are expected to follow the rules and regulations of volunteer/mentoring programs in which they participate.



VERIFICATION OF CPCS VOLUNTEER SERVICES

NOTE: Please submit the completed form to Human Resources and enter code “VOL” on your timesheet. The maximum allowable leave is 7 hours per month.

PART 1 - Request Form (to be completed by CPCS employee)	
Employee Name:	Division:
Contact Phone #:	Office Location:
Type of volunteer organization in Massachusetts (Check one) School/Mentoring Volunteer Community Engagement Program	
Volunteer Organization Information Name: Contact: Date of Volunteer Service, schedule if known: Describe your volunteer duties to be performed: Address: Telephone: I verify that if approved to participate in a CPCS Volunteer Service Program I will follow all guidelines and regulations of CPCS. I further agree to follow all screening procedures (including a background check) required by the chosen volunteer program. I understand the maximum allowable leave is 7 hours per month. Employee Signature Date	

Part 2 – Office/Unit Head Review of Request to Volunteer (to be completed by Office/Unit Head)	
Request approved	Request denied
<u>Reason(s) for denial (check one or more):</u> Employee not eligible Operational needs of CPCS Other (describe): _____	
_____ Office/Unit Head Signature	_____ Date
Part 3 - Verification of Volunteer Services (to be completed by Volunteer Organization)	
<u>Please ensure that all fields above are completed by the volunteer before signing.</u> This is to certify that the above-named employee of the Committee for Public Counsel Services provided the following services as a volunteer/mentor (please give brief description of the volunteer service provided): Service performed at: (Program Name/Location) On (Date): _____ Time arrived: _____ Time Departed: _____ Total hrs.: _____ I certify that the volunteer has not received any compensation or reimbursement by the organization or entity for the volunteer work performed. This is not a political organization. In addition, volunteer activities do not promote religion as the Massachusetts State Constitution (Amendment XVIII, § 2) prohibits public funds from supporting religious institutions. _____ Volunteer Organization Signature _____ Date	
Part 4 - HR Confirmation of Completed Volunteer Services (to be completed by HR)	
The employee is eligible to use the VOL hours referenced herein. _____ Human Resources Department _____ Date	