



VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Office of Volunteer and Civic Engagement

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INTRODUCTION

AARP volunteers and staff are the human resources of the Association. They bring their knowledge, skills, expertise, and dedication to the work of the Association on an ongoing basis. Working together, in partnership, volunteers and staff serve the members; move the Association closer to its vision; carry out its mission and purpose; and, achieve its goals.

AARP recognizes the valuable contributions of volunteers. AARP's purposes are best achieved by the active involvement of volunteers in the governance, management, implementation and evaluation of its many programs, initiatives, and activities. To this end, AARP encourages the involvement of its members as volunteers throughout all levels of the Association.

The policies provide overall guidance and a framework for the roles, responsibilities, and behaviors of AARP volunteers and the staff responsible for volunteer activities. Non-compliance with these policies may result in dismissal.

These policies are designed to be governing principles, broadly describing what a volunteer may expect of AARP, and what AARP expects of its volunteers. It can be challenging to create policies that address every situation. To ensure that the intent of these policies is implemented, standard operational procedures have been developed, and are available as a separate document.

For the purposes of this publication, we define **policies and standard operational procedures** as follows:

- **Policies** provide guidance as to *what* is expected by the organization, and often will include a rationale for the expectations.
- **Procedures** provide detailed direction as to *how* to carry out the policies. Because of the level of detail, procedures are not automatically provided to every volunteer. However, any volunteer who wishes to see the operational procedures may contact his/her supervisor.

Amendment of the Policies

These policies may be amended at any time. Suggestions for amendment may be submitted in writing to the Office of Volunteer and Civic Engagement.

VISION STATEMENT

A society in which everyone ages with dignity and purpose and in which AARP helps people fulfill their goals and dreams.

MISSION STATEMENT

AARP is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all as we age. We lead positive social change and deliver value to members through information, advocacy, and service.

PHILOSOPHY OF VOLUNTEERISM

AARP believes

. . . that volunteer service is a unique and valuable contribution that benefits both the volunteer and society.

. . . that AARP volunteers, working in partnership with paid staff and community colleagues, are a necessary and vital force in achieving the Association's vision, mission, and strategic goals.

. . . that volunteers contribute to the Association's goal of attracting, developing, and maintaining the diversity of people and programs that reflect our communities and their needs.

. . . that it is crucial to match the skills, abilities, interest, and availability of volunteers to the tasks and opportunities that advance the Association goals.

. . . that volunteering for AARP is one of many paths by which members can become connected, involved, and engaged with their Association.

. . . that a strong commitment to supporting and recognizing volunteers is essential in helping them reach their potential for service.

AARP VOLUNTEER

An individual is considered to be an AARP volunteer if he or she meets all of the following:

- Working on a project directly sponsored by AARP
- Registered as an AARP volunteer (entered in the Volunteer Management Information System (VMIS) or listed on an AARP volunteer roster)
- Supervised by another AARP volunteer or AARP staff member

VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Commitment to Diversity

Diversity is the collective differences and similarities of our members, volunteers, employees and business partners. AARP volunteers and staff will demonstrate their commitment to attracting, developing, and sustaining a diverse volunteer force at all levels of the association.

Freedom from Discrimination

All AARP volunteers will receive equal opportunity and treatment throughout recruitment, appointment, training, and service. There will be no discrimination based on age, economic status, sex, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental abilities, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion.

Freedom from Harassment

Harassment or abuse, including sexual harassment (verbal, nonverbal or physical), is a form of discrimination and will not be tolerated.

Volunteer Management

Supervisors of AARP volunteers will utilize sound volunteer management methods when engaging individuals in volunteer activities. Throughout the process of engaging volunteers, efforts will be made to meet the needs of the volunteer, the particular activity, and AARP.

Sound volunteer management practices may include but are not limited to: the use of position descriptions and work plans; recruitment plans designed to attract new and diverse individuals; interviews; progress reviews; development opportunities; and reward and recognition. Information on these and other practices may be found in AARP's standard operational procedures.

Volunteer Support

In keeping with the AARP Philosophy of Volunteerism, the ability to volunteer should not depend upon an individual's ability to pay for incidentals related to volunteering.

It is the policy of AARP to provide appropriate support and reimbursement to volunteers assigned to and engaged in AARP activities.

If expenses not specifically outlined in the particular activity's reimbursement guidelines are anticipated, prior approval must be sought from the volunteer's supervisor.

Representing AARP

All volunteers must follow Board-approved policies when acting on behalf of the association.

Speaking for the association: Volunteers are considered to be representing AARP when:

- they are actively working on a volunteer assignment for AARP; or
- their involvement with AARP so closely identifies them with AARP that others will assume any public statement made by the volunteer is made on behalf of AARP.

Under these circumstances, AARP volunteers may not express opposition to AARP public policies or positions. If there is no approved policy on an issue, volunteers may not express a position on behalf of the Association. If a volunteer is unclear about whether or not AARP has taken a position on a public policy, guidance and clarification must be sought from the volunteer's supervisor or other appropriate AARP representatives prior to making any statement.

Obligating AARP: Volunteers may act or make statements that involve, affect, or obligate AARP *only* after being authorized to do so by their supervisors or other appropriate AARP representative. These actions may include (but are not limited to) public statements to the press, participation in coalitions or lobbying efforts with other organizations. In the case of agreements involving financial commitments or other significant obligations, the volunteer must get prior authorization from their staff supervisor.

AARP Intellectual Property: Volunteers are strictly prohibited from using or allowing others to use AARP membership or participant lists, the letterhead, the logo, or their signature blocks (names with titles) for any purpose other than for the

AARP activities to which they are assigned. AARP volunteers should not wear AARP logo apparel in situations that are contrary to AARP's policies or positions.

Political Activity

AARP is nonpartisan and does not support or oppose any candidate for public office. Nor does it contribute money to any candidate or political party. Volunteers who are very visible in the community as an AARP representative should not volunteer for visible roles in a political campaign. If you have a question about whether or not to volunteer for a candidate, you should consult with your AARP state office.

You may contribute personal money to a candidate and attend candidate events, but not appear on stage with the candidate so that someone would interpret your appearance as an endorsement of the candidate. In AARP voter education activities, all candidates must be treated equally, (e.g. given equal time to speak at events or given the same information about AARP issues). AARP volunteers should not endorse political candidates nor have a picture with the candidate appear in a candidate's political literature.

Conflict of Interest

Compensation: A volunteer may not accept compensation for the performance of his or her duties as an AARP volunteer. Compensation includes fees, gratuities, honoraria, or any other form of compensation to the volunteer or to a member of the volunteer's immediate family or household. However, donations may be made in a volunteer's name to the AARP Foundation.

Disclosure: Volunteers of AARP must be aware that outside obligations, financial interests, or employment may result in a conflict of interest and could affect the objectivity of their volunteer involvement. It is incumbent upon all AARP volunteers to avoid situations that create a conflict of interest, or the appearance of such a conflict. All conflicts, potential conflicts, and relationships that might be perceived as such, should be disclosed by the volunteer to his or her supervisor.

This policy also applies to family or household members of the volunteer. In case of a possible conflict, the staff supervisor will consult with AARP's Office of General Counsel and steps may be required to address the conflict.

Promoting: A volunteer, while representing AARP or participating in an AARP activity, will not promote personal interests including products, services, or political candidates, nor make use of his or her relationship with AARP for personal profit.

Personal & Professional Conduct & Confidentiality

A volunteer is expected to exemplify a high standard of personal and professional behavior. Each individual with whom the volunteer works is to be treated with dignity and respect.

In addition, volunteers must maintain confidentiality when exposed to sensitive information.

Conflict Resolution

Volunteers and their supervisors should resolve all problems and conflicts as they occur. If efforts to resolve the problem or conflict are not successful, the matter will be referred to the next appropriate levels of supervision for resolution. If efforts to resolve the problem or conflict are not successful, a volunteer has the right to appeal the decision through the established association appeals process.

Term of Service/Length of Service

To expand the opportunities for service within AARP, all volunteer positions will have specific terms of service defined in their volunteer position description. At the end of a term of service, if allowed by the position description, a volunteer may be considered for reappointment. Reappointment, however, should not be presumed.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence may be granted to an appointed volunteer by the volunteer's supervisor. However, the leave of absence will not extend beyond the current appointment term.

If necessary, the appropriate appointing authority may temporarily appoint another person in an acting capacity while the volunteer is on a leave of absence.

Avoiding Bias in Supervisory Relationships

The Association's experience demonstrates that relatives and friends of existing volunteers represent an excellent recruiting source.

Volunteer supervisors must take great care to avoid creating perceptions that they are biased or play favorites. In their volunteer assignment with AARP, volunteers must avoid any appearance of divided loyalty, conflict of interest, or misuse of confidential information. A state level appointed volunteer may not supervise his or her relative or domestic partner.

Resignation & Release

A volunteer may, at any time, decide to resign from his or her position with AARP. Written notice of such a decision will be communicated in a timely manner to the volunteer's supervisor.

AARP may, at any time and for any reason, decide to release a volunteer from service with AARP. In most instances, documentation regarding corrective action should occur prior to the release of the volunteer. Written notice of the decision will be communicated to the volunteer in a timely manner.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people 50 and over. We provide information and resources; advocate on legislative, consumer, and legal issues; assist members to serve their communities; and offer a wide range of unique benefits, special products, and services for our members. These benefits include AARP Webplace at www.aarp.org, the AARP lifestyle magazines, the monthly AARP Bulletin, and a Spanish-language newspaper, *Segunda Juventud*. Active in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP celebrates the attitude that age is just a number and life is what you make it.

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