

## Volunteering With Serve DC



### District Personnel Manual Instruction 12-54

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Effective Date	Expiration Date	Related DPM Chapters
February 9, 2015	Until Rescinded	12

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### Overview

The District of Columbia Government strives to encourage its employees to volunteer in the community we serve. In this effort this instruction seeks to provide the guidance and policy for granting leave for employees who wish to volunteer in the community.

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### Serve DC

Serve DC is the Mayor’s office on volunteerism and is the District of Columbia Government agency dedicated to promoting service as an innovative, sustainable solution to pressing social challenges. Serve DC engages District communities by building partnerships and organizational capacity, leading local and national volunteer and service initiatives, and providing and promoting meaningful service opportunities. Serve DC supports communities across the District through federal grant funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Serve DC engages the community in the following three areas:

1. **Emergency Preparedness:** Serve DC works to ensure all District communities are prepared in the event of an emergency. Serve DC provides critical volunteer support – including managing the coordination of volunteers, volunteer services and donations – to the District’s official emergency response effort. Serve DC also recruits and engages District residents to respond and assist in the event of an emergency and provides free training opportunities to ensure residents play a leading role in making their communities safer, stronger and better prepared to address threats of terrorism, crime and disasters.
2. **National Service:** Serve DC is the DC Commission on National and Community Service, one of more than 50 State Service Commissions that administer federal Corporation for National and Community Service funds and coordinate national service initiatives in the District. Serve DC manages the AmeriCorps State national service program, which provides ongoing service opportunities and addresses critical community needs.
3. **Volunteerism:** Serve DC promotes volunteerism and service across the city with strategic community outreach and engagement. Serve DC manages a portfolio of service days, connects residents with meaningful volunteer opportunities, and establishes partnerships and collaboration among community- and faith-based organizations, the private sector, and local and federal government.

## Scheduling Work Around Volunteer Activities

The following guidelines support the efforts of District government departments and agencies in encouraging employee participation in the volunteer activities described in this instruction. Each department and agency should also review any other applicable regulations or policies, as well as collective bargaining agreements, before making determinations on these matters.

### A. Scheduling Work and Granting Time Off

The District’s personnel system provides departments and agencies with flexibility in scheduling hours of work and time off. Each department and agency is encouraged to make appropriate use of that flexibility in responding to requests for employees to engage in the volunteer activities described in this instruction, while giving due consideration to the effect of each employee absence or change in duty schedule on work operations and productivity. The following are some of the options:

1. **Flexible Work Schedules:** Flexible work schedules may be established for employees who wish to engage in volunteer activities during normal work hours. District government employees represented by labor organizations may participate in a flexible work schedule only as specified in collective bargaining agreements. To determine how a flexible work schedule may be implemented, departments and agencies should review the District Personnel Manual (DPM), Chapter 12- *Hours of Work, Legal Holidays, and Leave*, section 1208 or any applicable collective bargaining agreement
2. **Scheduling Time Off From Work:** District government employees seeking to participate in volunteer activities during basic work hours may be granted annual leave, compensatory time, exempt-time off, leave without pay, or, in very limited and unique circumstances, excused absence (administrative leave), as specified below:



**Collective Bargaining Agreements:** To the extent that any applicable collective bargaining agreement provisions conflict with this instruction the Collective Bargaining agreement will control.

- a. *Annual Leave*- Departments and agencies should be as accommodating as possible to reviewing and approving employee requests for annual leave to perform volunteer service, consistent with the provisions in DPM section 1235.
- b. *Leave Without Pay (LWOP)*- At the discretion of the department or agency, LWOP may be granted to employees who wish to engage in volunteer activities during normal work hours. As with annual leave, whenever possible, departments and agencies are encouraged to act favorably upon these requests. However, it is noted that LWOP is appropriate for extended periods only if the employee is expected to return to his or her job at the end of the period of LWOP. Departments and agencies should review, DPM section 1267.
- c. *Excused Absence (administrative leave)*- Each department and agency has discretion to excuse employees from their duties without loss of pay or charge to leave (not more than eight (8) hours in a workday) for volunteer activities. However the granting of excused absence for volunteer activities should only occur when one (1) or more of the following criteria are satisfied:
  1. The absence is directly related to the agency's mission;
  2. The absence is officially sponsored or approved by the department or agency head;
  3. The absence will clearly enhance the professional development or skills of the employee in his or her current position; or
  4. The absence is brief and is determined to be in the best interest of the department or agency
- d. *Compensatory Time*- Departments and agencies should be liberal about allowing employees to use compensatory time off defined as time off in lieu of overtime pay for overtime work performed by FLSA non-exempt employees. Please review DPM sections 1138, 1199, 1245, and 1246, for more information.
- e. *Exempt Time Off*- Departments and agencies should also be liberal with the usage of exempt time off defined as time off without charge to leave or loss of pay grade granted to FLSA-exempt employees for work performed in excess of eighty (80) hours in a biweekly period when using this leave for volunteering purposes. For more information on exempt time off please see DPM section 1139.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each department and agency head to balance support for employee volunteer activities with the need to ensure that employees' work requirements are fulfilled and that department and agency operations are conducted efficiently and effectively. Each department and agency should review DPM Chapter 12- *Hours of Work, Legal Holidays, and Leave* or any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

## Labor-Management Relations

Department and agency officials are reminded that, to the extent required or permitted by law, regulation or collective bargaining agreements, conditions of employment (such as work schedules) of employees covered under collective bargaining agreements shall not be changed without prior notification to official labor representatives. Moreover, an employee covered under collective bargaining agreements may participate in flexible work schedules only as specified in the collective bargaining agreement. For additional information on these matters, please refer to any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

## Prohibition On Coercion

While department and agency officials may encourage District government employees to become more involved in volunteer activities, employees shall not be coerced into participating in volunteer activities or into relinquishing any entitlements concerning flextime work schedules for the purpose of volunteering, or for any other purpose.

## Conflicts Of Interest and Hatch Act Restrictions

Departments, agencies and employees are reminded that conflict of interest laws and related regulations governing outside employment for compensation also apply to District government employees who engage in volunteer activities. Restrictions under the Hatch Act apply to employees on duty status, as well as to employees on paid or unpaid leave. Questions relating to conflict of interest should be directed to the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability at (202) 481-3411. Additional guidance is also available in Chapter 18 of the D.C. personnel regulations, Employee Conduct.

## Use of Government Facilities and Equipment

Employees may not use District government facilities or equipment for other than authorized purposes; and must obtain supervisory approval for the use of any government facilities or equipment before engaging in any volunteer activities.

## Volunteer Recognition

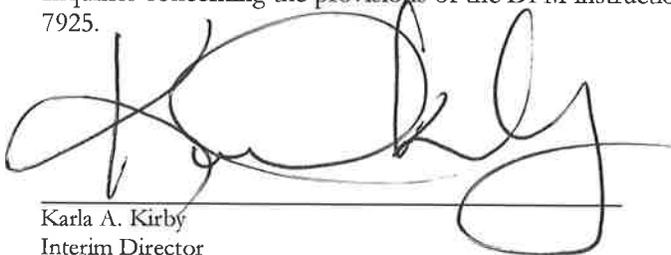
Departments and agencies are encouraged to recognize employees who volunteer their skills to help others. However, providing monetary awards or paid time off to employees in recognition for their volunteer activities undermines the “volunteer spirit” in which these employees donated their personal time and efforts for the benefit of others. On the other hand, granting appropriate citation, letters of appreciation, or small mementos such as pins or mugs, is appropriate as a sign of the department or agency’s recognition of the services rendered to the community by its employees.

## Effective Date

The provisions of this instruction are effective immediately.

## Inquiries

Inquiries concerning the provisions of the DPM instruction can be directed to Serve DC by calling (202) 727-7925.



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