

Volunteer Policy

Contact: Vice President for Finance and Administration

Sources/Links: N/A

NORTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY

Policies and Guidelines

SUBJECT: Volunteer Work Agreements

NUMBER: 4.2

1. Purpose

To define the role of Volunteers on the campus of Northern State University and in complying with this policy, to ensure liability and workers' compensation coverage for volunteers.

2. Definitions

Volunteers are individuals who provide services directly connected to the University's work, support University initiatives, or gain experience in particular fields without any promise or expectation of compensation, future employment, or other tangible benefits.

3. Policy

- A. Departments may appoint volunteers to assist with official University activities.
- B. Volunteers must follow all University, SDBOR, state, and federal policies and regulations. Volunteers act as agents of the University and must follow policies on conduct, confidentiality, technology use, substance use, and financial responsibility.
- C. In general, individuals under the age of 16 may not serve as University volunteers; however, the University may authorize individuals under the age of 16 to serve as University volunteers at its discretion and in accordance with state law;
- D. An individual who is under the age of 18 and authorized to serve as a University volunteer may only become a University volunteer with written parental consent and written approval from HR.
- E. Employees cannot volunteer for work similar to their paid role or under circumstances that suggest non-voluntary participation.
- F. All volunteers must establish proof of identity and citizenship or permanent residency by providing the necessary documentation to the Human Resources Office. If the individual is not a citizen or permanent resident of the United States, they must provide documentation of their visa status. An individual holding a temporary visa may not serve as a volunteer in a position where others receive compensation or perform the same services. An individual

with a pending H-1B visa application to work at the University cannot serve as a volunteer. Volunteer status may not be used to avoid or defer compliance with the employment eligibility requirements of federal immigration laws.

- G. Volunteers are covered under liability and workers' compensation for official duties. They are not considered employees, and payment is prohibited; however, reasonable expenses may be reimbursed according to university guidelines.
- H. Each volunteer is to be supervised by the sponsoring department.
- I. The University or volunteer can end the volunteer service at any time without cause or notice.
- J. Volunteers may be required to complete a background check before starting their role. In most cases, background checks are required when a volunteer will be directly involved in youth programs involving non-student minors (see NSU policy 6.6).
- K. The following activities are restricted for volunteers unless proper training or certification is obtained, and University authorization is granted:
 - i. Operating heavy equipment (e.g., forklift, backhoe).
 - ii. Operating University or State-owned vehicles without authorization.
 - iii. Working with BSL III and BSL IV protocols, export-controlled materials, hazardous materials, stored energy systems, or bio-hazardous/infectious materials.
 - iv. Engaging in any activity inappropriate for employees or entering into contracts on behalf of the University.
- L. Volunteer coaches
 - i. may not participate in recruitment activities.
 - ii. role is limited and distinct from paid assistant coaches. They may be listed as "volunteer assistant coach."
 - iii. travel with the team is optional.
 - iv. travel expenses are an allowable team expense.
 - v. cannot replace paid coaches or resign from a paid position and return as a volunteer in the same capacity.

4. PROCEDURES

- A. Each department must evaluate proposed volunteer services to ensure they support University objectives and do not replace compensable positions.
- B. The sponsoring department must send the Volunteer Work Agreement (found in DocuSign) to the perspective volunteer.
- C. The Form will then route to the supervisor to sign, and then to HR, and finally to IT for a final signature.
- D. NSU account credentials, which includes network access and a mailbox, will not be issued to volunteers.
- E. Volunteers working with Minors must have a Background Check conducted by HR and paid for by the requesting department. After the supervisor's approval, HR will communicate the need for a background check, will conduct the background check, and logs the volunteer into the system. This includes volunteer coaches.

- F. HR consults with International Programs on any foreign national restrictions.
- G. HR will confirm volunteer approval; services may begin only after HR clearance. HR will store all checkback check and other sensitive information.

5. Responsible Administrator

The Vice President for Finance & Administration is responsible for annual review of this policy.

6. Source History:

Proposed by Susan Bostian, Associate Vice President for Finance & Administration 08/28/2025