

# MCOA Volunteer/Intern Policy

MCOA appreciates the contributions of Volunteers and Unpaid Interns in fulfilling its mission. This policy provides general guidelines pertaining to volunteers and unpaid Interns.

## **Definition of Volunteer**

Consistent with definitions and guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor, Volunteers are individuals who volunteer or donate their services, usually on a part-time basis, for public service, religious or humanitarian objectives. Volunteers:

- are NOT considered employees of MCOA and are NOT compensated;
- have NO assurance or reason to expect that MCOA will offer employment following the volunteer period; and
- are NOT eligible for any MCOA benefits, including unemployment or workers' compensation benefits.

To ensure that an individual performing volunteer service is not an employee for purposes of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), all of the following criteria must be satisfied in order for the individual to be approved as a volunteer:

- The services are intended to be voluntary and to be rendered without compensation.
- The services must constitute a bona fide effort of the individual to volunteer for humanitarian or public service purpose or for the benefit of education, training or professional experience.
- Individuals volunteer their time for their own personal motives, without promise or expectation of compensation or employment.
- Volunteers must not be used in ways that displace or replace regular employees in the performance of their normal duties. Volunteers may augment the work of regular employees.

## **Definition of Unpaid Internship**

Individuals who wish to volunteer for the purposes of educational or professional interest must meet the following criteria:

- The internship experience provides some kind of educational or professional benefit for the intern.
- The intern does not displace regular employees but works under close supervision of existing staff.
- The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship.
- The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent on the internship.
- the individual is not eligible for MCOA benefits, including unemployment or workers' compensation.

**Participation**

Anyone, including retirees, students, or others may provide volunteer service or perform internship activities. An individual who is under the age of 18 may only become a volunteer with written parental consent. Individuals under the age of 16 may not become volunteers. The initial period for volunteering should be no longer than 6 months. The relationship may be extended for an additional 6-month term after appropriate review and agreement by the MCOA staff. All interns must complete and pass a CORI check.

**Requirements and Responsibilities Pertaining to Volunteers and Unpaid Interns**

Volunteers and Unpaid Interns are subject to, must abide by, and are protected by all applicable MCOA policies, procedures, and rules, including expectations for respecting the confidentiality of all information shared during the volunteer/intern experience. It is the responsibility of the MCOA Personnel Administrator to review these policy and procedure details with the volunteers and interns.

**Reimbursement**

Volunteers may be reimbursed for specified expenses incurred during the internship including mileage to special events and the MCOA Conference but not for travel as part of regular commuting. Reimbursements must be approved in advance by MCOA.

**Termination**

Volunteers and unpaid Interns are expected to conduct themselves consistent with standards of professional behavior common to MCOA staff. MCOA has a right to terminate internship at any time.

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