



Volunteer Manual

Revision Date: January 2023

Greetings from Sierra Delta Inc.,

Welcome! On behalf of the Organization, Staff and Board of Directors, we would like to thank you for considering volunteering your time at Sierra Delta. Here, we recognize that time is a very valued asset, and we are greatly appreciative that you are planning on sharing it with us.

Included, in this welcome kit, are a few resources that may be helpful to you as you reflect on the decision to become a Volunteer. Within this package, there is an application form, a Special Event Contract Sheet, and various templates.

Please fill out the included Volunteer Application and return it to the Human Resources and Veteran Manager. We ask that you please read over the list of considerations provided, mindfully, so you may make an informed and confident decision.

Our volunteers truly are the heart of our organization. We would not be able to do what we do, here at Sierra Delta, without our volunteer's support, dedication and hard work. We are always striving to grow our family and continue to provide the best compassionate care to those we serve.

We look forward to receiving your application and meeting with you soon for an interview. Thank you for considering Sierra Delta!

Sincerely,

Stefanie Marvin-Miller
Human Resources and Veteran Manager

Organizational Background

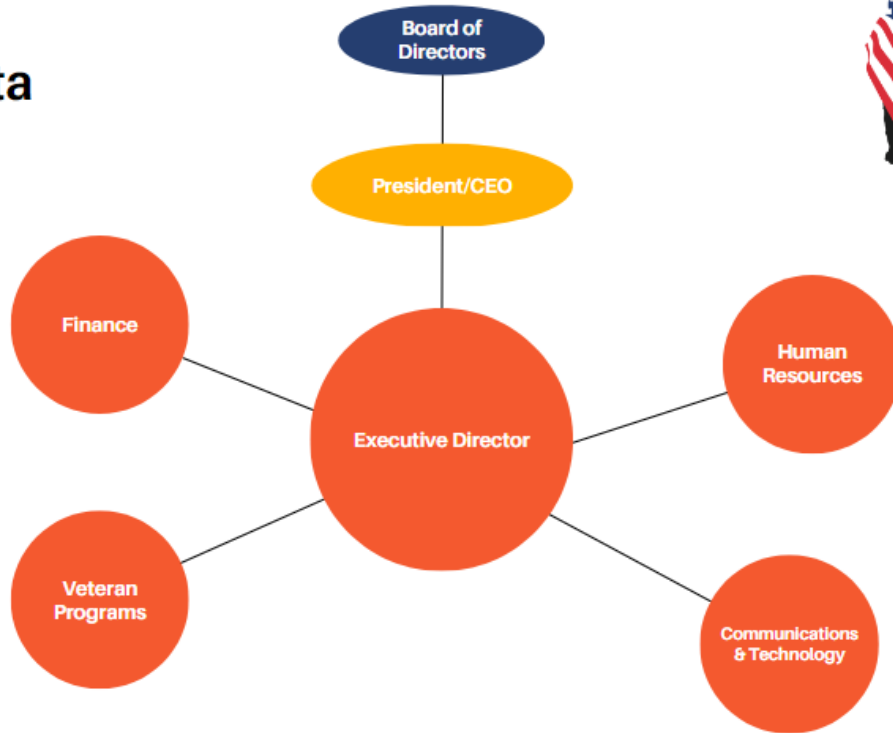
- We began on Nantucket Island, MA in April of 2017. Since then, we have expanded across the nation, partnering with multiple service dog academies and shelters, to help all veterans who have served in any era!
- Our Programs:
 - **Life Buddy**
 - **Life Force**
 - **Life Blood**
- Mission Statement:

Sierra Delta empowers every Veteran with access to approved dog training that provides purpose, innovation, and community through the love of dogs. With a comprehensive Veteran-centric methodology, we thrive on utilizing a strengths-based approach to assist Veterans in obtaining their Service Dog or Life Buddy. Veterans of ALL eras are encouraged to apply. Veterans are not required to have a disability or specific need to be in a Sierra Delta program.

Organizational Structure

Sierra Delta

Revised: February 2023



Contact Information

Website: <https://sierradelta.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SierraDeltaServiceDogs/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sierradeltadogs>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/sierradeltaservicedogs/?hl=en>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/sierra-delta-service-dogs/?viewAsMember=true>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/SierraDelta>

Stefanie Marvin-Miller, Human Resources and Veterans Manager

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Sierra Delta Inc. Address:

811 East Washington Avenue, Suite 400,
Madison, WI 53703

DEFINITIONS & TERMS

Definition of Volunteer

- You are considered a volunteer if you, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement for volunteer-related expenses, perform a service at the direction of and on behalf of Sierra Delta. This includes participating in program activities or serving on the Board of Directors. As a volunteer, you will be accepted officially and enrolled by Sierra Delta prior to the performance of your tasks.
 - Sierra Delta welcomes volunteers either the age of 18 or older, and does not discriminate against any volunteer because of race, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.

Family Members of Staff as Volunteers

- Family members of staff may volunteer with Sierra Delta. When family members are enrolled as volunteers, they will not be placed under the direct supervision of family members, who are employees.

Clients and Their Relatives as Volunteers

- If you are a client of Sierra Delta, you may be accepted as a volunteer where such service does not conflict with the provision of services to you or to others. Relatives of clients may also serve as volunteers, but will not be placed in a position of direct service or relationship to members of their family who are receiving services.

Group Volunteers

- Many of Sierra Delta's events accept one-time volunteer service from groups, including college service groups, veteran groups, and employees on corporate service days. In these instances, the Special Event Volunteer Contract Sheet is used in lieu of the formal organization application, and no interview is required.

Volunteering vs. Interning vs. Service Learning

- As opposed to most volunteer opportunities, internships are primarily educational experiences with an emphasis on learning academic or career-related skills. Interns will be directly supervised by licensed or otherwise accountable professionals. Interns may receive academic credit for their experiences if they arrange this with their school ahead of time.
- Service learning occurs when a class or group works with a community partner, such as Sierra Delta, on a plan to implement solutions for a student-identified community need.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS

Ongoing Volunteers (Regularly Scheduled)

- When a volunteer accepts a position with a regular schedule, they will be considered an ongoing volunteer after serving consistently for six months (or another predetermined length of assignment, i.e. summer vacation, etc)
- Board and any Advisory Committee members are also considered ongoing volunteers when they accept terms of service.

Special Event Volunteers (Occasional)

- People who serve as volunteers only once or occasionally in an event situation are considered special event or occasional volunteers. Examples of this include when someone helps to set up an event, or spends an afternoon handing out flyers for said event in their community.

Direct Service Volunteers

- Direct service volunteers provide service directly to clients. There are additional screening requirements for these volunteers.

Ambassador

- Ambassadors serve as the highest standard of volunteer. They exemplify our values and mission in everything that they do.

Recruitment and Selection Procedures

Volunteer Opportunity Descriptions

As a volunteer, you will be given an opportunity description outlining the specific responsibilities of your role. It is your responsibility to read about your position, gain an understanding of the requirements, and seek any necessary clarification from your supervisor. Signing the Volunteer Agreement Form demonstrates that you are aware of the duties your position entails and agree to perform them to the best of your abilities.

Recruitment

Sierra Delta uses a variety of different methods to recruit volunteers. You may find us reaching out to potential volunteers via our agency website, through other internet volunteering sites and social media platforms, in print publications, and by word of mouth. We also encourage you to let your friends and family know about our volunteering opportunities.

Applications

As a volunteer, you will be required to complete the Volunteer Application. Volunteer applications are reviewed as they are received by the Human Resources Department. Should any further information be needed, a Sierra Delta staff member will reach out to you.

Interviews

Most ongoing volunteer positions require an interview with the Sierra Delta staff member who will be supervising you. Interviews help volunteers clarify the responsibilities of the opportunity

and help supervisors decide if the prospective volunteer is a good fit. If you are participating as a volunteer in a one time event, then an interview before the event may not be necessary.

References

Sierra Delta requires ongoing volunteers to provide two nonfamily references on their application. These references will be checked by the Human Resources and Veteran Manager prior to accepting the individual as a volunteer.

Background/Criminal Records Checks

In accordance with Sierra Delta standards, volunteers for ongoing positions are required to undergo a background/criminal records check and sex offender registry check prior to beginning service. Driving records checks are required for volunteers who drive for their program or transport anyone or anything.

Sierra Delta covers the cost of all background and criminal records checks for volunteers.

Volunteer Agreement Form

To document that you have read, understood, and agreed to follow the Sierra Delta volunteer practices and procedures and feel comfortable with the responsibilities of your specific volunteer position, we require you to sign a Volunteer Agreement Form when beginning service.

Aspects of Volunteer Service

Initial Agency Orientation

All ongoing volunteers will be required to complete an orientation to Sierra Delta. Topics covered during orientation will vary depending on whether the volunteer is serving in a direct service or non-direct service capacity.

Program Orientation & Training

As a new volunteer, your program will provide you with its own orientation and the necessary training required for your specific volunteer position.

Supervision

As a volunteer, you will have a clearly identified supervisor who will directly oversee your role within the program. This supervisor will be available to you for consultation and assistance. One-time volunteers will also be informed of their supervisor if questions or problems arise.

The Human Resources and Veteran Manager is also a point of contact throughout the application and orientation process and supports agency volunteers throughout their service.

Record Maintenance & Volunteer Time Reports

Keeping track of the time given by our volunteers is very important to us. Each program is required to record hours for each individual volunteer and report them on a monthly basis. Some

volunteer positions are more independent and require volunteers to keep track of their own hours which they must then report back to their supervisor.

Corrective Action

In appropriate situations, corrective action may be taken following an incident or evaluation. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, re-assignment of a volunteer to a new position, suspension of the volunteer, or dismissal from volunteer service.

Concerns & Grievances

Decisions involving corrective action of a volunteer will be reviewed for appropriateness by the Program Director, Human Resources and Veteran Manager. If corrective action is taken, the volunteer shall be informed of the procedures for expressing his/her concern or grievance. A volunteer has the opportunity to provide a written request to air his/her concerns to the Human Resources and Veteran Manager.

Evaluation

If you are a volunteer with ongoing responsibilities, you may be given an annual evaluation in accordance with Accreditation standards. Occasional or "casual" volunteers will receive evaluations only upon request of the volunteer.

Recognition

As a volunteer, you are an essential part of our program operations. Therefore, we believe it is very important to recognize the time and effort that you put into your service. Recognition opportunities will occur at the department level, as well as the program level.

Participation Guidelines

Drug-Free Policy

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is not allowed in Sierra Delta event sites. Additionally, volunteers may not be impaired by any substance while serving. Any volunteers displaying impaired behavior during scheduled events may result in your immediate dismissal from the volunteer position.

Dress Code

As a volunteer, you are responsible for presenting a positive image to clients and to the community as a representative of Sierra Delta, so please refrain from anything politically driven. You should dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of your duties. For example, if it's raining, bring a rain jacket. Common sense prevails at the end of the day!

Property Policy

As a volunteer at Sierra Delta, you will respect the property of Sierra Delta and the personal property of other volunteers and staff.

Driving Policies

If you will be transporting clients as a volunteer driver, a State-specific Department of Motor Vehicles check and a criminal background check must be completed prior to your start. Sierra Delta reserves the right to accept or deny you as a volunteer driver based on the findings of these checks.

You must be 21 or over to be a volunteer driver and follow all state and federal traffic laws. All passengers must wear seat belts. We also ask that in order to avoid any distracted driving, that you use hands free devices while operating a motor vehicle of any kind. If you have had a previous DUI conviction, three years must pass before you may be considered for a volunteer driving opportunity with Sierra Delta. If your drivers license has any restrictions, Sierra Delta needs to be made aware of those restrictions, how long they are in place, as that could affect your ability to drive with us.

Safety

Sierra Delta is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for staff and volunteers as well as persons and families served. Each program will provide volunteers with information on facility safety plans and safety protocols related to the assigned volunteer position. Certain practices are in place to ensure positive and safe volunteering experiences at Sierra Delta. Any injury to the volunteer while fulfilling the duties of their position description must be reported to the supervisor immediately.

Liability and Insurance

In May of 1997, Congress approved legislation that shields volunteers for nonprofit organizations from liability lawsuits. HR911 limits the occasions when volunteers, as well as directors, officers, and trustees, may be sued in connection with their actions on behalf of a nonprofit. While the legislation removes a volunteer (but not the nonprofit) from liability if an individual commits negligent acts or omissions while acting within the scope of his or her responsibility, it does not protect the person if such acts were caused by willful or criminal misconduct or gross negligence.

Confidentiality Policy

Sierra Delta recognizes confidentiality as a living principle based on the sanctity and dignity of the human person. Therefore, the organization will respect the privacy of the personal information of those it serves or employs. You are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all information to which you are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves staff members, volunteers, clients, or other people or involves overall program or agency business. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination or other corrective action.

Harassment Policy

Sierra Delta is committed to a work environment that is professional and harassment-free for all employees and volunteers. Harassment includes, without limitations, verbal, physical, visual, and innuendo. It also includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually

motivated physical contact and other verbal or physical conduct, or visual forms of harassment of sexual nature when submission to such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment or is used as the basis for unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment for employees and volunteers.

Volunteers should report any issues to their supervisor, coordinator of volunteer services, or Human Resources and Veteran Manager.

Personal Involvement and Boundaries

If your volunteer position involves working directly with clients or donors, it is important to maintain boundaries with them and to keep your relationship professional, not personal.

Ending Volunteer Service

Resignation & Leave of Absence

Your volunteer position may conclude at the end of a particular project, event, or set time period, but you are also free to end your volunteer service with Sierra Delta at any time. Because volunteers are so important to the programs and agency, however, we request that you provide advance notice of your departure and a reason for your decision.

Termination

You may be terminated from your position as a volunteer for a variety of reasons. Some of these include: gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of agency equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of clients or coworkers, failure to abide by agency policies and procedures, failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance, failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties, or for any other reason deemed appropriate by an approved Sierra Delta representative.

Exit Surveys

When you leave your position, you will be given an opportunity to fill out an exit survey detailing why you are ending your service. The exit survey is also a great place to give us any further comments about your experience and to provide any potential ideas for improvements.

F.A.Q's

Q: Do I need to have any specific skills to be a volunteer?

A: Not at all! Our Coordinator of Volunteer Services, Human Resources, Veteran Manager, and Program Leads will be able to train you and help with anything you may need.

Q: I am volunteering to fulfill court-mandated community service hours. Is there anything I need to know?

A: Individuals may complete their court-mandated hours with Sierra Delta. However, we cannot accept applicants who have been charged with a felony or violent crime (domestic abuse, misconduct involving children, possession of firearms, etc.). If you need verification of completed hours, please let our coordinator of volunteer services know. Please make sure you sign in and out for each shift. If not, we will be unable to verify your hours.

Q: What should I wear when volunteering?

A: Please dress appropriately for each different event as the situation dictates.

Q: Will I be required to lift heavy objects?

A: While we may have occasional boxes that need to be moved or transported to an event location, there will be at least one person at each event who is able to lift these items. If you are not, no worries, we're happy to make accommodations for you.

Q: I signed up for a shift and realized I will not be able to make it that day. What do I do?

A: If you need to cancel a shift last minute, please call the Human Resource Manager at (323) 333-3862 or send an email.

Q: I forgot to sign out! What do I do?

A: If you forget to sign in or out, please call or email the Human Resources Manager as soon as you remember. They will verify your attendance with another staff member and then correct our records.

Q: What happens if something of mine gets stolen?

A: We are not responsible for any items lost or stolen, so please keep a close eye on all your belongings.