



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Prisons

Office of the Director

Washington, DC 20534

April 4, 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

FROM:


Charles E. Samuels, Jr.
Director

SUBJECT:

Volunteer Organizations

Over the years, Federal inmates have benefitted from the services and support of dedicated volunteers and volunteer organizations. Volunteer organizations, by nature of their mission, increase morale by their commitment to visitation, moral support of inmates, and the addition of resources that aid in targeted skill development. They provide inmates, otherwise separated from the community, with the opportunity to experience healthy social behaviors and mentoring relationships. The efforts of these volunteers are a great asset in assisting inmates to prepare for reentry into the community and support the Bureau's overall reentry strategy. I truly appreciate the efforts of all volunteers committed to this service.

The size and complexity of Bureau institutions have necessitated some modification of program and visitor regulations in recent years. Unfortunately, this has impacted volunteers in some of our facilities. Accurate information and effective communication regarding the focus and scope of any program assures the program's effectiveness. Please refer to the relevant policies governing volunteers and community involvement as you acquaint staff with the goals and purposes of volunteer organizations.

Please continue your support of these programs and extend appropriate courtesies to these dedicated volunteers. Safety and security of inmates, staff and the community are the Bureau's top priority and this can be aided by the effective use of volunteer services. To that end, volunteer visitors are to be accommodated as fully as possible within these considerations. Concerns related to any volunteer program should be referred to the respective Reentry Affairs Coordinator.

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS – GUIDANCE

April 2013

The BOP recognizes the value and importance of outside organizations which provide visitation services for our inmate population. One volunteer organization that frequently visits our facilities is the Prisoner Visitation and Support (PVS) program; however, this guidance applies to any volunteer organization seeking to provide support and visitation services to inmates. To facilitate and ensure an effective visitation program, the following guidelines apply in all institutions unless security concerns warrant alternative procedures.

- Requests for visitor approval, including pertinent biographical data, are sent to the Warden by the visiting organization's staff. Prior to approval, such visitors have appropriate visitor screening, local law enforcement checks, and NCIC clearance.
- Ordinarily, such visits are held in the visiting room during visiting hours. When this is the case, the Warden may waive the requirement for volunteer training. If circumstances create the necessity, the Warden may approve visits in other areas of the institution. In these instances, the approved visitor must have attended the institution's volunteer training. When visits are scheduled inside the institution instead of the visiting room, the requirement for constant staff supervision applies. Scheduling multiple visits on one day may be impacted by this regulation.
- Approved visitors notify inmates of scheduled visits by postcard and may also send appropriate postcard greetings for holidays and birthdays to the inmates they are visiting. When necessary, further coordination will be provided by a designee of the Warden.
- Approved visiting organization volunteers are generally permitted to carry a pen or pencil and paper into the visiting room for the purpose of taking notes unless the Warden has established local procedures prohibiting this practice. If this procedure cannot be accommodated at particular institutions, the visiting volunteer organization should be notified in advance.
- Renewal of approved visiting organization volunteers will be conducted every five years and will include an updated Letter of Endorsement from the sponsoring organization, an updated NCIC check, and a review of file material to ensure all information is current and accurate.
- The Visiting Regulations Program Statement and each accompanying Institution Supplement, establish the admissible level of interaction between inmates and visitors.
- The Warden may authorize national visiting organization volunteers to use cameras and film equipment during training events. Inmates being photographed will sign the appropriate release forms.
- Visiting organization volunteers are authorized to visit only in specific institutions. Inmates who request a visit from these organizations should be ordinarily accommodated.
- Visiting organization volunteers may be badged in order to simplify entrance procedures and eliminate the need for authorization memoranda, if they have completed the required volunteer training. While not a requirement, these volunteers may be placed on the inmate's visiting list. Their visits are not charged against allowable prisoner visits.
- **PVS National Visitors**, Eric Corson, Nan Broeder, Jonne Long, David Poundstone, Lena Prewitt, Virginia Rinella, Chuck Barrett, Jeannie Graves, and Eileen Gilkenson may, with the Warden's approval, visit inmates in any BOP institution.

PVS staff can be contacted at:

Eric Corson, Executive Director
Prisoner Visitation and Support
1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102

Phone: 215-241-7117
Fax: 215-241-7227
Email: PVS@afsc.org

The unique nature of volunteer visiting organizations makes the above information necessary in order to provide clear guidance to institutions. It is not intended to be a statement of support for any specific program. If organizations request to provide similar services, this information may serve as a guide for institution staff. Please route any questions regarding any volunteer organizations through the institution and/or Regional Reentry Affairs Administrator.