

Volunteer Program FAQs

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has been developed as a guide for nursing homes to use to aid in developing a robust volunteer program. Each nursing home must establish individual policies and procedures related to their volunteer program. In addition, nursing homes must comply with Federal Regulations in Appendix PP of the State Operations Manual (SOM) which includes the Requirements of Participation (RoP) for Medicare and Medicaid certified providers.

1. Are we required to have a volunteer program?

No, volunteer programs are optional.

2. Prior to an individual volunteering, is a background check necessary?

Under [Chapter 50.9](#), volunteers are not included in the definition of employee. However, based on individual policies and procedures you may consider completing a background check depending on the roles of the volunteer. For example, if a volunteer is completing 1:1 care with a resident, you may exercise additional caution and complete a background check.

3. Is physical examination necessary for a volunteer?

No, [Chapter 58.10\(3\)](#) states that employees must have a physical examination before employment and at least every four years. In Chapter 58, employee is not defined to include volunteers. However, nursing homes can always choose to exercise additional caution and complete a physical depending on the volunteer's role.

4. Is Tuberculosis Screening necessary for volunteers?

Possibly, according to [Chapter 59](#), a health care worker (HCW) is defined as any paid or unpaid person working in a health care facility or hospital, including any person who is paid either by the health care facility or hospital or paid by any other entity (such as temporary agency), or any volunteer who volunteers on a regular or consistent basis for five or more hours per week.

Baseline tuberculosis (TB) screening must be conducted for all HCWs including assessing for current symptoms and using a two-step tuberculin skin test (TST) or interferon-gamma release assay (IGRA) upon hire and ongoing based on individual risk assessments.

5. ***What training is required for volunteers?***

Abuse policies and procedures according to F607 and F943 in [Appendix PP](#).

- Prohibiting and preventing all forms of abuse, neglect, misappropriation of property and exploitation.
- Identifying what constitutes abuse, neglect, exploitation, and misappropriation of property.
- Recognizing signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation of property such as physical or psychosocial indicators.
- Reporting abuse, neglect, exploitation and misappropriation of property, including injuries of unknown origin, to whom, and when staff and others must report their knowledge related to any alleged violation without fear of reprisal.
- Understanding behavioral symptoms of residents that may increase the risk of abuse and neglect and how to respond including but not limited to aggressive and/or catastrophic reactions, wandering or elopement behaviors, resistance to care, outbursts or yelling out, and difficulty adjusting to new routines or staff.

Behavioral health based on resident population and needs as outlined in the facility assessment. Volunteers are included in F949 there may be interactions depending on the role of the volunteer that training may be beneficial and determined necessary.

Resident rights as outlined in the Federal regulations under F942.

Quality assurance and performance improvement, consistent with the volunteer's role according to Federal regulations under F944. This may include understanding what QAPI is and how to identify/report potential problems and ideas for improvement.

Infection control according to Federal regulations under F945. This includes written standards, policies, and procedures for the program consistent with the volunteer's role.

Compliance and ethics training under Federal regulations under F946. At a minimum, this should include definitions of crimes that must be reported and who suspicion of a crime is required to be reported to.

Additional training may be necessary as outlined in your individual facility assessment based on roles and responsibilities of volunteers.

