STATE of CONNECTICUT

Department of Correction

HANDBOOK

FOR VIPs

V OLUNTEERS

I NTERNS and

P ROFESSIONAL **P** ARTNERS

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Rev. 12/16

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide basic information about the roles and opportunities available for Volunteers, Interns and Professional Partners (VIPs!) affiliated with the Connecticut Department of Correction.

This handbook presents the mission of the Department, a review of appropriate conduct for citizen involvement, general security information and a listing & map to locate our facilities.

While this information is not intended to answer every question concerning responsibility and commitment, this handbook addresses those areas of interest most expressed by past VIPs.

It is important for you to read this handbook carefully and to use it as a reference guide. If specific questions or issues arise which are not covered, you may wish to speak with the Supervisor of the VIP Unit or any one of our designated facility or parole VIP Coordinators.

We will make every effort to inform you of policies, program changes and opportunities.

We trust that your involvement with the Department of Correction will support staff and inmate services and that your experiences will be personally or professionally rewarding.

WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET, BUT WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE

winston churchill

Connecticut Department of Correction

VISION and MISSION STATEMENT

Vision: Re-victimization is reduced by providing offenders the tools and resources to make positive changes for a successful transition back into the community.

Mission: The Department of Correction shall strive to be a global leader in progressive correctional practices aligned to law-abiding and accountable behaviors. Safety & security shall be a priority component of this responsibility as it pertains to staff, victims, citizens and offenders.

Guiding Principles

- ✓ Appropriate and proper assessment of every incoming offender
- ✓ Individualized programming, education and job training for offenders
- ✓ Shared economic, community, social and collaborative partnerships
- ✓ Research and best practices

To complement the overall mission of the Department of Correction, the VIP Unit continuously seeks Volunteers, Interns and Professional Partners (VIP's) to supplement or augment opportunities for inmates/parolees to participate in recovery, restorative and re-entry preparation activities while incarcerated or participating in a continuum of care through parole.

The VIP Unit currently offers a wide variety of opportunities for approved Volunteers, Interns and Professional Partners to support agency staff in the provision of:

- **A**ddiction Services;
- **B**asic Educational Services; and
- **C**haplaincy Services

"The ABC's of Citizen Involvement & VIPs In Correction"

The goals of the VIP Unit are to:

- Develop an accommodating climate for Volunteers, Interns and Professional Partners;
- Establish standards and guidelines for organization and administration;
- Provide insight, information and technical assistance to develop activities;
- Recruit, train and supervise program staff working with Volunteers, Interns and Professional Partners;
- Plan and implement the orderly expansion of resources;
- Serve as a liaison to other public and private agencies;
- Provide information to the general public about the Department of Correction and its general functions.

WHY CONTRIBUTE?

People contribute their time and talents for many reasons. Whatever your reasons are, we are pleased to have you on our team.

Statistics show that over 50% of all Americans "give back" an average of five hours a week. We believe this reflects peoples' desire to strengthen families and give something back to society by helping others who may be less fortunate. As a contributor to offender services and restoration, you are performing a valuable public service and setting a good example for inmates/parolees.

You can help us by being a role model for inmates & parolees. You can help them learn to make important and constructive changes in their lives. Your help may lessen inmates' feelings of isolation, alienation or despondency and assist Parole & Community Services staff to ensure parolees are aware of available community resources to assist them & their families with reintegration. As a DOC-VIP you can provide an important link between the inmate or parolee and the community. You can bring a sense of "normalcy" and strengthen a continuity of care from incarceration through community reintegration.

By sharing your services as a VIP with inmates & parolees, they recognize that your motivation is not purely financial in nature. Your involvement as a Departmental VIP can help inmates/parolees to understand they too can exercise their responsibility to stay motivated and focused on personal improvement through participation in productive & constructive activities.

As a partner with staff in corrections, one of your most important contributions is providing inmates/parolees with a sense of hope. A person who has hope can look to the future in a positive way. Through your contributions of time and commitment, you can help make it happen.

WHY CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN CORRECTIONS

Volunteers, Interns and Professional Partners in Correction:

- Assist staff;
- Diversify structured activities and programs;
- Facilitate inmates' life skills for successful restoration or for facing long-term confinement;
- Support agencies & organizations partnering with DOC to assist with programs/services;
- Build Bridges between the DOC and resources for crime prevention in communities;
- Mobilize community resources to interact with the correctional system;
- Infuse diverse opportunities for citizen involvement in corrections; and
- Enrich voluntary/elective opportunities for inmates/parolees to participate in programs/services not otherwise afforded by paid staff.

VIP Programs and services broaden and enhance the work done by corrections staff. VIP's strengthen formal treatment programs, supplement education and assist in stemming recidivism. Individuals contribute in varied areas such as preparing inmates develop decision making or problem solving skills, preparing for GED exams, organizing educational seminars, supporting art workshops, coaching sports or facilitating fitness/wellness activities, strengthening religious services and serving as role models for 12-Step substance abuse groups. While this list is not complete, it illustrates that individuals serve as key components in our effort to help inmates/parolees to make choices that may result in more effective community re-integration or greater success in handling long term incarceration.

AS YOU BEGIN

As you begin to prepare for working with DOC Staff you need to examine the opportunities available. Select a program or activity that is consistent with your expectations, goals and abilities. You can accomplish this by reviewing the opportunities listed in this handbook.

Once you have filled out a VIP Application Form and completed the screening process, you will need to attend a safety and security orientation before you are fully authorized to contribute your time to a facility or community-based program.

We will direct you to attend a Safety & Security Orientation in a facility or field unit, usually one fairly close to your home. You will be given information regarding the Department, its policies and procedures, inmates, rules and regulations, information about dress code, expected behavior and general assistance to help you adjust to conditions within a restrictive environment.

You are expected to work within the boundaries of your specified assignment. Don't get involved in issues that don't apply to you or hamper personnel who have specific jobs to do. Stay focused. Maintain goodwill and patience.

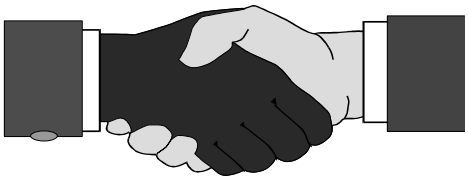
To be an effective partner in corrections you need to learn facility protocols and rules. In order to fit in properly, you must become aware of how correctional facilities & programs operate, where potential problem areas exist, restricted areas where only staff may go, and how to best assist staff members who are assigned certain tasks. It is important to realize that being a DOC/VIP requires commitment. As a good VIP or partner you must be dependable, make regular visits, have enthusiasm, give support, use good judgment, act discreetly and exhibit maturity and confidence.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

Here are several suggestions that will help you to be a valued VIP. Being familiar with them will give you a better perspective about which activities will offer the greatest satisfaction and personal reward:

Suggestion 1: Know Yourself

Determine which activity area or program best matches your interest. Assess your level of commitment and dependability. Do you have personal experience or academic-vocational goals or professional responsibilities that distinguish you as an ideal VIP? Can you describe in simple terms why you want to work in a restrictive setting with inmates or parolees? What prior experience do you have being a role model? What meaningful achievements have you had in other agencies, institutions, universities/colleges, clinics/hospitals, schools, churches or community groups? If you are hoping to submit a new proposal for programs or services that paid staff do not ordinarily perform, have you developed a summary describing how inmates/parolees would benefit from the activity? Can you state your program goals and briefly describe expected outcomes? Are you capable of conforming to rules and regulations for working with inmates/parolees? Can you deliver services consistently without developing personal long-term relationships? What experience do you have motivating, organizing or supervising others to achieve short-term goals? Do you need to see immediate results or are you more interested in long-term successes? Do you enjoy intense periods of work followed by breaks or do you prefer to bring one project or service to closure on a daily basis? Do you prefer to assume a leadership role or are you more comfortable being part of the team? The more you know about yourself improves your ability to help others. The knowledge and attitude you reflect could be what someone else needs.



Suggestion 2: Investigate the Opportunities

Talk to the people involved with inmate & parole services. Find out what opportunities are available. Review all activities and programs offered. Find where these opportunities are geographically located. Assess how many hours you would be able to allocate. Find out who is responsible for what activity. Attempt to learn what services may be available to support your involvement such as public transportation or mentoring for a role you are interested in. Find answers to any questions or concerns you have to make an informed decision. If you feel the need to visit a particular facility or program prior to taking on an assignment, contact the facility or parole-community service's designated VIP Coordinator. Be prepared. We want you to feel you made the right choice.

Suggestion 3: Learn the Ropes

VIP's are provided a Safety & Security Orientation and Site Sensitization to better understand and manage risk that is inherent in working with people incarcerated or being supervised because of criminal activities. This training will enable you to function effectively within an institutional or restrictive environment. You should learn about and follow all rules and regulations. You need to know how to contact your designated VIP Coordinator. You need to know more about policies, procedures and proper protocols to interact responsibly. You need to know that personal appearance, hygiene and good health matters. You will learn about contraband and why VIP's are strictly prohibited from bringing-in any items not specifically authorized, particularly electronic equipment or items that could jeopardize the safety of staff or other VIP's and inmates including, cell phones, cameras, and laptop computers. You will learn that gifts, books, tokens, and personal relationships with inmates are prohibited. For your protection, you will learn about personal confidentiality and why we do not share last names, addresses, phone numbers or any other personal information with inmates/parolees. You will learn about the Prison Rape Elimination Act and you will have to agree in writing to make your best effort to: 1) Detect. 2) Refer for Staff Investigation and 3) Prevent sexual misconduct to maintain the safest environment possible for all. You will continuously be reminded that if you are unsure of what course of action to take, not to hesitate to ask your DOC supervisor for guidance.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION

The purpose of the Department's requirement that you participate in Safety and Security Orientation and subsequent in-service training sessions or annual conferences is to prepare you to work confidently and successfully by providing you with information, techniques and skills. We know that the time and resources you will bring to the correctional system are invaluable. Your willingness to share your time and abilities to affect the lives of those who are incarcerated supports the Department's goal to reduce criminality and recidivism. Reciprocally, we extend our respect and gratitude.

All "VIP's" are required to be recertified annually and to participate in routine training sessions to ensure familiarity and compliance with current Departmental policies, procedures & protocols. In these training sessions you will receive information about how and who to contact if you cannot keep a scheduled commitment. Your role as a VIP will be discussed and your responsibilities will be outlined. You will learn how your relationship with staff will impact your success and how to support inmate services effectively.

You will learn about the state's correctional system. You may be introduced to Correctional Officers, Lieutenants, Captains, Wardens, Counselors, Recreation Supervisors and Chaplains. These individuals and their professionalism will give meaning to the purpose, philosophy, organization and 'chain of command' which define the Department. The success of your role depends on establishing good working relationships.

Rules and regulations will be reviewed, including relationships with inmates, confidentiality of their records, expectations and reporting procedures related to the Prison Rape elimination Act, contagious viruses, natural disasters, etc. Specific procedures such as parking, signing-in and unique aspects of each setting will also be explained during your Safety/Security Orientation or Site-Sensitization.

To help you become acclimated to a correctional setting, you will learn what to expect, the most effective ways of dealing with inmates and explanations of their needs. You should direct any unanswered questions to the trainer so that you will be completely at ease with your new assignment. Of course, as with every other new endeavor, you'll learn more "on the job".

You should be prepared to leave your valid driver's license or picture ID at the facility control center upon arrival and remember to exchange your "Escort Required Badge" for your ID as you exit.

If you plan to visit any institution or unit other than where your schedule is authorized it's important that you contact that unit's designated VIP Coordinator and request approval or prior authorization. Clearly state your reason for wanting to visit and wait for permission before planning to visit. If cleared to participate you will be scheduled to participate in a 'site sensitization' ensuring you are familiar with the new staff contacts, policies, protocols and emergency procedures.

GUIDELINES

- Be prepared to invest your time. Live up to your commitment.
- Be patient. Miracles don't happen overnight.
- Hear what is being said. It is easy to talk; there's a real art to being a good listener.
- Be prepared to work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Respect others. Respect forms a basis for a positive relationship.
- Be an image builder. Demonstrate self-esteem and build up self-esteem in others. Believe that every person is unique, important or valued.
- Help others acquire the ability to make the right choices for themselves. Never force your opinions on others.
- Be a good role model. Lead by example.
- Do not engage in gossip.
- The rules and regulations of the Department are to be followed by everyone. Never show preferential treatment.
- Keep your word. Don't make promises you can't fulfill.
- Be objective. Don't be tempted to take sides. Don't let your emotions put you at odds with the Department, other VIP's or the inmates/parolees.
- Dress suitably for your role. Practice good personal hygiene. Don't make your appearance an issue.
- Make your VIP Coordinator aware of any family relationships or friendships you have with inmates/parolees. Avoid potential conflicts or allegations of "undue familiarity" or favoritism.
- Don't engage in activities that could compromise your integrity or effectiveness.
- Refrain from using inappropriate signs of affection including hugs, handshakes or any signals that may be misinterpreted.
- Don't probe or delve into an offender's criminal history. Respect privacy.
- Be supportive, not subversive. Offer suggestions, not criticism.

- Conduct yourself in accordance with the rules. Be an asset, not a liability. Cooperate fully with correctional staff.

- Follow schedules to avoid conflict with other activities. The safe & secure operation of the facility is everyone's priority.

- Use appropriate language.

- If you cannot keep an appointment, please notify the person in charge.

- Learn to discern. Listening does not mean that you have to believe everything you hear.

- Check the facts. Do not be manipulated.

- Don't pre-judge. We all have prejudices. Make a conscious effort to overcome biases.

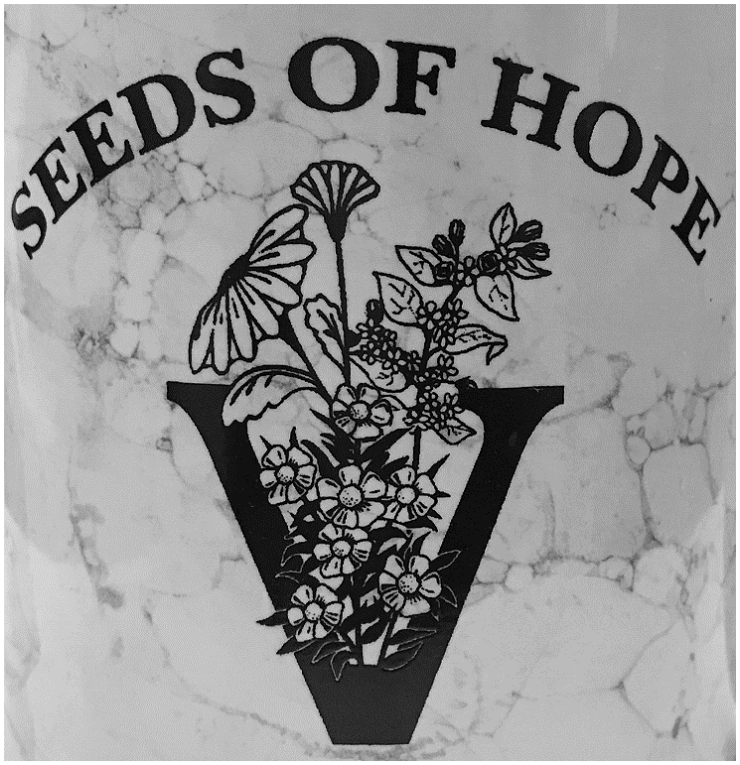
- Be ready for setbacks. Don't give up. Growth will come through perseverance.

- Be yourself. Nobody likes a "phony".

- We all make mistakes… don't be afraid to believe in forgiveness.

- It should be clearly understood that all staff and VIP's are absolutely prohibited from criticism or disrespect toward any religion or religious beliefs held by others.

Remember, you are entering into new relationships. These relationships should be positive. People are changed for better or worse through these interactions. Make the best of it.



RULES FOR VIP's

VIP's in Connecticut Corrections must adhere to the following:

1. **Park appropriately. Lock all personal items in your vehicle or store in lockers as available in facility entrances. Take nothing inside a facility, absolutely no unauthorized items will be allowed including letters, cell phones or personal items in or out of any correctional facility. Cameras, laptops, tablets, DVD players, recording or electronic devices, including games are strictly prohibited.**

2. **Respect and maintain the confidentiality of privileged information. Follow all instructions from staff carefully.**

3. **If/when staff ask for information, communicate clearly and respectfully.**

4. **If you change your name through marriage or religious conversion or probate action or you move to a new address or change phone number(s), remember to update one of our VIP Coordinators in a timely manner.**

5. **Report any perceived inappropriate behavior or actions of a sexual nature directed towards an inmate, staff or VIP. All sexual activity is inappropriate in any correctional setting. Your sign-off on the VIP Application MOU binds you to compliance with the (federal and state) Prison Rape Elimination Act. If you do not make every effort possible to detect report and refer for investigation any sexual misconduct you may be subject to criminal sanctions including prosecution.**

6. **If you experience a personal hardship, including any arrest or serious illness please inform your VIP Coordinator, and if appropriate take leave from your VIP functions until matters are resolved.**

7. **Do not make phone calls, correspond or perform similar services for inmates. Do not give offenders personal information, including your phone numbers, home addresses or e-mail. Your personal safety and security could be compromised and you can be terminated for undue familiarity.**

8. **Refrain from taking photographs or conveying any letters or inmate's possessions including artwork or creative writing for any purpose without specific permission from the Warden's Office or administration.**

9. **Refrain from giving absolutely anything to inmates without explicit permission. If you have a family member or friend who is incarcerated or on parole inform your VIP Coordinator to avoid a conflict of interest.**

10. **Report any expression or ideation about self-harm, suicide, threats, damage to state property or PREA-sexual misconduct including harassment to the designated VIP Coordinator immediately, if not available –any staff.**

11. **Leave nothing behind for the inmates' use, even if permission was given to bring it in. Follow staff guidance at all times.**

12. **Refrain from inappropriate signs of affection which may be misinterpreted. Refrain from hugging or touching or handshakes. Smiles & "thumbs up" are okay!**

13. **Sponsorship for an inmate or parolee for any type of community release (i.e. parole, transitional supervision, transitional placement, halfway house, including reentry furlough) is currently prohibited.**

14. **Do not enter into business ventures with inmates. Do not refer inmates/parolees to employment or volunteer opportunities. This would constitute favoritism.**

15. **Do not give or receive gifts, loans or articles from inmates or their families and friends.**

16. **If arrested for any reason, report what happened to the facility VIP Coordinator as quickly as possible. You will be asked to take a leave of absence until your personal matter is resolved.**

17. **Volunteers, Interns & Professional Partners must understand and comply with staff to minimize risk, danger, possible injury, assault and the spread of infectious diseases. Although every effort will be made to reduce your risk this is a shared responsibility.**

DIRECTORY OF OPPORTUNITIES:
The ABC's of Corrections

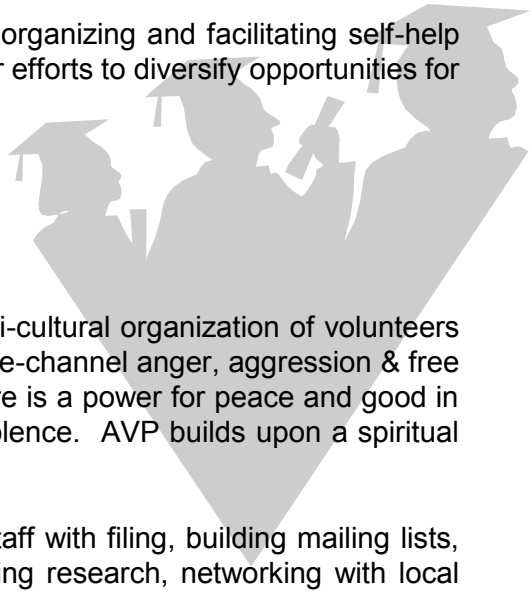
To help you get involved, we have listed various job descriptions. If you have a particular skill or ability which is not represented in this Directory, complete attached Program Proposal form and submit to Volunteer Services Unit Supervisor Calma Frett.

A ADDICTION SERVICES:

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA): Qualified service providers are needed to lead Open Book, Panel & Step Meetings. Qualified sponsors, speakers & individuals with familiarity with AA or NA 12-Step Programming are encouraged to apply.

Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA), Ala-Teen, Cocaine Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Parents Anonymous, Prisoners Anonymous & "Overcomers": Qualified service providers with experience with step-based or developmental programming are needed in most locations.

Self-Help Programs: VIPs with resources & experience in organizing and facilitating self-help activities are encouraged to offer their expertise to staff in our efforts to diversify opportunities for inmates in all institutions & centers.



B BASIC EDUCATIONAL SERVICES:

Alternatives to Violence Project: The AVP Project is a multi-cultural organization of volunteers offering experiential workshops that empower individuals to re-channel anger, aggression & free themselves from violence. Volunteers must believe that there is a power for peace and good in everyone and that this power has the ability to transform violence. AVP builds upon a spiritual base of respect and caring for self and others.

Clerical/Administrative Support: VIPs may assist agency staff with filing, building mailing lists, making labels, copying documents, typing reports, conducting research, networking with local resource providers, and assisting with the screening and training process for new VIPs.

Community Services: VIPs may be needed in Parole Offices, Halfway Houses and community-based programs to help organize activities for inmates returning to the community, such as life skills, mentoring, family counseling, housing & job referrals or AA/NA fellowship.

Health Education/Disease Prevention: VIPs may help organize education & prevention support groups. Qualified students in health/medical vocational programs may apply for internships through the UCONN Correctional Managed Health Care Unit, (i.e. Residencies, Mental Health; Nursing; Diabetic Care, etc.) or through our network of facility-based Recreation Supervisors.

Hospice: Hospice trained volunteers may work with facility-based Hospice Programs at MacDougall CI (Suffield), Osborn CI (Somers) and York CI (Niantic).

Internships: Non-stipend internship opportunities are available where supervision by qualified, professional staff is available. Daytime hours preferred. Mature, dependable interns are encouraged to participate in program cross-training to assist staff with program functions.

Literacy Volunteers: VIPs who have been trained to utilize LVA's methods and materials are encouraged to mentor & support inmates functioning as 'peer tutors' in correctional school settings. LVA training can be facilitated by calling any of Connecticut's numerous affiliate organizations.

Mentors for Children of Prisoners: Qualified mentors are needed by numerous community-based agencies to support children with a parent in prison. If you are interested in becoming a mentor for children with a 70% greater risk of becoming incarcerated than kids without a parent in prison/jail call the Governor's Prevention Partnership for more information about opportunities.

Mini-Course Instructors: VIPs with an ability to teach or organize 'continuing education' activities, especially in the areas of parenting, arts & crafts, hobby clubs, business affairs or fitness/wellness are encouraged to draft a curriculum or course objectives. Such classes may be one time seminars or limited to a number of weeks, or scheduled as needed to fully cover course goals. RSVP & SCORE volunteers (retired executives) welcome.

Parenting/Family Aides: VIPs are needed to promote family awareness & parenting skills. Some may be able to assist inmate's families by helping them to learn to cope with loss of income & promote involvement in community based mentoring services. VIPs assist staff in the operation of Family Visitor Centers at Osborn CI and Niantic CI or help to strengthen or initiate Family Support Services in most facilities. Some Volunteers may be qualified for training to serve as mentors for Youthful Offenders incarcerated at MYI (boys) or York CI (girls).

PEP-People Empowering People: PEP Programs are sponsored by UCONN External or Field Programs. PEP facilitators organize volunteers to present seminars/workshops for inmates needing life-skills or information for reentry planning (e.g. family reunification, finding housing, jobs, counseling services, creating resumes, volunteer activities, programs, etc.)

Prison Arts: In this role, artists introduce inmates to the value of visual arts – drawing, painting & sculpture as well as poetry, creative writing & 'expressive arts therapy'. Some inmates are 'beginners' others are highly advanced. These activities may be collaborated with the CPA Prison Arts Program or offered by unaffiliated artists or groups. Donation of quality art supplies directly to the CPA Program is welcome.

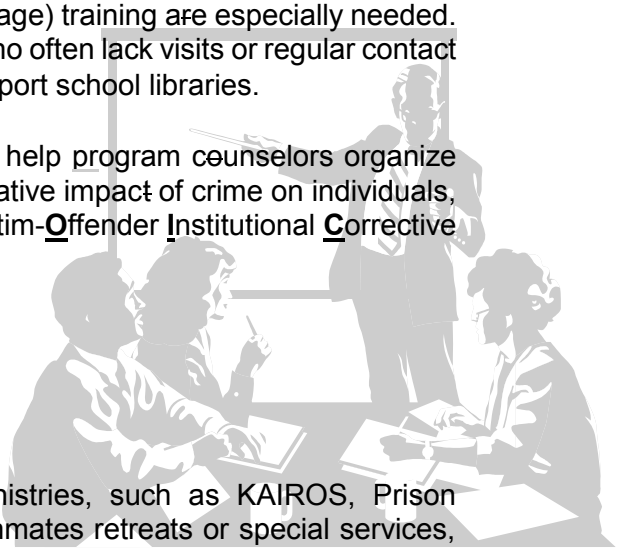
Professional Partners: Professional Partners, including Program/Service Contractors, Researchers, GED Examiners or employees of correctional support agencies, including college and university Professors may be provided a Safety & Security Orientation and facilitated for visits to multiple institutions or field components. These 'Partners' or adjunct staff are highly valued for their specialty work. Being cleared as a Professional Partner by the VIP Services Unit can expedite one-to-one visits or group activities in facilities or parole units.

Recreation Specialists: If you have experience coaching or facilitating sports, aerobics, yoga, meditation or other fitness/wellness activity you may be able to assist Recreation Supervisors in building structured voluntary-elective programs for inmates. VIPs are also needed to oversee inmates with gardening, grounds beautification or green house projects. Help is also welcome to enhance inmate newsletters & to update facility visitor's kiosks. Those able to organize chess, dominos, checker & card tournaments or other passive recreational activities are also welcome.

Thresholds: Cheshire Thresholds is an all-volunteer organization which trains volunteers to teach inmates decision-making and problem-solving skills. Threshold's volunteers conduct weekend training sessions twice each year to orient new Volunteers. Program Manual or instructional resources including reentry workbooks are provided. Volunteers are asked to support three 12-week cycles or about 100hrs per year.

Tutors & School Support: Tutors and/or educational mentors may work with correctional teachers to help inmates with special challenges. Some may help to improve inmate's abilities to read, write and learn. Those with ESL (English as a Second Language) training are especially needed. Some sponsors may work with inmates with 'special needs' who often lack visits or regular contact from the outside community. Others may be assigned to support school libraries.

VOICES/Victim Services: VIPs are occasionally needed to help program counselors organize sensitivity groups for inmates to make them aware of the negative impact of crime on individuals, families and the community. "VOICES" is an acronym for **V**ictim-**O**ffender **I**nstitutional **C**orrective **E**ducation **S**ervices.



C CHAPLAINCY SERVICES

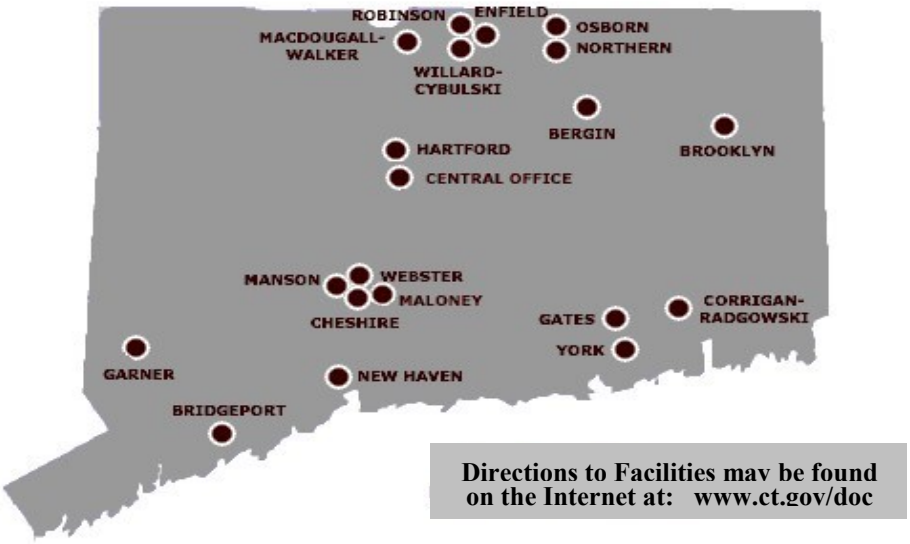
Special Events: Groups of volunteers in organized ministries, such as KAIROS, Prison Fellowship or Emmaus support Staff Chaplains by offering inmates retreats or special services, including life-skills seminars from a faith-based perspective.

Spiritual Studies: Qualified Clergy or other Religious Leaders are invited to assist correctional Chaplains (staff) in the formation of inmate prayer groups and spiritual fellowship activities. Volunteer Clergy can help staff to enhance inmates' understanding of their faith and its traditions. A syllabus/course outline must be proposed to the Lead (staff) Chaplain for review and authorization. Include copies of any religious literature or materials recommended.

Worship Services: Ordained clergy are encouraged to volunteer to assist correctional Chaplains in the provision of Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, Jewish, Native American & other organized and appropriate services for inmates on a regular schedule.

Mentors: Mentors trained to conduct the Alpha Program or Overcomers Groups can assist Staff Chaplains by guiding inmates/parolees to develop a greater understanding of their spirit and/or the role & responsibility of exercising religious beliefs in their daily lives.

Connecticut Correctional Facilities & Locations



Directions to Facilities may be found on the Internet at: www.ct.gov/doc

DISTRICT 1

Cheshire CI
900 Highland Avenue
Cheshire, Connecticut 06410

Enfield CI
289 Shaker Road, POB 1500
Enfield,Connecticut 06083-1500

Garner CI
50 Nunnawauk Road, POB 5500
Newtown, Connecticut 06470

MacDougall-Walker CI
1153 East Street South
Suffield, Connecticut 06080

Manson Youth Institution
42 Jarvis Street
Cheshire, Connecticut 06410

Northern CI
287 Bilton Road, POB 665
Somers, Connecticut 06071

Osborn CI
335 Bilton Road, POB 100
Somers, Connecticut 06071

York CI
201 West Main Street
Niantic, Connecticut 06357

DISTRICT 2

Bridgeport CC
1106 North Avenue
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604

Brooklyn CI
59 Hartford Road, Rte 6
Brooklyn, Connecticut 06234

Corrigan-Radgowski CI
986 Norwich-New London Tpke.
Uncasville, Connecticut 06382

Hartford CC
177 Weston Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06120

New Haven CC
245 Whalley Avenue
New Haven, Connecticut 06511

Robinson CI
285 Shaker Road, POB 1400
Enfield, Connecticut 06083-1400

Willard-Cybulski CI
391 Shaker Road, POB 2400
Enfield, Connecticut 06083-2400

GENERAL ORIENTATION

Visitors are expected to use common sense and good judgment when confronted with a new or unusual situation within the correctional system. When there is any doubt as to a course of action, you should consult with your program Coordinator or in their absence the facility Shift Supervisor.

The primary responsibility of correctional employees is to provide for the safety of fellow staff, including guests, and the safe custody of inmates in their charge.

As a VIP you must assist in this endeavor by reporting any action or condition which could compromise that responsibility. For example, information about inmates' behaviors/actions that could lead to escape, riot, suicide, sexual misconduct or damage to individuals or property.

Solicitation of donations to organizations that any VIP is associated with is strictly prohibited.

You should remember to conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times. Do not use, nor allow an inmate to use, obscene, vulgar or profane language. Do not allow deviation from authorized, structured and purposeful activities.

When within the security perimeter of any facility, you should not move around the corridors without staff escort.

Any sickness, accidents, or unusual behavior of inmates should be reported to the facility Shift Supervisor immediately.

If you are injured in any way while at a facility, report such injury to the Shift Supervisor immediately.

Unauthorized items should not be brought into or out of a facility by anyone for any reason. This applies to, but is not limited to, food, clothing articles, jewelry, paper supplies, photographic or recording equipment, DVD or MP3 players, pagers, cell phones, e-devices of any nature and personal property not authorized properly or necessary for the performance of ones duties.

If you change your name, home address, report this change as soon as possible to the Supervisor of the VIP Services Unit. We need to know in order to update 'in case of emergency' information.

If keys or personal items are lost within a facility, report such loss to your supervisor immediately.

If you know a relative or friend who is incarcerated, you should inform your supervisor. This is necessary to avoid putting you and inmates in a compromising or conflicting position.

Report any behavior or act of a sexual nature directed towards an inmate by any employee, contractor or VIP. It is the responsibility of all to maintain professional boundaries with inmates under their supervision per PREA-The Prison Rape Elimination Act.

PREA Standards

- The CT-DOC is required to ensure that all Volunteers, Interns & Professional Partners (VIP's) who have contact with inmates are trained to understand, detect, respond and prevent sexual misconduct and harassment.
- All VIP's must clearly understand the CT-DOC's "Zero Tolerance" policy regarding sexual abuse and sexual harassment and informed how to report such incidents.
- The CT-DOC asks for your cooperation and expects your participation in training and documentation confirming that you understand and agree to abide by PREA Compliance Training provided.
- Per PREA standard 115.77: Any contractor or volunteer who engages in sexual abuse shall be prohibited from contact with inmates and shall be reported to law enforcement agencies, unless the activity was clearly not criminal, and to relevant licensing bodies.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

No Wireless Devices Allowed Inside Facilities! Do not make phone calls for inmates!
Do not bring letters in or out!
Do not share photographs! Do not correspond with inmates! No special cards!
No Cell phones, Tape recorders, CD/DVD players are allowed! No e-games!
Business ventures with inmates are forbidden! Do not send e-books, books or discs!
Never give or take gifts, make loans, deposit funds or promise anything to inmates!
It's important that you act professionally at all times! Respect boundaries!
Report any sexual or social misconduct! Stay home if you're feeling ill!
Maintain good rapport with your VIP Liaison or Supervisor. Do
not compromise safety or security in any manner.

SECURITY ISSUES

Appearance:
Keep your appearance or dress simple and appropriate to the correctional environment. Pocket books and knotted ties are not generally allowed. Don't wear short skirts or shorts that expose body parts. Do not make your clothing style an issue. Remove excessive jewelry. If you wear a tie, clip-ons (pull-offs) are practical.

Professionalism:
Appearance, conduct, language and attitude reflect the character and integrity of the individual. Demonstrate 'good taste' and you will gain respect from everyone. Know your program. Know your boundaries. Treat everyone equally. Be patient with custody staff.

Personal Perimeters and Boundaries:
Whenever possible, everyone should use formal titles, for example: Warden; Sir; Officer; Mr./Ms.; or Mrs., Captain, Lieutenant. You should not befriend any specific inmate. Rather, act as an aide, assisting inmates to learn ways to help themselves. Never give out phone numbers, addresses, or personal information. Absolutely nothing should be taken in or out of an institution without specific permission from the administration. Safety and security is everyone's priority. Do not contact offenders outside of the institution, unless authorized and supervised by DOC staff.

Contraband:
Items such as candy, gum, foodstuff, clothing, jewelry, televisions, radios, coffee pots, books and many other items are available to inmates through Commissary; sometimes with specific limitations dependent on an inmate's behavior. Anything not provided or specifically authorized by the institution is considered contraband or forbidden goods. Any items not specifically authorized will be confiscated. This "Rule" is for the safety and security of everyone. All facilities are non-smoking environments and tobacco products are strictly forbidden. Giving any item to an inmate without permission will result in your dismissal and disciplinary action including loss of privileges for the inmate(s).

Con-Games:
Never agree to "bend the rules" because this can create a prime target for a scam or con game. It is important to refrain from long conversations about personal likes and dislikes or other intimate matters. No favors should be accepted. Excessive compliments should be deflected. Requests for unauthorized materials should be denied. "No" should mean no! An inmate's defiance of any direct request should result in an immediate report to the Shift Supervisor. Gossip or stories about other inmates, staff or VIP's should be avoided. Intimidation or hostility should not be tolerated. Pushing the limits of proper conduct will result in the termination of all activities.

Fearing relapse after release, some inmates may request you to provide them with shelter and employment or support. You should never be the primary resource provider, rather a bridge to available resources. Your role is to help the inmate/parolee to help him or herself. You are advised never to give out your home phone number or address to inmates. There have been instances where inmates persistently beg for assistance. There are cases where people have been hurt, victimized

and unfortunately murdered. If you are cleared to provide follow-up services in the community, you should maintain frequent contact with your Program Coordinator.

Inappropriate and Mis-interpretable Conduct:
Some inmates may demonstrate a strong need for affection. Many inmates may view your expression of concern or ongoing participation in a program as a romantic signal. Should you sense an inappropriate relationship building, you should report it immediately. If you continue developing a personal relationship, be prepared to resign or be suspended.

Client Failure:
It is typical for as many as half of all inmates enrolled in activities to quit. Inmates have other reasons for wanting to be part of an activity, for example, free coffee, fellowship movement outside of housing areas or gang activity. Report any confrontation, incident or important information about security concerns, such as escape, suicide or riot to the facility Shift Supervisor immediately. Do not give an inmate credit if not earned. Do not let inmates bend the rules or manipulate you. Stay focused on the inmates who want to learn and grow.

Bending the Rules:
Many inmates have become experts at storytelling. Problems do occur. These situations are best handled by staff. When you are 'taken in' by an inmate, make sure to report what you were told to your Coordinator. Ask the Coordinator to let you know if there was any follow-up or consequence to your report. Do not allow your integrity or purpose to be compromised.

- Do not let anyone convince you to mail letters.
- Do not let anyone convince you to carry correspondence between inmates in the same or different institutions.
- Do not let anyone convince you to bring packages from "families" in/out of institutions.
- Do not let anyone convince you to put money on their inmate account.

Not all inmates are manipulative. One of the best ways not to get manipulated is never to say or do anything you would not want to be made public information.

Management of Aggressive Behavior:
If an inmate becomes hostile, the best advice is to back off and remain calm. If alone, gradually move to where staff can see you. Correctional staff will handle difficult situations. Remember that inmates have been convicted or have pending charges for criminal offenses. Many inmates have lived in harsh conditions. Physical intimidation and violence are a common occurrence for some. If any inmate is hostile towards others, assaults staff or threatens any VIP, seek staff assistance immediately.

Emergency Procedures/Communications:
If you hear a fire alarm sound, you will be expected to evacuate the area in accordance with posted emergency exit procedures. Listen to staff as they may direct you to another area. If the fire is in the immediate vicinity, you should communicate the problem to staff and depart the area. Always make sure you have signed into the facility properly. It is also your responsibility to view and understand the emergency evacuation plan in your assigned area.

Follow all instructions given by staff. Each facility has a "Control Center" that can be reached by dialing a designated emergency code number. Just tell the Officer where and what the problem is. If you find that it would be impractical to attempt to actually talk on the phone, then by simply knocking the receiver off the hook, the Control Center Officer may be able to identify the location of the problem and send staff to the scene without further action.

Critical Incidents:

In the event that an incident happens and you are in a dangerous situation, the best advice is to stay put until staff secures the area. Don't act instinctively, heroes can get hurt. Be cooperative with the antagonist. Comply with what is asked. Take cover and hide if possible. Keep a low profile. Don't judge, condemn or provoke. Do not make any threats or attempt to negotiate. Act naturally. Listen carefully. Be quietly observant and write down what was witnessed as quickly after the incident as possible. Seek counseling when it is over. No one should have to be alone after an incident. Make sure you seek out your Program Coordinator and discuss what to do in an emergency.

Gangs and Security Risk Groups:

Inmates have utilized programs and activities to conduct gang business. Gang activity, such as displays of color, hand signals, and exchanging personal notes should be reported to the highest ranking Supervisor in the institution. Gang activities can result in people being hurt. If you witness any suspected gang activity, be sure **not** to react directly. Do not do or say anything that might compromise your safety. Be discreet! When you are safely apart from all inmate contact, report what you saw or heard directly to the Shift Supervisor.

Infectious Diseases:

It is important to realize that the Department makes every effort possible to control infectious diseases, including HIV, TB, Hepatitis MRSA, the Ebola Virus and others. Every visitor should exercise caution because viruses, germs and contagious infections may spread quickly in institutional settings. A good rule of conduct is to presume that your health and well-being, and that of others, requires continuous attention and respect. Stay home if you are feeling ill. Contact your VIP Coordinator, Program Supervisor or Group Leader to let staff know you are sick and unable to fulfill your commitment. Everyone will be appreciative and understand.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Every inmate is tested for TB when entering the system.

- HIV and Hepatitis B are transmitted only by blood contact or body fluids.
- After admission, inmates are offered routine medical services and care.
- You may be asked to complete a form to help prevent the spread of the Ebola Virus.

Site-Sensitization:

Correctional facilities can be restrictive and potentially dangerous settings. Policies, rules and regulations are enforced to protect everyone. Be prepared to be surveyed if the Center for Disease Control issues national infectious disease warning. Be prepared to participate in mandatory PREA-Prison Rape Elimination training. Become familiar with exits, areas where there can be mass movement and areas to be avoided. Housing units will not be included in tours other than when activities are scheduled in day rooms. What privacy institutional living provides is very important to most inmates.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VIP's

- Always be honest with the inmate or parolee.
- Treat the inmate/parolee with respect.
- Talk to the inmate/parolee on their level.
- Be professional at all times.
- Be a role model for the inmate/parolee.
- Listen carefully with sincerity.
- Accept people with different values.
- Be persistent and patient.
- Be dependable.
- Be capable of empathizing.

Be objective.
Be mature and confident.
Be enthusiastic.
Use discretion.
Submit reports when required.
Seek to establish adult relationships.
Use good judgment.

Helping Hands Make A Difference

A GENERAL OVERVIEW

What to Expect: Expect the unexpected at all times. With people new to them, inmates and parolees tend to be reserved, even leery. Some will be friendly and outgoing from the start; others need time to build trust in the newcomer and confidence before they will take care to be polite and pleasant and adhere to the rules of the program.

Many inmates come from inner city environments. Some of their friends and relatives may have been or are presently incarcerated, some in the same institution. Many have held full-time jobs, some have never worked. Some are college educated, many are high school graduates, some left school at an early age, and some are illiterate. Many have been physically or emotionally abused, or both. The greatest numbers of inmates are from minority backgrounds. Many have used illegal drugs; many have habitually abused alcohol. Nonetheless, some are anxious to learn new skills and may work diligently to acquire new skills. Many are keen judges of character and superb con artists. Most have the courage to let you know how they feel without pulling any punches.

Inmates want good guidance and personal reinforcement. We need to help them to understand that "life is hard" and they need to develop goals and more acceptable thinking and to exhibit the motivation to implement practical and pro-social solutions to their problems. They need to acquire the proper education and skills to succeed and they need counseling to help them decide on the best choices to make. Most programs are structured to achieve a high degree of success leading to heightened self/other awareness, better choices, etc.

It is important for you to remember that inmates facing the realities of incarceration experience many limitations and few personal visits. Inmates entering the system from the community quickly perceive their loss of social identity and freedom to pursue feeling good. Phone calls are limited. Correspondence is limited. Showers and meals are scheduled. There are limited activities and occasional periods of isolation. There is usually no one to share personal issues and problems with and few to trust. Due to these circumstances, you may be vulnerable to inmates who try to persuade you to provide for their needs.

Most staff appreciate your efforts. If at any time you have a question or need assistance, correctional staff are ready and willing to offer help.

Inmates who participate in elective activities learn to appreciate and respect those who commit to regular programs and schedules.

Unfortunately, behavior modification is, for most, a long and tedious process. Patience becomes the most important commodity you may possess. The more familiar you become with the Department Offender Accountability Plan (OAP) process, the better you will be able to help inmates dealing with long term confinement or preparation for reentry.

Help us build bridges and pathways enabling offenders to develop productive lives. You serve a unique purpose by helping inmates to realize that they can grow to become good citizens and can accept personal responsibility for their behavior. Inmates know that you receive few rewards, if any, for the time and effort you invest in helping us to broaden and strengthen correctional programs and activities.

CONCLUSION

It is the intent of the Commissioner, Wardens and Staff to make the time you invest with us rewarding and safe. With your continued cooperation we are sure that this can be achieved. If this has not been said already, we wish to thank you for your help in corrections!

Best Wishes!

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For more information about the Connecticut Department of Correction, including policies and available resources, you may refer to the agency's web site at: www.ct.gov/doc.

For VIP Forms or an e-copy of this Handbook and a Directory of Opportunities for Citizen Involvement, click open "Volunteer Services Unit" from the Home Page of the CT/DOC Web site.

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