

Managing Volunteer Conflicts and Reports

Note: This procedure is intended to encourage open communication and to provide volunteers with an avenue for resolving conflicts and complaints. This is based on the assumption that the CCE Association involved has followed the recommended procedures for selecting, orienting, training, and supervising the volunteer involved in the conflict or other concern. These procedures are not intended to create a contract between CCE and its volunteers and may be altered to meet the needs of different situations and contingencies. All information received will be handled with as much discretion as possible.

The issue/concern will be discussed only with those directly involved or necessary to assist in resolving the matter.

Document each step, in writing, as the process progresses.

Informal Resolution – recommended for use when a volunteer is involved in a conflict with other volunteers, program participants or staff, and when it is determined by CCE, and all parties involved, that informal resolution is appropriate for the conflict at issue. Prior to selection of informal resolution, CCE must familiarize the parties with the formal review option. CCE may determine the need to use a Formal Review in serious situations (for e.g., allegations of harassment or misuse of funds).

1. The parties involved should meet face to face to discuss the conflict.
2. The parties can ask the appropriate supervisor (if the supervisor is one of the parties involved, the next level supervisor should be approached) to attend if they are not comfortable meeting on their own.
3. Summarize the resolution in writing.

Formal Review – recommended for use when a volunteer is the subject of a complaint by another volunteer or a staff member or when Informal Resolution has failed.

1. The written report is made to the supervisor who may seek input from others in reaching a written decision (which outlines corrective action) in a fair and timely manner.
2. The written decision is discussed with the Executive Director and appropriate action taken.

Adapted from CCE Association Volunteer Involvement Policy Procedure - Revised: 04/2019

Releasing an Ineffective Or Detrimental Volunteer

Before an ineffective volunteer is released, the following sequence of steps is recommended:

1. Genuine efforts should be made to correct the negative situation, including closer supervision, re-training and motivational tactics. If these fail, a formal consultation should be scheduled. If the individual does not voluntarily resign during that conversation, the staff member responsible for the program will establish specific expectations and a specific trial period. After this trial period, the volunteer will be released if the expectations have not been met.
2. A schedule of supervisory meetings will be included in the written documentation that will be given to the volunteer and a copy of the documentation will be filed with the volunteer's records.
3. If expectations have not been met by the end of the trial period, the volunteer should be officially released during a face-to-face meeting. Departure details such as the return of equipment, completion of reports should be discussed.
4. A letter should follow this verbal notification. See samples on the next page. If the volunteer has been credibly accused of committing an illegal act or seriously endangering the safety or well-being of others, or of engaging in other behavior deemed by CCE to warrant immediate suspension, the responsible volunteer supervisor will immediately suspend the volunteer without prior discussion. As soon as feasible, a decision whether to release the volunteer or to follow the above procedure will be made in consultation with the Executive Director.

CCE Association Volunteer Involvement Policy Procedure Revised: 02/2018

Important Contacts

If the complaint relates to an **equal program or other civil rights issue except for one of equal employment** (as it does not apply to volunteers), use the process outlined in your local association Affirmative Action Diversity and Inclusion Plan [statewide AADIP template at: <http://staff.cce.cornell.edu/orgdev/Pages/diversity.aspx>].

If the report relates to Sexual Harassment, use the formal review above reporting to supervising staff member, Association Executive Director, or designee. Alternatively, a volunteer may contact the Equal Opportunity Officer, Cornell University, 382 Roberts Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853; P: 607-255-2135; C: 607-351-5899; or email: cce-biasconcerns@cornell.edu or sfd3@cornell.edu. Complete the CCE Sexual Harassment Reporting Form for Volunteers or report verbally.