



AFS-USA VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Effective February 2011

Volunteer policies ensure that AFS-USA provides all AFS-USA volunteers with a reasonable and uniform system of administration. They reflect the core values of AFS-USA, as well as the importance of the volunteer-staff partnership and the following core principles, which are intended to serve as important cornerstones of our volunteer development program.

1. AFS-USA will be an organization which seeks, tracks, and maintains enduring relationships with all its supporters

We will actively work towards a model of volunteer development whereby any individual who supports AFS in any way has the opportunity to maintain a relationship with the organization. This relationship can include, but is not limited to being a participant on an AFS program, host family, natural family, volunteer, donor, school official, and/or community leader. In order to support this relationship, we will have a database and process that allows us to capture all AFS supporters and track their involvement with the organization. We will recognize and encourage all AFS supporters to contribute to AFS based on their desires and abilities and recognize that the ways in which supporters may wish to contribute may change over time.

2. AFS-USA will be an organization of continuous learning

We are committed to continuous learning throughout the organization. We recognize that one of the reasons why people volunteer with us is for the opportunity to learn and gain new skills and to develop their intercultural awareness. We will ensure that all volunteers are provided with the ongoing training and resources they need for their positions, as well as to support our mission of intercultural education and understanding. Our commitment to learning and training extends to staff as well. We will ensure that all staff as well as leadership volunteers are trained in basic volunteer management practices.

3. AFS-USA will be an innovative volunteer organization

In order for AFS-USA to continue to grow we need to be innovative in our approach to volunteer development. This means that we are committed to experimenting and trying new strategies to strengthen and diversify our volunteer base by recognizing the changing nature of volunteerism in the U.S. and continually adapting the ways we recruit, integrate, train, and communicate with volunteers. In addition as an organization we will work with volunteers to continuously identify new and /or better approaches to supporting and delivering our programs. We recognize that having fun as well as providing time and space for creativity are key elements to supporting innovation in an organization and we will work towards making sure that these elements are not lost. We are committed and will continue to develop the means and the programs to support the needs of the 21st and 22nd century volunteer.

4. AFS-USA will be a well managed volunteer organization

We are committed to being a well managed volunteer organization. This means that we will have clearly defined volunteer policies and the processes in place to support them. All volunteer roles will have specific position descriptions, and volunteers will be provided with the training, support, materials and information they need to fulfill their roles. Volunteer positions will be linked to a career ladder which will enable individuals to move to higher levels of responsibility according to their own interests and continue to build upon their experience in the organization. Along the way they will receive performance feedback and recognition on a regular basis, in order to encourage their ongoing development. In exchange, AFS will hold volunteers accountable to accomplishing what they commit to do and to perform in accordance with the same quality standards and expectations that it has for its staff.

These policies help to inform AFS-USA volunteers on how they should perform their duties in their volunteering role. They provide a shared understanding of relationships between AFS-USA and its volunteers and assist with meeting volunteer expectations.

Volunteer policies provide AFS-USA volunteers with:

- clarity of understanding and direction on the role of volunteering for AFS-USA
- confidence that they are volunteering for a reputable organization of high standards
- stated boundaries to their volunteering on what is or is not acceptable behavior
- a framework to promote volunteering with AFS-USA

AFS-USA volunteer policies apply to all registered AFS-USA volunteers.

AFS-USA volunteer policies

The AFS-USA volunteer policies include the following topics:

1. Volunteering
2. Global Link & AFS Wiki
3. Code of Conduct
4. Communication
5. Complying with AFS-USA, AFS-International, CSIET, and US Department of State Standards and Regulations
6. Confidentiality
7. Conflict of Interest
8. Contracts
9. Customer Service Standards
10. Duty of Care
11. Equal Opportunity
12. Finances
13. Grievances and Disputes
14. Harassment
15. Health and Safety
16. Health and Well-Being of Program Participants
17. Policy Governance
18. Reimbursement
19. Rewards and Recognition
20. Volunteer Performance Management & Termination

21. Volunteer Insurance
22. Volunteer Relationships with Staff
23. Volunteer Training
24. Other Rules Relating to AFS-USA's Business Operations
25. Continuous Improvement

1. Volunteering

Volunteers are central to the mission and values of AFS-USA. To enhance the volunteering experience, meet regulatory requirements and to discharge its duty of care for volunteers, AFS-USA, Inc. will:

- recruit, screen and register volunteers in accordance with AFS-USA standards and in accordance with equal opportunity and non-discrimination laws and regulations
- acknowledge the rights of volunteers
- define volunteer roles and develop clear role position descriptions
- provide appropriate levels of support and management for volunteers
- provide volunteers with required orientations and training, as well as development opportunities
- treat volunteers with respect and acknowledge their value
- encourage volunteers to participate in organizational decision making through the appropriate channels
- provide adequate insurance coverage
- ensure that volunteers have access to information on policies relating to grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures
- comply with AFS-USA policies on volunteering
- recognize and acknowledge the contributions of volunteers

2. Global Link & AFS Wiki

Access to Global Link (www.usa.afsglobal.org) is available to all registered AFS-USA volunteers. In addition, registered AFS-USA volunteers are able to make edits or revisions and post items on the AFS Wiki (www.afswiki.org). Proper use of all information that is available from Global Link and/or the AFS Wiki is required by all AFS-USA volunteers. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Not sharing confidential information with people outside of AFS
- Not providing your user ID and password to others
- Not using personal contact information of AFS constituents **for non-AFS**

purposes.

Please note: Personal contact information for all AFS volunteers, including your Date of Birth, can be accessed by all other registered volunteers via Global Link.

3. Code of Conduct

AFS-USA is committed to the safety, welfare, and well-being of all young people participating on our programs. This is our highest value. We will act without hesitation to promote a safe environment at all times for our participants.

In volunteering for AFS-USA, all volunteers will demonstrate appropriate behavior and understand what is considered to be inappropriate behavior.

AFS-USA volunteers will undertake to demonstrate the following appropriate behavior:

- at all times conduct oneself in a manner consistent with one's volunteer role and as a representative of AFS-USA
- follow AFS-USA policies and guidelines for the safety of program participants
- when dealing with issues of potential risk, ensure that another volunteer or a staff member is involved
- treat all program participants, families, fellow volunteers and staff with respect
- raise any concerns or issues with the appropriate volunteers or staff
- immediately report to the appropriate AFS-USA support staff when any allegation is made or suspicion of any type of abuse of a participant (this includes verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual) is present
- give care and respect to participants concerning any information that may be viewed as sensitive and should be treated confidentially

AFS-USA volunteers will undertake to ensure that they will not demonstrate the following inappropriate behavior:

- forcing participants into any activity which makes them feel significantly uncomfortable
- holding or touching a participant in a manner that is inappropriate or perceived as inappropriate by the other person
- making lewd, racist, ethnic or sexually suggestive comments, even as a joke
- discrimination based on issues related to gender, ability, race, religion, class, age, national origin, marital status, ethnicity, or sexual orientation

AFS-USA volunteers will understand that while touching can be appropriate or essential for a child or young person's self esteem, it should be:

- in response to an appropriate need of the child or young person and not a need or want of the adult
- done with the child or young person's permission – resistance should be respected
- respectful, avoiding breasts, buttocks, or groin;
- open and non-secretive

Any touching or physical contact should be governed by the age of the child or young person. For example, sitting in an adult's lap may be appropriate for a 3 year-old but is not appropriate for a 16 year-old.

AFS-USA supports the rights and well-being of our host families, natural families, volunteers, and staff and encourages their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all participants.

4. Communication

AFS-USA believes that, in order to support volunteers in their roles and so that we can continue to improve our volunteer practices, we should seek volunteers' feedback and suggestions.

AFS-USA seeks to remain connected with volunteers through regular contact. This includes the use of the monthly "Coming Together" volunteer newsletter and other function-specific newsletters and/or emails, Global Link, the AFS Wiki, phone contact, mail and face-to-face meetings, trainings, and conferences.

Volunteer feedback is welcome and encouraged. If you have questions or concerns, please email volunteer.development@afs.org, so that we can follow-up with you.

5. Complying with AFS-USA, AFS-International, CSIET, and US Department of State Standards and Regulations

AFS-USA is a volunteer-based and volunteer-led organization. As such, it relies on the good will, commitment and dedication of volunteers throughout the U.S. Without volunteer support, AFS would not be able to successfully deliver our intercultural exchange programs.

The AFS-USA national standards for volunteer operations are the foundation of AFS-USA volunteer involvement ensuring that we operate with consistency.

All AFS-USA volunteers must comply with the AFS national and international standards as well as with all regulations and standards established by external regulating or accreditation bodies for our operations. This means that volunteers are willing to work with the same standards, policies and procedures across the AFS-USA network. Failure to comply with AFS standards, CSIET standards, and US Department of State regulations may result in the termination of the volunteer's association with AFS-USA. For a full listing of CSIET and US Department of State Standards and Regulations, please see the following Links:

CSIET: <http://www.csiet.org/about/standards.html>

US Department of State: <http://tinyurl.com/2e9kbgn>

6. Confidentiality

The people with whom AFS-USA deals most directly (program participants, members of their families, and AFS volunteers) all have a right to privacy. In the course of their work, some AFS-USA volunteers or staff will come into possession of information that will be confidential. AFS-USA volunteers and staff owe a duty of confidentiality to the people to whom such information relates.

Occasionally, volunteers will be required to exercise their best judgment when made aware of an issue which seems to require immediate action. In such circumstances, volunteers should at the earliest possible opportunity inform their approved Volunteer leader/coordinator, who will provide guidance and, when necessary, seek support from appropriate staff and/or other volunteer leaders.

Some volunteers have roles which lead them to receive information concerned with issues of participant support. That information is provided solely to assist those volunteers in performing their roles. Volunteers receiving such information are not to divulge that information. If volunteers receiving such information have any doubt as to discharging their duty of confidentiality, they should immediately refer to their approved volunteer leader/coordinator for guidance, who may seek support from appropriate staff or other volunteer leaders.

No one is permitted to remove, make copies or disclose any AFS-USA records, reports or documents which relate to any person's circumstances without prior approval from appropriate staff or volunteer leaders.

Disclosing information relating to any person's circumstances without prior approval can result in termination of the volunteer's association with AFS-USA and may also result in legal proceedings.

In Global Link, AFS-USA volunteers have online access to view other volunteers' and participants' basic contact information - including date of birth. Volunteers have the option to hide their own personal year of birth on the regular screen containing their profile, but the complete date of birth will still be viewable when data is exported from Global Link into reports, into excel worksheets, or into a host family application, if applicable.

AFS-USA volunteers can only use the contact information of volunteers and participants that is stored in Global Link for AFS-USA purposes and cannot sell or distribute volunteer or participant contact information to any third parties. Violation of this policy will result in the termination of the volunteer's association with AFS-USA and may also result in legal proceedings.

7. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest, or an apparent conflict of interest, arises where a volunteer or a volunteer's associate (that is, someone closely related to the volunteer – for example, a spouse, child, other relative, business partner) can expect to receive or suffer a direct or indirect benefit or detriment as the result of a decision or action which he or she takes.

This can apply to a financial or non-financial benefit or detriment.

An actual or apparent conflict of interest may arise if a volunteer, or an associate of a volunteer:

- competes, directly or indirectly, with the interests or services of AFS-USA
- has, directly or indirectly, a financial interest or any position in any concern with which AFS-USA does business or which provides services in competition with AFS-USA
- provides services to any outside concern that does business or competes with AFS-USA
- accepts gifts, entertainment, or other favors from any concern that does, or seeks to do, business with, or is in competition with AFS-USA
- uses to advantage information gained in the course of performing AFS-USA duties

It is improper to disclose, or to use to advantage, confidential or proprietary information relating to AFS-USA's business.

If a volunteer suspects or believes that they may have a conflict of interest, then in the interests of fairness and in the volunteer's own best interests, the volunteer should seek to avoid the conflict. The volunteer should withdraw from any related discussion and activity and should abstain from any related voting.

It is as important to avoid apparent conflicts of interest as it is to avoid actual conflicts of interest.

The U.S. Department of State places certain restrictions on the actions volunteers acting in the role of "local coordinator," i.e. anyone involved in the recruitment, screening, selection, orientation or support of AFS participants or host families, in order to avoid a conflict of interest and protect the safety and well-being of the participants. These regulations require that a local coordinator may not be:

- A host family for one sponsor (exchange organization such as AFS hosting students on J-1 visas) and a local coordinator for another sponsor;
- A local coordinator (specifically a liaison) for any exchange student over whom he/she has a position of trust or authority such as the student's teacher, principal or coach. (This requirement is not applicable to a boarding school placement.)

Where there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest, volunteers can reduce opportunities for criticism of their actions by:

- declaring the potential conflict as soon as the volunteer realizes that there is, or may be seen to be, such a conflict
- declaring the potential conflict before being involved in any discussion related to the matter giving rise to the conflict, and avoiding involvement in any such discussion
- leaving the vicinity of any activity or discussion related to the potential conflict and returning only after the activity or discussion has been concluded

If in relation to a possible conflict of interest a volunteer is in any doubt as to the course of action to be taken, the volunteer should seek guidance from the Volunteer Development Manager.

8. Contracts

Volunteers are not authorized to enter into any binding written or verbal agreements in the name of AFS-USA, Inc. unless authorized by the AFS-USA Board of Directors.

Contracts for an AFS-USA activity (with the exception of day-use only permits with no Hold Harmless clause or those required in order to lease a vehicle) shall be forwarded to the attention of the Senior Organizational Development and Learning Specialist in the Regional Service Center for review and approval, at least two weeks prior to the event.

9. Customer service standards

AFS-USA believes that, in the course of our daily work and working together as volunteers and staff, we should provide service that is:

- respectful
- reliable
- responsive
- empathetic.

AFS-USA volunteers can contribute to achieving this by careful attention to:

- understanding individual customer's expectations and needs
- developing product knowledge
- communicating effectively
- following up promptly
- problem solving efficiently
- taking care to say, "Thanks" – and demonstrating an attitude of gratitude.

AFS-USA believes a service culture is one in which each person in the organization feels and acts in a manner which demonstrates that they are accountable for creating satisfied customers.

10. Duty of Care

AFS-USA has a duty of care to protect, to its utmost ability:

- those taking part in its programs, and members of their families
- volunteers
- staff

Volunteers implement their duty of care by ensuring that they:

- act in good faith for the interests of AFS-USA
- understand the mission of AFS-USA and are familiar with its goals and activities
- adhere to AFS-USA customer standards
- prepare for, attend and participate in meetings or other agreed commitments
- do not misuse any authority or discretion which they have been given
- do not misuse any information acquired through their position
- avoid actual and apparent conflicts of interest

11. Equal opportunity

Equal opportunity has been, and will continue to be, a fundamental principle of AFS-USA in providing equal volunteering opportunities for everyone without discrimination, because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, or any other protected characteristic as established by law, which do not preclude performance of the essential volunteering role.

Our goal, which reflects the ideals of AFS-USA and the desire of the AFS-USA Board, National Council, and management, is to foster a diverse volunteer workforce which reflects a broad spectrum of society and maintain an organization free from unlawful discrimination towards any volunteer or volunteer applicant. Full commitment to this policy is required to produce a volunteering environment in which we can take pride.

AFS-USA's provision of all volunteering opportunities is based upon the individual volunteer's assessed ability to perform their role and comply with AFS-USA volunteer policies in a dependable and reliable manner.

12. Finances

All funds raised in the name of AFS must be used solely for the purpose of the support of AFS programs and participants.

Each AFS-USA Chapter (Affiliated and Unaffiliated) and, Area Team shall maintain accurate records of income and expenses, must submit required reports as outlined by the AFS-USA Finance Department, and must follow all outlined Chapter and Area Team funds policies.

13. Grievance and disputes

For AFS-USA to be an efficient and successful organization, satisfied volunteers are essential. From time to time, volunteers have grievances. Such grievances are of concern to AFS-USA. AFS-USA is committed to resolving grievances and disputes quickly and sensitively.

A grievance arises when a volunteer believes that any rule, practice or event has undermined the volunteer's rights or has resulted in the volunteer being treated unfairly or unjustly. A grievance may also arise from an attitude shown, a statement made or an opinion expressed by a volunteer or staff member.

AFS-USA respects the rights of each individual volunteer reflected in the fundamental values of the organization. This grievance policy is based upon those same values and on ensuring fairness. By implementing this policy, AFS-USA seeks to enable volunteers to share their problems and to provide avenues for resolving grievances.

AFS-USA is committed to resolving grievances and disputes quickly and sensitively. AFS-USA has the opinion that our mission is about a more just and peaceful world and it is preferable if possible to resolve grievances at the point in the organization closest to where the grievance has arisen, in order to restore volunteer working relationships in the quickest and least disruptive way.

If it is appropriate to the circumstances, it is most desirable that an aggrieved volunteer seeks to raise the matter of concern directly with the person involved. Volunteers doing so may wish to ask the next person in their line of accountability to sit in on any such discussion.

If a volunteer's grievance involves that next person in the line of accountability, the volunteer should raise the matter with the person to whom that next person is accountable.

Every effort should be made to resolve issues cooperatively and informally. Only if that is unsuccessful should the matter be put in writing as a formal grievance.

Some grievances involve the operating and management of the organization in a broad sense, rather than simply locally. Volunteers should raise such matters with a member of the National Council, with a member of the Volunteer Development Staff or with any Senior staff member who will advise what the next steps are depending on the parties/issues involved.

If an investigation appears to be warranted, steps will be taken to ensure that it is conducted promptly, discreetly, and in a fair and impartial manner. The person hearing the grievance should be independent of all parties involved. Other party or parties involved as well as the complainant will be made aware that an investigation is being conducted.

The volunteer or staff member handling the grievance should keep a brief, comprehensive written record of the grievance, noting dates, discussions, and outcomes.

The volunteer or staff member handling a grievance should objectively consider all facts and issues arising from the grievance and disclosed by any investigation. The volunteer or staff member handling the grievance should attempt to arrive at an outcome which addresses the complainant's concerns to their satisfaction while at the same time respecting the rights of others who have been involved in the grievance. The outcome of the grievance resolution process should be in keeping with the seriousness of the grievance and, where it has broader application, should be fairly and consistently applied across the AFS-USA volunteer network.

In some cases, the grievance may not be substantiated and no further action will result. The complainant and any other parties involved should be advised that no further action will be taken in relation to the grievance.

In all instances, whether the response is oral or written, the complainant should be advised of the opportunity, if dissatisfied with the way in which the grievance has been handled and/or with the outcome, to take the matter up with the person to whom the handler of the grievance is accountable.

14. Harassment

AFS-USA believes that our volunteer environment should be free from intimidation, hostility or offensive behavior which might interfere with volunteer performance.

Harassment of any sort – verbal, physical or visual - cannot be tolerated. If a volunteer or staff member believes that s/he is being harassed then the individual should seek to resolve the issue directly with the person they deem to be harassing them or lodge a grievance.

15. Health and safety

AFS-USA is committed to the occupational health and safety of volunteers and staff. AFS-USA has a duty of care to help avoid exposing volunteers to unacceptable risks which affect their health or safety. AFS-USA welcomes volunteers' feedback on this important matter.

Volunteers are encouraged, and obliged, to assist AFS-USA by reporting unsafe working conditions, potential hazards or unsafe behavior, within their volunteer working environment. AFS-USA is committed to acting on such information by investigating and attempting to eliminate or reduce the risk.

Issues impacting the health and safety of AFS-USA volunteers should be reported to the Volunteer Development Staff.

16. Health and Well-Being of Program Participants

AFS-USA volunteers should report any concerns about the health and well-being of AFS participants to the appropriate support contact person and, where appropriate or required, advise AFS-USA staff. AFS-USA volunteers must at all times adhere to local, state and federal laws requiring that any reasonable belief that abuse or unlawful harassment of an AFS participant is occurring be reported to the appropriate authorities.

AFS-USA is required by law to promptly notify the US State Department of any unusual or exceptional incidents that may bring the Department or AFS-USA into notoriety or disrepute. Further, AFS-USA must report incidents involving alleged sexual misconduct. Problems or controversies that we must report include, but are not limited to,

- events involving serious bodily injury or death
- allegations that the host family has taken or misappropriated the student's money or credit cards
- events in which the student was a victim or perpetrator of a crime
- events, alleged or actual, where the student is the victim or perpetrator of sexual assault
- missing/runaway students longer than 24 hours

- any issue that has the potential for press coverage

If the case includes any incident or allegation involving the actual or alleged sexual exploitation or abuse of a student participant, the Government Relations and Legal Affairs Manager will review state statutes regarding mandatory reporting and consult with legal counsel to determine the appropriate course of action. Should AFS be deemed a mandatory reporter in the case, the Government Relations and Legal Affairs Manager will report the incident to local authorities as specified in the state statute and include the name and telephone number of the appropriate contact in the incident report.

Emergency procedures as outlined by AFS-USA on www.afswiki.org shall be followed.

17. Policy Governance

The Board of AFS-USA, Inc. operates under Policy Governance as the framework for the governance and leadership of the organization. Policy Governance was adopted by the AFS International Board of Trustees and a large number of AFS partners.

Policy Governance is seen as an effective framework, in that it:

- reinforces that the Board's representation of, and accountability to, the organization's "moral owners"
- obliges the Board to speak with one clear voice – or not at all
- ensures that the Board's decisions are predominantly policy decisions
- requires the Board, in considering any issue, to commence from the biggest picture perspective possible and to descend into degrees of detail only to the extent that it is necessary for a governance, as distinct from a management decision
- thrusts the Board into defining and delegating rather than being reactive
- requires the Board at the same time to hold the President to account in a systematic and rigorous way for implementation of the Board's policies
- enables the Board to focus primarily on a key governance task: setting and refining the Ends of AFS-USA, seeking constantly to clarify what benefits AFS is seeking to give which people and what value we attach to those benefits
- provides means for the Board to monitor its own performance

While the Board is accountable for ensuring the effectiveness of the organization, it is not involved in day-to-day AFS operations. The Board's link to those operations is through the President, his or her Executive Team and the National Council.

18. Reimbursement

In the course of performing roles, volunteers may incur out-of-pocket expenses. Volunteers are entitled to seek reimbursement for budgeted and pre-approved expenses, which may include, but are not limited to, the costs of:

- mileage
- meals
- postage
- copying and duplicating

Area Teams and Unaffiliated Chapters have established bank accounts and procedures for reimbursing out-of-pocket expenses. Volunteers should seek further advice and clarification from their Area Team or Chapter Treasurer regarding approved expenditures.

Volunteers in roles coordinated by staff receive reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses from staff. To receive reimbursement, such volunteers need to support their claims with receipts showing the expenditure incurred and send these, along with an expense report form to the staff person coordinating their activities.

19. Rewards and recognition

Reflecting its commitment to recognize volunteer contributions, the AFS-USA National Council has established the Volunteer Recognition Committee. This Committee works to provide recognition of volunteers at the national level and support recognition efforts at the regional, area and local levels.

The goals of the National Council Recognition Committee include:

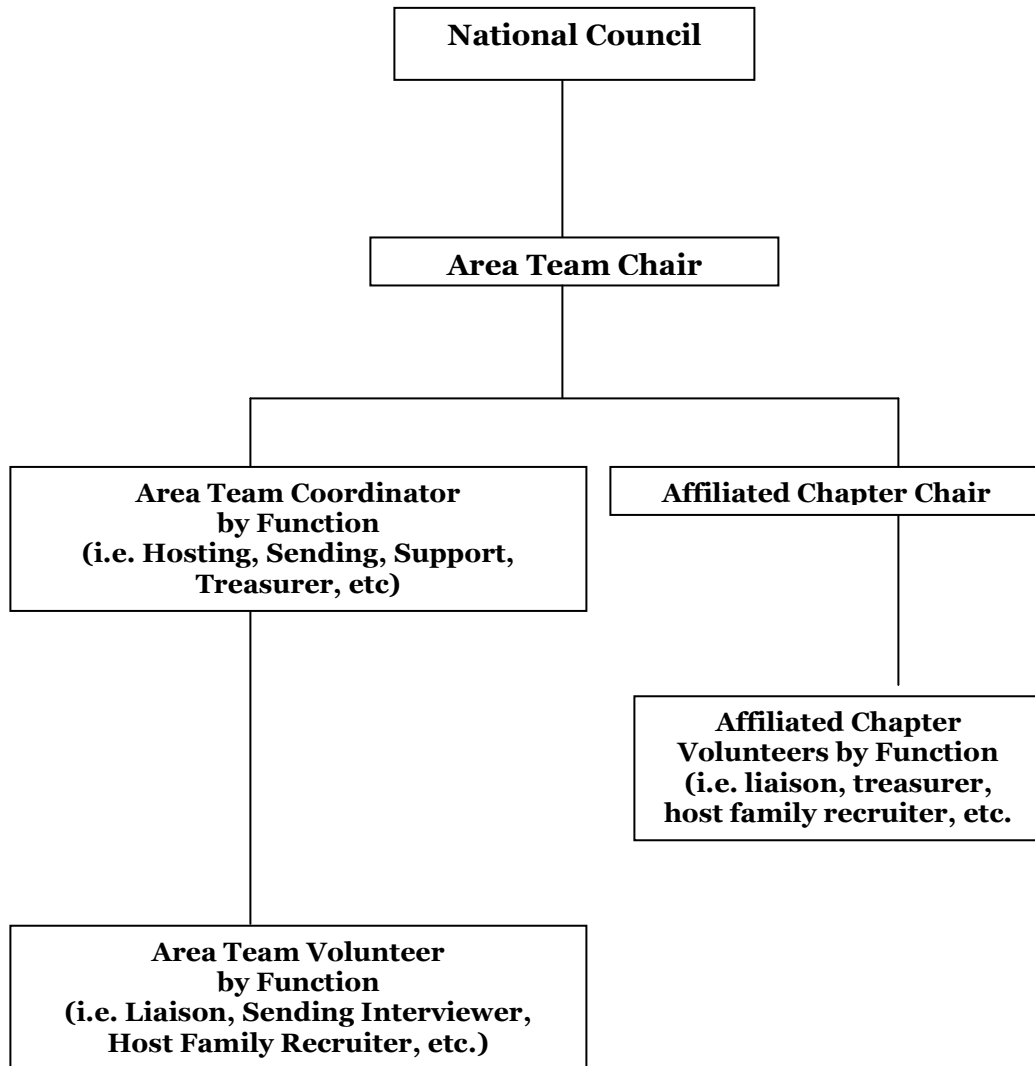
- Setting guidelines, timelines and supervising the implementation of all awards and volunteer recognition including, but not limited to, the selection for chaperone and/or volunteer study exchange travel.
- Supporting staff with guidelines for recognition of volunteers.
- Developing and implementing a plan for ongoing recognition with an annual review.
- Providing an annual recognition plan to the National Council and staff.
- Ensuring that publicity is provided for nominees of all awards coordinated through the Volunteer Development Department.
- Providing a brief report at National Council meetings a minimum of 3 times a year, and/or when awards are announced
- Creating selection committees as needed to help the National Council Recognition Committee.

20. Volunteer Performance Management & Termination

In AFS-USA volunteers who agree to fulfill certain roles or positions within the organization agree to report to and be accountable to other volunteers who have agreed to fulfill coordinating or leadership roles within their teams or within the organization or in some circumstances to staff members or volunteer committee or advisory group chairs who oversee specific functions or projects within the organization. Each Volunteer Position Description will indicate the reporting line for that position.

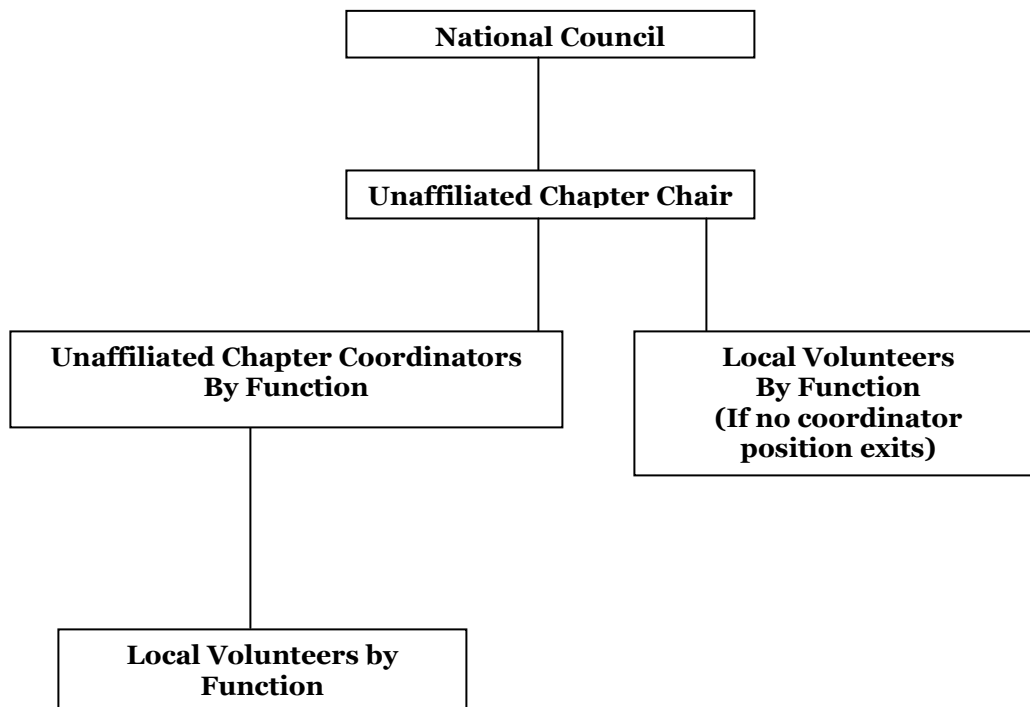
Volunteers who manage other volunteers as part of their role will be responsible for ensuring that expectations are clear, that the volunteers on their teams have the knowledge, training, and materials they need to do their jobs well, and that they receive feedback in regards to their work and recognition for their efforts.

For volunteer positions within area teams, volunteer “reporting lines” are organized as follows:



As this organizational chart shows, Chapters that are affiliated with an Area Team report to the Area Team leadership through the Chapter Chair and the Area Team leadership is responsible for ensuring all chapters within the area team meet AFS-USA’s standards.

For volunteer positions within unaffiliated chapters, volunteer “reporting lines” are organized as follows:



In cases where a volunteer role is not part of the Area Team or Chapter structure, reporting lines will be either to a volunteer leader such as a National Council member, Committee Chair, Advisory Group Chair or in some circumstances to a staff person who oversees a specific function or project within the organization.

Volunteer Development, Management, and Support

As a volunteer organization, AFS-USA needs to have systems in place to promote volunteer and organizational development, including structures to ensure volunteers receive support and feedback in regards to their work and performance.

Providing appropriate support and feedback to volunteers will help AFS-USA to:

- retain valuable volunteers
- ensure that our programs are implemented with quality and in compliance
- enable volunteers to grow and develop their knowledge and skills
- ensure fair and consistent treatment for all volunteers
- ensure volunteers receive due process
- enforce the organization’s code of conduct

As stated earlier volunteers who manage other volunteers as part of their role are responsible for ensuring that expectations are clear, that the volunteers on their teams have the knowledge, training, and materials they need to do their jobs well, and that they receive feedback, support and recognition on an on-going basis. Volunteer Development

staff are available to assist volunteers in their “supervisory” role at any time to provide appropriate support to volunteers on their teams.

Feedback and Support Process

Most people when asked will say that they appreciate receiving feedback on an ongoing basis when performing specific tasks or taking on specific roles within an organization so that they know how they are doing and can continue to grow and develop.

Important facts about feedback:

- Feedback is most effective when it is received directly from another person who has had an opportunity to directly observe behavior or who is directly involved in the work or situation to be discussed.
- Feedback needs to be given in a timely way, not months after the event or situation has occurred.
- Feedback needs to be given both when things are going well and when a person is in need of development or a change in behavior.
- If feedback needs to be given for a performance issue it is important that the person receiving feedback also receive support and assistance as s/he works to make improvements.

When Volunteer Performance Is Not Meeting Expectations

- When a volunteer’s performance is not meeting expectations it is important that s/he receive feedback first directly from another person either volunteer or staff who has directly observed or who has an issue with the performance.
- If this initial direct feedback does not solve the problem, his/her manager should be contacted. The volunteer’s manager should discuss the situation with the volunteer in question in an effort to hear his or her perspective, determine the cause of the problem and identify solutions.
- A volunteer whose performance is not meeting expectations may need additional information or skill development or may simply not know that his or her performance or behavior is problematic.
- If appropriate feedback and support are given early on, many issues can be resolved in a positive way.

In situations where initial feedback discussions and support fail to resolve the concern it may be necessary for the volunteer leader responsible for supervision of the volunteer in question to develop a written performance plan in consultation with the individual. This document constitutes not only a commitment by the volunteer in need of improvement to work on certain areas of his or her performance, but a commitment on the part of his or her volunteer leader and the organization as a whole to provide the individual with the information, tools, training, or support they need to make improvements.

- A performance improvement plan should not only outline the concerns that have arisen, but what resources will be made available to support the development of the volunteer’s performance. Ideally, performance plans should be created by a volunteer leader in consultation with the volunteer him or herself.
- When a volunteer leader believes that a performance improvement plan is warranted, they should alert both the Area Team or Unaffiliated Chapter Chair (if the Chair is not already involved and/or aware) and the staff Volunteer Development Manager for their region (or the AT/Unaffiliated Chapter Chair should inform the Volunteer Development Manager for their region).

- The Volunteer Development Department should be consulted as to the correct timing of the development and implementation of a written volunteer performance plan and should be given the opportunity to approve all written plans before they are finalized with individual volunteers.
- Sometimes performance plans may reflect a change in the individual's place in the volunteer lifecycle, which may mean a change in role, re-vitalization, or referral.

If improvements in volunteer performance are not seen in the time outlined in the performance plan, the volunteer leader and/or the AT or Unaffiliated Chapter Chair should again meet with the volunteer in order to summarize and document the shortcomings in the volunteer's performance. At this time, the volunteer leader and/or the AT or Unaffiliated Chapter Chair should work with the Volunteer Development Manager for their region to determine next steps to resolve the situation, including the possibility of removing the volunteer from their current role and reassigning them different volunteer responsibilities.

Not all performance or behavioral issues can be addressed in the same way for every volunteer. For example, a serious violation, such as theft of company property or threatening or harassing an individual might warrant immediate dismissal. In cases where the safety or well-being of an AFS-USA participant or the violation of a State Department regulation is in question, the Director of Risk Management and Quality Assurance may request that the National Council make an immediate volunteer termination decision. In such cases volunteer team leadership, as well as the Director of Volunteer Development, will be informed.

Reviewing the issues

At a certain point, despite feedback, support and improvement plans, a situation may still not be improving. In certain situations, individuals may be put on suspension or placed in a more limited role as a volunteer while the situation is further reviewed.

- A suspension might be considered, for example, in a situation where an investigation is ongoing and it is decided that the individual should stop volunteering, pending the outcome.
- Suspension decisions can only be made by the National Council Chair and Vice-Chair or their designees, in consultation with the Director of Volunteer Development.

The Decision

When all efforts to address a performance or behavioral issue have been exhausted, it may become necessary to terminate the volunteer's involvement with AFS. In such situations the following process should be followed:

- The volunteer leader or staff manager of the volunteer in question will be required to write a termination recommendation memo addressed to the National Council Chair and Vice-Chair (or their designees) and the Director of Volunteer Development.
- The termination recommendation memo should summarize chronologically all of the events that have led to this conclusion, all intermediate steps taken to counsel and support the individual, including specific dates of conversations/emails and other written communications, along with detailed descriptions of the individual's reactions to these and agreed upon steps at each phase.
- This memo will be reviewed by the National Council (or their designees) and the Director of Volunteer Development. The final decision regarding the termination of the volunteer will be made by the National Council

As mentioned above, volunteer terminations can also occur without prior disciplinary action if a volunteer commits serious offenses, such as theft of company property, assault, the falsification of records, sexual harassment, willful and serious damage to property, serious safety violations or violations of the regulations or standards that govern AFS-USA.

Once a final decision has been made to terminate a volunteer, the individual will be informed, in writing, by the National Council Chair and the Director of Volunteer Development of the decision to terminate his/her service.

Appeals Process

At any point in the process, a volunteer may appeal decisions or request a review of actions taken by any of the AFS administrative bodies, staff or volunteers that are made in regards to his or her performance. It is the intent of AFS-USA to establish a Volunteer Ombuds Council, for this purpose.

Until such time as the Ombuds Council is functioning, volunteer appeals should be submitted, in writing, to the Chair of the National Council, within 30 days of being notified of the decision. The National Council will then have 30 days to make a decision regarding the appeal and must notify the volunteer, in writing, of the decision within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal letter.

21. Volunteer insurance

AFS-USA has a responsibility to insure volunteers while they are undertaking AFS-USA business. Under the AFS corporate liability insurance, AFS-USA registered volunteers are assigned the status of Additional Insured.

Additional Insured status allows AFS's corporate insurance protection to be extended to AFS-USA's volunteers should they be named in a covered claim regarding activities related to their volunteering work for AFS. This protects AFS should it be named regarding the activities of a volunteer. AFS corporate insurance does not cover every eventuality and AFS cannot extend protection to volunteers beyond the limits of its insurance.

Any person who will be transporting participants or people involved in AFS-USA activities in their motor vehicles must meet the following qualifications:

- Be 21 years of age
- Possess a valid driver's license appropriate to the vehicle
- Possess automobile insurance which satisfies the requirements of their state
- Have no more than two moving violations and one at-fault accident in the last five years
- Have no drunken or reckless driving convictions at any time.
- Require use of seat belts for all passengers

Volunteers who cannot meet these qualifications are welcomed at AFS in capacities that do not involve driving for the organization.

22. Volunteer relationships with staff

In acknowledging the central role of volunteers, AFS-USA makes every effort to ensure that staff at all levels of the organization is informed about the roles, rights and responsibilities of its volunteers.

AFS-USA encourages good working relationships based upon mutual respect and understanding between volunteers and staff. As such:

- the roles of volunteers and staff will be complementary and mutually supportive
- appropriate training, support and resources will be provide for all staff who work with volunteers
- volunteers will be provided with clear information about the responsibilities and role of staff
- appropriate staff appointments are made for volunteer management, who provide supervision, support and resources.

23. Volunteer training

All AFS-USA volunteers must successfully complete any trainings required by the US Department of State, CSIET, or by AFS-USA, before taking on their volunteer role(s). The content of these training includes but is not limited to:

- History, Mission, and Structure of AFS-USA
- Conflict resolution;
- Procedures for handling and reporting emergency situations;
- Awareness or knowledge of child safety standards; information on sexual
- Conduct codes;
- Procedures for handling and reporting allegations of sexual misconduct or any other allegations of abuse or neglect;
- The criteria to be used to screen potential host families and exercise good judgment when identifying what constitutes suitable host family placements.

In addition to any training required by AFS-USA, all volunteers involved in the recruitment, screening, selection, orientation or support of participants or host families must also successfully complete the Department of State mandated training module prior to assumption of their duties and on an annual basis as a refresher course. The Department of State training module includes instruction designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Exchange Visitor Program; its public diplomacy objectives; and the Secondary School Student category rules and regulations.

AFS-USA undertakes to ensure that as AFS-USA volunteers will be prepared and trained for his/her specific role before s/he assumes their volunteer responsibilities. AFS-USA is committed to creating a community of skilled volunteers who support the high quality of our exchange programs.

AFS-USA volunteer training is designed to equip our volunteers with the skills and knowledge to undertake their specialist roles. It is essential that AFS-USA volunteers avail themselves of all relevant volunteer training activities to ensure that they are maintaining AFS-USA's most current practices and to ensure organizational compliance to external and internal regulations and standards.

24. Other rules relating to AFS-USA's business operations

AFS-USA has quality standards, polices and rules that relate to specific areas of our operations. These include, but are not limited to:

- travel, support and preparation of program participants
- local volunteer operations, elections and financial administration
- promotion of AFS, including the branding and the communications of the organization.

AFS-USA’s volunteers are to support the business operations of the organization and are not empowered to make their own rules or interpretations. It is important to understand that AFS-USA operates in a highly regulated environment, and is regulated by the U.S Department of State and CSIET. Volunteers who choose to apply their own interpretation of quality standards, rules or operations may undermine the management of AFS-USA and put AFS-USA’s reputation and ability to operate at risk.

25. Continuous improvement

AFS-USA continually reviews its volunteer management, support and training programs in order to ensure AFS-USA volunteers have a meaningful and rewarding experience.

From time to time volunteers’ feedback will be sought in a more formal manner by evaluation forms and surveys. We encourage volunteers to respond. Limited resources mean staff and volunteer leaders may not be able to meet every volunteer personally, but volunteers’ feedback and ideas are welcome.

Volunteers will be kept up to date with any changes to policies and procedures and with news of AFS-USA. This will be done through the monthly “Coming Together” volunteer newsletter, through www.afswiki.org, and through other volunteer communications, trainings, and meetings.

Volunteer Agreement (Note: This is what all volunteer will actually sign, electronically, as part of the Volunteer Registration/ Re-registration process. It will appear in Global Link after the volunteer scrolls through the complete volunteer policy document, above):

I agree to uphold all AFS-USA Volunteer Policies outlined above, US Department of State Regulations, CSIET standards (<http://www.afswiki.org/index.php/Compliance>), and other AFS policies and procedures in my volunteer work for AFS-USA. If I am unable to fulfill my agreed upon AFS volunteer roles, I will make every effort to inform my volunteer team leaders or appropriate staff right away, so as to ensure a different volunteer is identified to take on my role(s).

In signing this agreement I confirm that all information and statements given in the Online Volunteer Application are completely accurate and true to the best of my knowledge. Furthermore, I understand that signing below does not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement.

Volunteer Name

Date