

Visiting Volunteer Position Description (working version)

INMATE VISITATION / SPONSORSHIP SERVICE

Purpose: to connect inmates interested in obtaining outside sponsorship with outside volunteers willing to provide that service. Volunteers for this service CANNOT go into the institution as H&I meeting volunteers; if it is discovered that a volunteer for this service is also going into the institution as a meeting volunteer, their clearance will be immediately revoked. Male inmates will be connected with male volunteers and female inmates will be connected with female volunteers, and members should not volunteer at facilities where they have family members.

VISITATION VOLUNTEER - person who meets one-on-one with inside A.A. member to provide potential sponsorship – depending on availability, the Visitation Coordinator may send more than one volunteer for the initial visit. The inmate is free to make a choice for sponsorship or make a request for another visitor. As with any sponsor relationship, it may be terminated by either party at any time. The volunteer may meet with the inmate as often as agreed upon by both parties, but no less frequently than once a month. Although this service may occur at a State or Federal prison, this is a non-clearance position. Most State and Federal prisons restrict visitation to the weekends. The Visitation Volunteer is chosen by and responsible to the H&I Visitation Coordinator for the institution.

Term: no specific term limit

Qualifications: Five years of continuous sobriety including knowledge and practice of A.A.'s 12 steps. Previous sponsorship and H&I experience required.

Responsibilities:

1. Attends initial orientation provided by Visitation Coordinator; reviews CDCR publication *CDCR Visiting a Friend or Loved One in Prison* and other materials.
2. Completes visitor application Form 106 (provided through Visitation Coordinator) and submits to institution.
3. Pending CDCR approval, arranges initial visit and notifies inmate by mail of visitation date (appointments may be set up online through VPASS, if desired).
4. After initial visit, schedules and attends subsequent visits as agreed upon by inmate and volunteer.
5. Within suggestions provided in pamphlet p-15, *Questions and Answers on Sponsorship*, shares experience, strength and hope in working the twelve steps of A.A. with the inmate.
6. If inmate has been notified of release within six months, either assists inmate in arranging Bridging the Gap contact and the importance of getting to a meeting on the first day of release, or agrees to continue performing sponsorship function if inmate will be released into same geographic area.

Guidelines: the following suggestions, including those from the GSO flyer F-26, *Corrections Correspondence*, provide helpful guidance on how we can be of maximum service while protecting the security of ourselves and our families:

- For the purpose of identification and to put the inmate at ease, we introduce ourselves by qualifying briefly.
- We let the inmate know that sponsorship helps us as much as it helps him or her.
- We let the inmate know that he or she is not alone.
- We share sobriety and sobriety ONLY.
- We have found it best for all concerned if no emotional or romantic involvements develop.
- In the spirit of the Twelfth Tradition, we respect the anonymity of our inside members.
- We exercise caution in breaking our own anonymity or divulging details which might place our families in danger, always mindful that while we are a society of equals, most inmates aren't incarcerated because they missed a week of Sunday School.
- We encourage inmates to engage in "inside" A.A. group activity.
- Realizing we only know one side of the story and to avoid potential harm, we never express opinions about prison staff, policies, or practices.