



U.S. Department of Homeland Security VOLUNTEER FORCE



Join the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Volunteer Force and support Customs and Border Protection.

Overview

DHS has a vital mission to safeguard and secure the homeland. The DHS Volunteer Force provides non-law enforcement and logistical support for those processing through the immigration system. As we continue to encounter large numbers of individuals along our Southwest Border, we are now, more than ever, in need of your assistance.

Volunteer Requirements



- Current background investigation
- U.S. citizen
- Current federal civilian employee
- Complete required forms
- Follow safety protocols

Locations May Include



El Centro, CA
San Diego, CA

Big Bend, TX
Del Rio, TX
El Paso, TX
Laredo, TX
Rio Grande Valley, TX

Tucson, AZ
Yuma, AZ

Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

General Support

- Meal distribution
- Supply distribution
- Warehousing
- File tracking
- Property management
- Control room assistance

Data Input

- Possess a Tier 5 Single Scope Background Investigation
- Input biographic data into CBP processing systems
- Create logs and assist frontline officers with processing of individuals

More Questions?

Refer to the attached
Frequently Asked Questions

**Apply today on
USAJOBS!**

For more information, please email
dhsvolunteerforce@hq.dhs.gov.



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How do I apply?

Visit [USAJOBS](#) to apply. Make sure to complete and upload all Required Documents with your application package.

How long will I serve?

Deployments are typically 60 consecutive days (full-time) but volunteers may be released sooner if the assignment is complete.

What kind of work does a DHS volunteer perform?

Volunteers provide logistical, non-law enforcement support to those processing through the immigration system, to include: distributing food and water; handing out clothes, blankets, personal care items; receiving stock, organizing, sorting, and labeling supply items; tagging, bagging, sealing, storing, and retrieval of migrant personal property; picking up pre-purchased items, such as food and supplies; picking up medical prescriptions from local pharmacy; walking/driving case files to/from station/site; cleaning, packing, re-locating, and distributing supplies to station/site; trash removal, sweeping and cleaning refrigerators; monitoring and operating access doors, and answering phones; entering and maintaining data elements into relevant information systems. However, volunteers may be requested to work in additional specialty areas or fill other roles on an as needed basis.

Who can volunteer?

Any permanent, full-time, temporary full-time, federal, civilian employee.

Do I need to be vaccinated?

Many of the locations supported by the Volunteer Force are in high-risk settings or conditions that may expose volunteers to illness such as COVID-19, flu, or other contagious diseases.

Volunteers are encouraged to obtain the necessary vaccinations for COVID-19, Tetanus and Diphtheria, Flu, and Hepatitis A prior to deployment. Please be aware that vaccinations may not be available or offered in the immediate duty location.

The Volunteer Force complies with current DHS/Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines regarding COVID-19.

Do I need supervisor and agency approval to participate in the detail?

Supervisor and agency approval is required and there are no exceptions. One of the required documents for this detail is a completed and signed supervisory deployment authorization form, uploaded in USAJOBS with your application.

Who is my point of contact?

For registration purposes and pre-deployment updates, email the Volunteer Force Coordination Cell (VFCC) Interagency Lead at dhsvolunteerforce@hq.dhs.gov. Once deployed, volunteers will report to their Volunteer Force Sector or Crew leader on a day-to-day basis. The VFCC will provide this information, as well as a point of contact for general questions and concerns during the deployment process.

PLEASE NOTE: Volunteers may **not** 1) take photographs, video, or give the impression that their phone is being used as a camera while at the facility, 2) provide their phone for use by individuals within the facility, or 3) post anything on social media.



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Where will I be working?

Deployment locations are based on need and are not negotiable. Volunteers will likely initially fly by commercial air to an assigned duty location. From there, the volunteer will either be met by their POC or be provided instructions to obtain a rental vehicle. Each POC will also provide further instructions for orientation, any additional required training, work schedule, and duty location.

What are conditions like in the field?

Conditions may be challenging. Although lodging typically consists of local hotel accommodations, living conditions can sometimes be austere. This may include, but not limited to, sleeping in tents or other non-conventional forms of housing (e.g., ships) and weather extremes. Duty locations are also often limited on hotel space. Volunteers may be requested to transfer housing locations or be assigned to a new duty station during their deployment.

What safety measures are being taken?

The safety and health of our volunteers is a top priority. Volunteers will be adequately informed and trained to take the appropriate prevention measures when interacting with detainees (adults and children) to protect against the spread of disease, infestation, or other communicable health conditions that may be present in the work setting.

What is my work schedule?

Volunteers work various schedules, on location (this is not a remote detail), up to 12 hour per day, seven days per week with two days off per two-week pay period. Volunteers will be working in at least pairs for field missions.

How do I know when to deploy?

The Volunteer Force Coordination Cell (VFCC) issues deployment orders. Volunteers who accept a deployment request will be given further instructions to provide information and activate a Deployment Tracking System account, as well as identify the e-mail or phone numbers through which they want to receive deployment notifications. These may include work and personal emails and phone numbers. Deployment orders are intended for the registered and cleared volunteer and do not include family members, friends, or pets except for service animals. Please advise the DHS VFCC in advance of deployment if service animal accommodations are required.

Can I make travel arrangements before I am officially deployed?

No, volunteers must wait until they receive and accept the travel invitation from the VFCC. Volunteers will also receive deployment orders via the Deployment Tracking System, at which point, volunteers can make travel arrangements according to the instructions provided by the VFCC. Volunteer will need to provide copies of their approved Travel Authorization to the contacts provided in their deployment confirmation and the VFCC.

Do I need a rental car?

Volunteers are not authorized to rent a vehicle unless specific guidance is given by the VFCC or Sector Lead. Most volunteers will share a rental vehicle with other volunteers or be transported by the Sector or Crew Lead during the assignment. Any volunteer who is requested to rent a vehicle should verify government insurance is included and equally share the vehicle with other volunteers while deployed.

What kind of training will I receive?

Upon arrival to the assigned duty station, volunteers will receive all relevant training and guidance for their specific assignments.



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What type of items should I pack?

Check the weather report in the area to determine clothing and outerwear needs. Volunteers should plan for a casual dress code, such as jeans, cargo pants, polo or t-shirts (large print or graphics are not permitted; solid colors are preferred), and proper footwear, which includes sneakers/hiking/walking shoes (flip-flips and open toe shoes are not permitted). Also include personal toiletries and necessities, prescription medications, glasses, sunscreen, and insect repellent.

Be sure to bring personal identification, your government HSPD-12 ID badge, lanyard for displaying your government ID, and government travel card. Volunteers are also encouraged to bring their government issued laptop and cell phone, if possible. Special requirements or additional information may be provided with deployment orders.

What items should I NOT pack?

Do **not** bring firearms/flare guns/machetes, pressurized containers, electronic appliances/coffee makers, expensive clothing/jewelry, passport (traveling outside of the country while on deployment is prohibited), and/or anything you don't want broken/lost/stolen/thrown/taken away, including any oversized items you may not be able to handle on your own.

What happens if there is an emergency?

Each Volunteer Force location should have an assigned Sector Lead and designated Safety Officer. The on-site Safety Officer may provide location-specific guidance on health, safety and emergency procedures, or the Sector Lead may help obtain and provide this information. Volunteer Force Coordination Cell (VFCC) and Sector Lead contact information will be provided to each volunteer upon deployment for any immediate contact needs.

Volunteers should provide a list of emergency contacts to the Volunteer Force as well as the Sector/Crew Lead in the field. Additionally, volunteers should provide this information in the Deployment Tracking System (DTS) and update their assignment location information in the DTS system daily. Each duty location should also have a designated Safety Officer who may provide location specific guidance on safety and emergency procedures.

Should I bring my agency uniform or wear agency logos?

No, the VFCC will provide identification clothing as necessary. Display of agency logos are not allowed and will not be permitted.

Will meals be provided?

Meals are typically not provided and employees should receive per diem based on agency travel policies. However, some locations may provide personnel meal service. All federal employees should account for any meals provided at these locations when completing their travel voucher.

Will my health care coverage cover me should I get sick or injured while deployed? What about workers' compensation?

As a federal employee, both your health care coverage and workers' compensation will remain with you during deployment.

Can I take leave while deployed?

Volunteers should not schedule or plan to take any leave during deployment except, in extenuating circumstances such as illness, injury, or family emergency. These circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis by Volunteer Force field leadership and volunteer agency.



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Who pays my salary while deployed?

Volunteers with the Volunteer Force remain in a paid status and will continue to be paid at their current rate of pay and with their current locality by their home agency for a normal 80 hour pay period. Grade and step would not be affected. Note: This is not a promotion opportunity. Volunteers may be expected to work overtime during the deployment and will be paid premium pay accordingly (subject to bi-weekly and annual pay caps).

Agencies will be reimbursed by DHS for all base pay, overtime, and premium pay incurred by employees while serving on the Volunteer Force consistent with applicable law and regulations. Overtime will be approved by deployment supervisors. Employees receiving overtime pay under Title 5, United States Code, are subject to biweekly and annual premium pay limitations.

DHS does not pay hazard pay for deployments. DHS will manage mission assignment reimbursements for deployed staff centrally through agreements with agencies and offices.

FLSA Status:

Volunteers who are non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) will remain in a non-exempt status under FLSA for purposes of overtime unless they perform FLSA exempt duties for 30 consecutive calendar days or more. Exempt employees may have their duties assessed (after 30 days) to determine if they may be covered by FLSA.

Note: The Volunteer Force recommends that all volunteers contact their human resources department to notify of deployment and review limitations prior to departure and review pay limitations and FLSA status, eligibility, and policy prior to departure. Volunteers should subsequently work with their respective human resources departments to request any FLSA status review, request changes, or submit waivers, as appropriate.

How will I account for my time?

Volunteers should know their agency's policies concerning time and attendance when deployed away from their normal duty station.

Volunteers will be provided a Volunteer Force timesheet to complete and submit to the Sector and/or Crew Lead for review and signature at the end of each pay period to verify hours worked. The Volunteer Force will then provide a signed copy of this timesheet to the volunteers' supervisor and timekeeper/agency POC.

Volunteers should then submit their time using their home agency's normal time recording procedures for payment of wages. Deployed personnel may have limited connectivity to the network in the field and should brief their timekeepers prior to deployment to establish an alternate time recording procedure if necessary. Note: each agency may also require specific codes for this mission.

When I travel as a DHS Volunteer Force volunteer, do I need to pay for any travel-related costs out of pocket?

All travel expenses will be reimbursed by DHS/CBP in accordance with applicable government travel regulations. In most circumstances, volunteers will need to have a federal government travel card.

Volunteers should know their agency's travel voucher procedures when deployed away from their normal duty station. Travel vouchers will be required for reimbursement in two-week intervals.

Agency travel rules apply for all Volunteer Force members selected to deploy. Each volunteer is required to possess a government-issued travel card. Upfront travel costs and overtime will be covered by the home agency until reimbursement is processed. Volunteer Force volunteers should not make any purchases outside of travel expenses.