



United States
**Office of
Personnel Management** Washington, DC 20415-0001

April 6, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: KAY COLES JAMES
Director

SUBJECT: Participation of Federal Employees in Volunteer Activities

To recognize America's proud tradition of volunteer service and the many people who work to help their neighbors and communities, April 18–24, 2004, has been designated as National Volunteer Week. Additionally in his 2002 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush has challenged all Americans to give 2 years or 4,000 hours over the course of their lives to volunteer service.

To further his call to service, in 2003, President Bush established the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation to recognize the valuable contributions that volunteers make in our Nation and to encourage greater civic participation. The Council created the President's Volunteer Service Award as a way to recognize Americans who contribute a significant amount of time to volunteer service. The Award is given to individuals, families, and groups who have demonstrated outstanding volunteer service and civic participation over the course of a 12-month period.

Federal employees have a history of generously giving of their time and talents to make positive contributions to their local communities. Given their ongoing service activity, many Federal employees and their families may already have met the requirements to earn the President's Volunteer Service Award. Therefore, I strongly encourage agencies to consider adding the President's Volunteer Service Award to their current public service recognition programs. The President's Council on Service and Civic Participation has enlisted more than 2,600 certifying organizations throughout the country to help the Council distribute the awards. These include businesses; non-profit, community, and faith-based organizations; school districts; national service programs; membership organizations; and Federal, State, or local government agencies. I urge you to consider enlarging your agency's role in support of volunteer activities by becoming a certifying organization and recognizing the valuable contributions your employees are making to their communities. Further information on the President's Volunteer Service Award and on becoming a certifying organization can be found at the President's Volunteer Service Award Web site at <http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov>.

In addition, I would like to take the occasion of the 30th anniversary of National Volunteer Week to encourage agencies to support the volunteer efforts of their employees by ensuring that all employees are aware of the various work scheduling and leave flexibilities available to enable them to participate in volunteer activities. (See the attached “[Guidance on Scheduling Work and Granting Time Off to Permit Federal Employees to Participate in Volunteer Activities](#).”) Each department and agency should review the extent to which alternative work schedules are authorized and encouraged to allow Federal employees to participate in volunteer activities. Likewise, each department and agency should review its policies and practices for granting employees annual leave, leave without pay, credit hours under flexible work schedules, and compensatory time off, where appropriate, to perform community service.

As we approach National Volunteer Week, I ask that you support the President’s call to service by encouraging employees to participate in volunteer activities and making employees aware of the President’s Volunteer Service Award. Through their direct involvement in local community activities, Federal employees have become an invaluable resource to our citizens. I encourage you to honor their proud tradition of service. To help your employees find volunteer opportunities, please visit the USA Freedom Corps Volunteer Network, located at www.usafreedomcorps.gov. The network allows individuals to search among more than 75,000 organizations, according to interest and geographic location, to find volunteer opportunities locally, across the country, and around the world.

For additional guidance, agency Chief Human Capital Officers and Human Resources Directors may contact their assigned OPM Human Capital Officers. Employees should contact their agency human resources offices for assistance.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers
Human Resources Directors

Attachment