

# Using volunteers during COVID-19

By Tanya Crites

As member agencies are re-opening or planning to re-open with the goal of full service to the public, members may be considering how to bring volunteers back or even start a new volunteer program. The Liability Resource Manual, which is available through the Member Resources page on the WCIA website: <http://www.wciapool.org/member-resources>, contains excellent risk-guidance and sample documents for new and already established volunteer programs. However, there is now more to consider.

In addition to all the usual risk controls to put into place for volunteers, now members must consider the additional risks of COVID-19. For the purposes of COVID-19 protocols, members must provide volunteers with at least the same safeguards as employees, which include following government, health department and local guidelines specific to the qualifying phase of reopening. In consideration of a volunteer's legal ability to make a negligence claim against a member, members should carefully consider where and how to use volunteers during this time. WCIA recommends requiring all volunteers, new and returning to volunteer service, to complete a new, revised volunteer application and waiver which includes general volunteer assumption-of-the-risk language and additional information specific to the risks to volunteers during COVID-19.

WCIA has two sample volunteer applications/waivers that address COVID-19 risks, one for individual volunteers and one for volunteer organizations:

[SAMPLE AGREEMENT AND WAIVER FOR INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEER SERVICE DURING COVID-19](#)

[SAMPLE AGREEMENT AND WAIVER FOR GROUP/ORGANIZATION VOLUNTEER SERVICE DURING COVID-19](#)

For questions or risk management recommendations addressing specific uses of volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact a WCIA Risk Representative.