



**PASOs**

# **Volunteer Orientation Manual**

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## Contents

<b>I.</b>	<b>The Program</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Your Role as a Program Volunteer</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>Areas where a Program Volunteer might be needed and utilized</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>What to Expect</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Cultural Considerations</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Privacy and Personal Information</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Coordinator's Contact Information</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Volunteer Information form</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>IX.</b>	<b>Waiver Form</b>	<b>11</b>

## **I. The Program**

PASOs (Perinatal Awareness for Successful Outcomes) is a program of the South Carolina Public Health Institute and its' mission is to empower Latino families to optimize maternal and child health within their social and cultural context through education, outreach, partnership and advocacy.

The program involves educational interventions for Spanish-speaking expectant parents, culturally appropriate community outreach, cultural awareness training for medical providers, and advocacy for increased access to health care for the immigrant population. Through a partnership with the South Carolina Public Health Institute (SCPHI), the Program Director oversees the currently functioning PASOs Program in the areas of South Carolina where it exists and its designing and developing new sister programs in other areas of the state with significant Latino populations.

For more information about PASOs, visit the website at: [www.scpasos.org](http://www.scpasos.org) and our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/pasosprogram](https://www.facebook.com/pasosprogram)

## **II. Your Role as a Program Volunteer:**

PASOs is dependent on the help of volunteers to ensure its success and we are **very thankful** that you have chosen to volunteer with the program. There is a lot of opportunity to learn about the Latino community, practice your Spanish skills, learn about participants' families and lives, and make a lasting contribution to the program and the women who participate.

While you do not need any prior experience, we ask that volunteers make every effort to be respectful and culturally considerate, respect the dignity and privacy of the program participants, be enthusiastic about the work, and assist wherever they are needed. Above all else, go into the experience with an open mind!

## **III. Areas where a Program Volunteer might be needed and utilized:**

### **1. As the coordinator of small projects that benefit the PASOs Program**

There are always small projects that a volunteer can become involved with through PASOs. Some of them involve making phone calls, preparing materials, doing research, making databases, etc. Some of them could be done from your home, or from the PASOs office. In addition, if you have a unique idea for something to include in the prenatal classes or to contribute to the community, ask the Coordinator if it would be a fitting idea. He or she will be willing to work with you and try to provide you with necessary resources.

### **2. As helpers for transportation to and from the prenatal classes:**

For the prenatal classes, volunteers are often needed to help with transportation for program participants to and from class.

*What you need to consider*

- a. Transporting program participants can be a wonderful opportunity to spend some time talking to the women and their family members, getting to know them, and practicing your Spanish. You may have the chance to get to know them further if both of you are interested.
- b. The Program Coordinator will provide you with the person's name, address, and phone number. It is recommended that you look for directions in advance, and call the woman to arrange a pick up time. During this conversation, ask if she has children to bring with her, and ask her to be prepared to install any small child's car seat. Volunteers should not install the seat for the participant. If you are uncomfortable calling, please let the Program Coordinator know.
- c. If you provide transportation for a participant, she may ask you for help to other appointments, such as a doctor's appointment. This is up to you to accept or reject. If you decide to help her with these appointments, you will be doing so as a helpful individual and not as a PASOs volunteer. If you cannot help her with anything else, please be clear about your inability to do so.
- d. It is a common practice in the Latino community to pay other people to give you rides; therefore, the women may offer to pay you for helping them with transportation. If you are providing transportation for PASOs, please do not accept this money. Simply say, "we do not accept money for rides". If you are providing rides *outside* of your PASOs commitment, it is your choice, but we generally recommend not accepting this money unless you genuinely need it to help you with your gas expenditures.
- e. At this time, gas cannot be reimbursed so each volunteer is responsible for his/her own gas money.
- f. The PASOs program and/or SCPHI do not provide insurance coverage for privately owned automobiles. By agreeing to serve as a volunteer, you are acknowledging that you understand this and that any automobile you use as a PASOs volunteer is covered by automobile insurance that satisfies the requirements of South Carolina law. Any accident that occurs during the performance of your duties as a PASOs volunteer must therefore be submitted to your automobile insurance company for processing.

- g. PASOs must check the driving record of all volunteers who will be providing transportation. We will need your driver's license number to do so. PASOs will incur the cost of the DMV check.

### 3. **As general helpers for the prenatal classes.**

**NOTE:** *All prenatal class helpers will have background checks (covered by PASOs).it is necessary that when caring for children optimally there need to be at least two volunteers in the room with the children for safety concerns.*

*What you need to consider:*

Depending on the class facilitator's needs, you may be asked to do the following tasks: help set up the room, help with welcoming the women and giving out nametags, help setting up and cleaning up refreshments, help cleaning up after class, help watching younger children brought to class, and/or sitting with a particular participant who may be struggling to understand the course due to language or other barriers. Please be open to participating in any of these ways. If you are uncomfortable helping out with any of these activities, please let the instructor know ahead of time. If you are participating in a certain way and become uncomfortable or need some help, please let the instructor or her assistants know as soon as possible so she can give you a break or change your assignment.

- a. If you are watching the children, please assist the instructor in having every mother sign a waiver form so the program and you will be protected. If a child begins to cry and ask for his/her parent, try to distract him/her with another activity. If she/he becomes inconsolable, bring the child to his/her parent in the class. Also make sure you are respectful of the participants' wishes; should a woman feel more comfortable keeping her child with her during the class, it is her decision. The classes that are held at churches have nurseries with toys and other play things. The older children are usually helpful with the younger ones. Please help in cleaning up the nursery (or other area where children are kept) and any other space you may have used with the children when the class is nearing its end. This may include vacuuming if there are crumbs on the floor.
- b. If you plan to be a class volunteer and confirm with the instructor that you will be there, please make every effort to do so. If you cannot make it to class due to an unforeseeable event, please let the instructor know as soon as possible by a phone call.

- c. Class observation: Oftentimes there is the opportunity to observe the prenatal classes. This is a great opportunity to practice your listening and comprehension skills in Spanish and to talk to the women. Observation is limited to 2 volunteers at a time, so as to not intimidate the participants.
- d. If the opportunity affords itself, begin conversations with the participants during breaks and after class.

#### **4. As helpers during community outreach events:**

*What you need to consider:*

- a. Community events include such things as health fairs and presentations at churches or places of business. Volunteers interested in helping will be acting as representatives of the PASOs group and thus must conduct themselves in a professional manner and dress comfortably yet professionally. Their Spanish language skills must be fairly advanced and they must feel confident interacting with large groups of people.
- b. It is helpful to be somewhat familiar with the information you will be handing out to the women. The PASOs Program Coordinator can provide you with examples of the materials before you go, so you can read over them. If people ask you questions, please consult with the Program representative before answering the questions. If they are specific medical questions, please refer them to their doctor or clinic or get their names and numbers so we can contact them at a later date.

#### **5. As support persons for a program participant who requests assistance above and beyond class time.**

*What you need to consider:*

- a. Building a relationship with a program participant is an incredibly rewarding experience as a volunteer. Several of the women enrolled in the classes have amazing stories to tell and would love someone with whom to share them. At the same time, many women are shy and have difficulty navigating the complexities of the health care system.
- b. Assisting women outside of classes is something done on your own initiative. If you are interested, the Program Coordinator will put you in contact with one participant with whom you can build a relationship. You can help book doctor's appointments, take her out to lunch, and attend events such as church services or performances put on by her children.

- c. Keep in mind that this is an extra opportunity and thus your commitment can vary based on the time you are available. Depending on the relationship you build, the rewards often surpass your commitment: past volunteers have been invited to be present in the hospital while their participant was giving birth.
- d. It is of utmost importance for you to respect the privacy of the person you are helping. If she tells you something in confidence, please do not share it with other people. If the information shared concerns her health, is potentially dangerous, or in anyway worries you, please share it with the Program Coordinator, who will help you decide the best plan of action. If you would like to share the information with other people in order to get her help, please ask her first if you can share the information before moving forward.

**6. As leader or co-facilitator of small-group community-based ESL (English as a Second Language) classes or other community activities**

In the future, volunteers may assist with small-group ESL classes and/or other community events. . Please contact the Program Coordinator if you are interested in helping to develop and implement these types of programs.

**IV. What to Expect:**

Much of your experience will depend on how much effort and time you are able and willing to put into it. For the most part, the participants in the program are extremely excited to have the opportunity to learn more about perinatal health, the health care system in the U.S., U.S. culture, and you! They have a lot of energy and are really fun to talk to and learn from. Expect to learn a tremendous amount and walk away feeling as though you have made a large impact!

**V. Cultural Considerations:**

There are many cultural considerations to keep in mind as new volunteers work in and around the Latino community.

- During the prenatal classes and outreach events, volunteers should try to conduct all of their conversations in Spanish when participants are around because use of English only may make them feel excluded.
- When getting to know the women, it is recommended that you refer to them as “Señoras” and use the “Usted” form for verbs. Once you have developed a friendship with one of them, it’s more acceptable to use the “tu” form.
- You should dress in nicer pants, jeans or longer skirts: shorts are not considered proper attire in the Latino culture and short mini skirts are not appropriate professional dress as Program volunteers.
- You should refrain from chewing gum in front of the participants.
- You should try to be friendly and open and try to get to know the women in the classes.

- If you are assisting a family and they invite you to eat with them, this is your call, but you need to keep in mind that it may be considered rude to deny the request.
- If at ANY time you feel uncomfortable in a participant's neighborhood or presence, please let the Program Coordinator know so she can assist you in finding a solution.

## **VI. Privacy and Personal Information**

It is of utmost importance to respect the privacy of the women and families you will work with through the PASOs Program. If they tell you personal information, please do not share that information with anyone other than the Program Coordinator. If they ask you for help, and share personal information in the process, please remember to de-identify them when helping them if at all possible.

- Example: You are helping a woman find a used crib for her baby. If you make phone calls to local agencies, say "I'm working with a young mother that is looking for a crib because she cannot afford a new one" rather than "an immigrant woman from Mexico who has no money and lives in a trailer off Piney Grove Rd. and whose husband lost his job at Acme Construction Company needs a crib."
- Example: You are helping a woman call to make an appointment. The woman may have told you her legal status. Do not EVER tell anyone else the legal status of any of the women unless they specifically require the information. If they specifically require a social security number, you can ask if they will accept anything else, and if not, have the woman answer for herself with you interpreting.

Please remember to respect the privacy and dignity of the program participants and the community in general. We try not to find out the legal status of any participants. If they happen to mention it, it is not of our concern and we do not pass on that information to anyone. If you need to talk about the experience with someone, please do not use names and use respectful terminology like "undocumented" rather than "illegal."

If you have any questions, concerns, or doubts about how to handle a situation, please contact the Program Coordinator.

**VII. Coordinator's Contact Information:**Beaufort:

Yaaira Benet-Smith

843-476-6189

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Note: While you can contact the Program Coordinator to express your desire to volunteer or for any other concerns or questions, a Volunteer Coordinator may contact you to arrange for you to volunteer and discuss your capacities and interests further.

Please fill this sheet out and return it so that we know more about you and how you may best be able to serve PASOs. Please print.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN for background check: \_\_\_\_\_

I am able to assist PASOs (please include days and times available):

I am able to drive:

- Other Volunteers
- Program Participants

I am interested in volunteering:

- Prenatal Classes
- Community Outreach Events
- Other community events/projects
- Special Projects

Other Service Ideas/Goals: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic year (if in college): \_\_\_\_\_

Major(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Prior Volunteer Experience:

Prior Experience working with the Latino community:

How did you hear about PASOs?

Waiver Form

I/we, \_\_\_\_\_, the undersigned, do hereby voluntarily agree to assume all of the risks and responsibilities involving my voluntary participation in the PASOs, or Perinatal Awareness for Successful Outcomes program, and, further, I/we do for myself/ourselves, my/our heirs, and personal representative(s) hereby agree to defend, hold harmless, indemnify and release and forever discharge the South Carolina Public Health Institute, University of South Carolina and all its/their trustees, officers, agents, employees, students and volunteers from, and for, any and all claims, costs, expenses, demands, causes of actions of any kind, as a result of damage to personal property, or personal injury, or death, which may result from my participation in the program and activities described herein.

I also acknowledge that the University does not carry automobile property damage or automobile liability coverage on my personal vehicle, even when I am carrying out volunteer duties on behalf of the South Carolina Public Health Institute or the University of South Carolina University, and that any damages to my vehicle, or to any other vehicles, or property, or injury to persons, must be submitted to my automobile insurance company for processing.

I agree and understand that as a volunteer with the University of South Carolina, I am not covered under the State Workers Compensation Act, nor does the University provide medical or health insurance coverage for me. As a result, if I am injured while serving as a volunteer, I cannot be compensated or reimbursed for medical expenses incurred through the State Workers Compensation Fund. Because of this, I have been advised to consider securing adequate health and accident insurance to cover myself while performing my duties as a volunteer. I agree to be personally and completely liable for any expenses including, but not limited to, medical or health care expenses for medical treatment, illness, or condition, incurred, for, or on, my behalf.

I also agree that I will serve as a volunteer with the University of South Carolina without monetary compensation and recognize that the University of South Carolina is not required to provide any specific material support, space, or funding for my volunteer activity.

I have read and executed this document with full knowledge of its significance.

If under the age of 18:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**\*\*Note: All volunteers working in the program undergo a SLED background check and volunteers who will be providing transportation will also undergo a DMV check.**