



MnCoSA VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Minnesota Department of Corrections is looking for concerned, committed volunteers to make a difference in the lives of people convicted of sexual offenses, their victims, and the community at large.

Volunteer Title: Circle Member

Purpose: Minnesota Circles of Support and Accountability (MnCoSA) is based on a successful, nationally-recognized restorative justice model. A Circle is made up of Circle Members (volunteers), a Core Member (released individual convicted of a sexual offense), and an Outer Circle (professionals).

Circle Member volunteers work in teams of 4-6 with a Core Member and are supported by an Outer Circle of professionals. Circles meet regularly to provide support to the Core Member as he/she begins to lead a responsible, productive, and accountable life while working on reintegration into the community – finding housing, employment, transportation, medical assistance, mental/chemical health care, friendship, and acceptance.

Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSAs) are used in neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, social services and justice systems to:

- Provide support for individuals
- Create positive relationships
- Address behavior problems
- Resolve conflict
- Build teams and positive work environments
- Successfully reintegrate offenders into the community

Volunteer Responsibilities and Qualifications: Applicants must:

- Be at least 18 years old, complete a MnCoSA volunteer application, criminal background check, and complete an interview with MnCoSA staff
- Successfully complete 15 hours of MnCoSA training
- Commit to 1 year of Circle involvement. (Circles meet 1-2 hours per week and an average of 4 hours per month as the circle develops; responsibilities and weekly commitments gradually decrease.)
- Abide by all Minnesota Department of Corrections policies and procedures

Benefits: Circle Members receive extensive, FREE training to successfully prepare to serve as a Circle Member. Training is broken down into 5 sessions totaling 15 hours. Topics include:

- Circle Processes and Guidelines
- Criminal Justice System Overview
- Police Concerns and Public Notification
- Human Sexuality and Sexual Deviance
- Process to Meet the Core Member
- Survivor Concerns
- Community Concerns
- Offender Discussion
- Group Dynamics
- Boundaries and Self Care
- Covenant Creation (part of the Circle process)

Circle Locations: Training takes place at a convenient location for volunteers (depending upon geographical area) and circle meeting locations vary and are selected specifically for each circle within Hennepin, Ramsey, Clay, and St. Louis Counties.



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www.doc.state.mn.us/volunteer/mncosa.htm