

Volunteer Recruitment Guidelines

Sanghas, and the pool from which volunteers are recruited, can be very different. The following list provides some questions as well as areas for consideration, when recruiting/interviewing a new prison dharma volunteer.

1. **Practice background:** What is his/her current practice of Buddhism? With which tradition are they most familiar-Vajrayana, Theravada, Mahayana? Who has been or are their main teachers?
2. **Personal background:** Does the volunteer have any special experience with mental illness or substance abuse that might be either beneficial or detrimental to their participation in the program.
Does the volunteer have personal experience with incarceration, e.g., self/family/friends?
3. **Working together:** Will the volunteer be able to work harmoniously with the other volunteers, the inmates and the prison personnel? What background do they have and what input can they provide that demonstrates an understanding of what this might entail? Can s/he work well with teachers and inmates from other lineages?
4. **Commitment to the experience:** Can and will the volunteer make a level of commitment to the prison sangha so that s/he will be a stabilizing presence to the sangha (i.e. gradually learning the names of the sangha members, coming regularly without multiple unplanned absences, being a consistent positive and helpful presence, etc.?) Can s/he be aware of challenges and concerns within the sangha and is he/she willing to discuss concerns with the other teachers-especially with the lead? Can the volunteer develop rapport with the CO's?
5. **Time commitment:** The total trial period for a BP3 volunteer is 12 months which is divided into two segments. There is an initial 4-month component and, if that is successful to all involved, a subsequent 8-month segment. Can the recruit commit to volunteering at least 2xs/month during this period?
6. **Reference:** The applicant should provide a name and phone number of someone (preferably a Buddhist teacher/mentor) who may be contacted regarding the applicant's appropriateness for prison service.