



## Community service instead of a prison sentence

### **What is community service?**

Community service entails a temporary unpaid job in the interest of society such as a charity or social-activity job of varying type, which takes the place of expiation of a prison sentence in prison. The job is performed outside of a sentenced person's working time and thus he can work or study while participating in community service and therefore be an active member of society. The Prison and Probation Administration can decide that a portion of the unpaid community service may consist of interview therapy; however, this may never exceed one fifth of the community service.

### **Who can request community service?**

Those who have been sentenced to up to **24 months of** non-probational prison can apply for community service on the enclosed form. When the prison sentence at hand is in accordance with more than one sentence, the total sentence may not exceed 24 months in total. When sentences are mixed, e.g. when a portion of the prison sentence is probational, then community service can be considered even though the total sentence is longer than 24 months. The terms for consideration of community service are such that an applicant may not have a case in processing by police, a prosecution or courts of law in which the applicant is charged with an indictable act.

### **Where and when should community service be applied for?**

Applications shall be turned into The Prison and Probation Administration **no later than a week before expiation is supposed to begin** according to the notification letter from The Prison and Probation Administration. Expiation of a sentence is postponed until a decision about the handling of an application is official. The Prison and Probation Administration notifies an applicant about whether a request is accepted for community service by phone or in a letter.

### **How is eligibility for community service determined?**

The conditions for community service is that the person sentenced may not have a case pending examination by the police, the prosecution authorities or the courts in which he is accused of a criminal offence, is considered fit for community service and that he is not serving a prison sentence or in custody on remand. Community service will not be considered if public interests run counter to it. The above-mentioned aspects are taken into consideration in the evaluation of eligibility of applicants. On the basis of the analysis, an applicant is subsequently evaluated on whether it is considered likely that he can carry out community service as well as which jobs should be suitable.

### **How is preparation for community service carried out?**

If an application for community service is accepted, then the charged individual is presented with community service identification on which the number of hours of community service and where and for how long the community service shall take place are written. Moreover, the terms by which the charged individual must abide are shown which are mainly that he does not commit an offence, consumes neither alcohol nor narcotics, works at the appointed time and informs of sickness or other reasons, without any delay, that cause him to be unable to attend work. At the same time, the consequences of breaching the terms are shown. The charged individual agrees to the above-defined terms with his signature. An employee of The Prison and Probation Administration can accompany the individual to the workplace for the first day and monitor his progress afterwards by, among other things, visits to the workplace and interviews with the supervisor; however, the supervisor is responsible for instructing the community service worker and with monitoring his efforts. The Prison and Probation Administration has made a contract with the Security Center for manned security for community service. The role of supervisory bodies is to visit workplaces and be in contact with community service workers and the supervisors at those places.

### **What kinds of jobs are performed?**

Mainly jobs available are charity related and jobs involved with community issues at organisations and public institutions. A job can consist of cleaning, help with operations, maintenance, care-giving and light office work. The selection of a job depends on which jobs are available on a case by case basis as well as what The Prison and Probation Administration considers to be a suitable applicant.

### **When is the job performed?**

The job is either performed during normal working hours or during evenings and on weekends. The time worked is from 40 hours to 960 hours and is distributed over 2 to 14 months.

### **What happens if the contract is not honoured?**

If a charged individual in community service breaches the terms by which he has been bound, e.g. by not fulfilling his work obligations, by insobriety or if he is charged with having committed an indictable act, then that can result in him having to expiate the remainder of the sentence/sentences in prison. These decisions are presented to the relevant party in writing.

### **Other information**

It is possible to find all further information on the terms and organisation of community service at The Prison and Probation Administration, Austurströn 5, 170 Seltjarnarnesi, phone 520-5000, website: <http://www.fangelsi.is/>