

# Hogoshi Act

(Act No. 204 of 1950)

## (Mission of Volunteer Probation Officers)

Article 1 The mission of volunteer probation officers is to contribute to the welfare of individuals and the public by helping persons who have committed crimes and juvenile delinquents reform and rehabilitate themselves, while endeavoring to raise public awareness for the prevention of crime, improve the social environment, and promote the activities of local residents, thereby achieving a safe local community where people can live with peace of mind, with a spirit of social service.

## (Designated Areas and Set Numbers of Volunteer Probation Officers)

Article 2 (1) Volunteer probation officers are assigned to areas in a prefecture designated by the Minister of Justice (referred to below as "probation districts").

(2) The total number of volunteer probation officers does not exceed 52,500 throughout the country.

(3) The set number of volunteer probation officers in each probation district is determined by the Minister of Justice in consideration of the population, economy, the status of crimes, and other factors of the district.

(4) The authority of the Minister of Justice as prescribed in paragraph (1) and the preceding paragraph may be entrusted to the regional parole board.

## (Recommendation and Delegation)

Article 3 (1) Volunteer probation officers are to be appointed by the Minister of Justice from among persons who satisfy all of the conditions stated in the following items:

(i) having a high level of personality and insight;

(ii) having a willingness to faithfully and diligently perform their duties in cooperation with other volunteer probation officers and probation officers;

(iii) being able to secure the time necessary for the performance of duties;

(iv) being financially stable; and

(v) being healthy and active.

(2) The Minister of Justice may entrust the power for delegation stated in the preceding paragraph to the chairperson of the regional parole board.

(3) The commission referred to in the preceding two paragraphs is to be made from among the persons recommended by the director of the probation office, while giving consideration to ensuring the diversity of volunteer probation officers, in light of the importance of diverse volunteer probation officers engaging in their duties to the best of their individuality and abilities.

(4) The director of the probation office must, when recommending the persons stated in the preceding paragraph, hear the opinions of the volunteer probation officers' screening commission in advance.

(5) The director of the probation office is to conduct public relations concerning the significance and content of the duties of volunteer probation officers, and in making the recommendation referred to in paragraph (3), endeavor to contribute to securing a diverse range of human resources by obtaining cooperation from the relevant administrative bodies, local governments, or private organizations or individuals.

(Disqualification)

Article 4 Any person who falls under any of the following items must not become a volunteer probation officer:

(i) a person who has been sentenced to imprisonment or a more severe punishment;

(ii) a person who, on or after the date on which the Constitution of Japan came into effect, formed or belonged to a political party or any other organization which advocates violation by force of the Constitution of Japan or overthrow of the government established under it; or

(iii) a person specified by Ministry of Justice Order as being unable to properly perform their duties due to a mental or physical disorder.

(Volunteer Probation Officers' Screening Commissions)

Article 5 (1) Volunteer probation officers' screening commissions are established at the probation offices.

(2) A volunteer probation officers' screening commission is composed of a maximum of 13 members (a maximum of 15 in the case of the volunteer probation officers' screening commission established at the probation office corresponding to the jurisdictional district of the Tokyo District Court) and one member is the chairperson.

(3) No salary is given to any member of the volunteer probation officers' screening commission.

(4) In addition to what is provided for in this Act, the organization, jurisdictional affairs, members, and administrative procedures of the volunteer probation officers' screening commission are provided by Ministry of Justice Order.

(Term of Office)

Article 6 The term of office of volunteer probation officers is three years; provided, however, that this does not preclude reappointment.

(Area in Which the Officer Performs Their Duties)

Article 7 (1) Volunteer probation officers are to perform their duties within the probation district in which they are placed; provided, however, that if they are particularly ordered to do so by the regional parole board or the director of the probation office, or if it is particularly necessary, they may perform their duties outside the district.

(2) When a volunteer probation officer performs their duties outside the probation district to which they have been assigned pursuant to the provisions of the proviso

to the preceding paragraph (except when they are specially ordered by the regional parole board or the director of the probation office), they must report that fact to the regional parole board or the director of the probation office in advance or without delay after performing their duties.

(Fulfillment of Duties)

Article 8 (1) A volunteer probation officer is to engage in the affairs under the jurisdiction of the regional parole board or the probation office, as designated by the director of the regional parole board or the probation office, and is also to engage in the following affairs under the jurisdiction of the probation office, in accordance with the plan of the volunteer probation officer approved by the director of the probation office:

(i) awareness-raising and advertising activities to aid the reform and rehabilitation of persons who have committed crimes and juvenile delinquents, or to promote the prevention of crime;

(ii) cooperation with the policies of local governments and the activities of private organizations to aid the reform and rehabilitation of persons who have committed crimes and juvenile delinquents, or to promote the prevention of crime; and

(iii) other activities specified by Ministry of Justice Order that contribute to helping persons who have committed crimes and juvenile delinquents reform and rehabilitate themselves, or to crime prevention.

(Services)

Article 9 (1) Volunteer probation officers must be conscious of their mission, make efforts to develop a noteworthy character and broad vision and acquire the knowledge and techniques necessary for performance of their duties, while carrying out their duties with a positive attitude.

(2) Volunteer probation officers must respect the confidentiality of the relevant parties relating to the personal affairs which they have come to know in the course of their duties, and must strive to maintain the good name of their position.

(Payment of Expenses)

Article 10 (1) Volunteer probation officers are not paid remuneration.

(2) Volunteer probation officers may, pursuant to the provisions of Ministry of Justice Order and within the limits of the budget, be reimbursed for the expenses needed for the performance of their duties, in whole or in part.

(Discharge from Commission)

Article 11 (1) If a volunteer probation officer has come to fall under any of the items of Article 4, the Minister of Justice must discharge the volunteer probation officer.

(2) When a volunteer probation officer has come to fall under any of the following items, the Minister of Justice may discharge the volunteer probation officer at the request of the director of the probation office:

(i) when they no longer fulfill any of the requirements for the qualifications given in the items of paragraph (1) of Article 3;

(ii) when they have violated an obligation in the course of their duties or they have neglected their official duties; or

(iii) when they have committed an act unbecoming of a volunteer probation officer.

(3) The director of the probation office must, when making the request pursuant to the provisions stated in the preceding paragraph, hear the opinions of the volunteer probation officers' screening commission in advance.

(4) Discharge pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (1) or (2) may not be conducted unless the volunteer probation officer has been given an explanation of the reasons for the discharge and an opportunity for explanation; provided, however, that this does not apply to discharge on the grounds that the volunteer probation officer has come to fall under Article 4, item (i).

(Volunteer Probation Officers' Associations)

Article 12 (1) Volunteer probation officers organize volunteer probation officers' associations for each of the probation district in which they are placed.

(2) The duties of the volunteer probation officers' association are to conduct the following affairs:

(i) formulation of plans prescribed in Article 8, and liaison and coordination concerning the duties of volunteer probation officers;

(ii) collection of necessary materials and information concerning the duties of volunteer probation officers;

(iii) study and announcement of opinions concerning the duties of volunteer probation officers;

(iv) provision of training opportunities concerning the duties of volunteer probation officers;

(v) operation of offenders' rehabilitation support centers (meaning facilities specified by Ministry of Justice Order as those that contribute to the smooth and effective performance of volunteer probation officers' duties); and

(vi) other affairs prescribed by Ministry of Justice Order that are necessary for ensuring smooth and effective performance of volunteer probation officers' duties.

(Federation of Volunteer Probation Officers' Associations)

Article 13 (1) The volunteer probation officers' associations are to organize a federation of volunteer probation officers' associations for each prefecture; provided, however, that in Hokkaido, the federation is to be organized for each area specified by the Minister of Justice.

(2) The duties of the federation of volunteer probation officers' associations are to conduct the following affairs:

(i) liaison and coordination concerning the duties of volunteer probation officers' associations;

(ii) collection of necessary materials and information concerning the duties of volunteer probation officers;

(iii) study and announcement of opinions concerning the duties of volunteer probation officers; and

(iv) provision of training opportunities concerning the duties of volunteer probation officers; and

(v) other affairs specified by Ministry of Justice Order as necessary for the smooth and effective performance of the duties of volunteer probation officers or volunteer probation officers' associations.

(Support for Volunteer Probation Officers' Associations)

Article 14 The director of the probation office is to provide information, advice, and other necessary support to volunteer probation officers' associations and federations of volunteer probation officers' associations for smooth and effective performance of the duties of volunteer probation officers' associations prescribed in Article 12, paragraph (2) and the duties of federations of volunteer probation officers' associations prescribed in paragraph (2) of the preceding Article.

(Delegation of Necessary Matters Concerning Volunteer Probation Officers' Associations to Ministry of Justice Order)

Article 15 In addition to the matters provided in this Act, any other necessary matters concerning the volunteer probation officers' associations and the federations of volunteer probation officers' associations are provided by Ministry of Justice Order.

(Responsibilities of the National Government)

Article 16 In order to develop an environment in which volunteer probation officers can smoothly and effectively perform their duties in a safe and secure manner, the national government is to secure suitable places for volunteer probation officers to conduct interviews, develop a support system for volunteer probation officers, and take other necessary measures.

(Commendation)

Article 17 The Minister of Justice must commend volunteer probation officers, volunteer probation officers' associations, and federations of volunteer probation officers' associations that have rendered distinguished service in the course of their duties, and must exercise care to make their accomplishments known to the public.

(Cooperation of Local Governments)

Article 18 (1) In light of the fact that the activities of volunteer probation officers, volunteer probation officers' associations, and federations of volunteer probation officers' associations are to assist persons who have committed crimes and juvenile delinquents to reform and rehabilitate themselves, as well as to prevent crime, and contribute to the safety of the local community and the improvement of the welfare of residents, local governments must endeavor to provide necessary cooperation for the activities of volunteer probation officers, volunteer probation officers'

associations, and federations of volunteer probation officers' associations in accordance with the regional conditions of the local governments.

(2) If a local government is requested by the national government to provide necessary cooperation for the implementation of the measures referred to in Article 16, the local government must endeavor to respond to the request.

(Measures by Employers)

Article 19 Employers (excluding the national government and local governments) must endeavor to develop an environment that makes it easier for employees to take leave to perform volunteer probation officers' duties, and to take other necessary measures, so that employees can smoothly and effectively perform volunteer probation officers' duties.

(Prohibition of Disadvantageous Treatment)

Article 20 A worker must not be dismissed or otherwise treated disadvantageously on the grounds that the worker has taken leave to perform volunteer probation officers' duties, or that the worker is, attempted to become, or was formerly a volunteer probation officer.

(Delegation to Ministry of Justice Order)

Article 21 Procedures for the implementation of this Act and other detailed regulations necessary for its enforcement are specified by Ministry of Justice Order.

### **Supplementary Provisions**

(1) This Act comes into effect on the date on which the Act on Urgent Aftercare of Discharged Offenders (Act No. 203 of 1950) comes into effect.

(3) The term "judicial volunteer" in other laws and regulations is deemed to be replaced with "volunteer probation officer".

Supplementary Provisions (Act No.268 of July 31, 1952) (Extract)

(1) This Act comes into effect on August 1, 1952.

Supplementary Provisions (Act No.111 of July 1, 1972) (Extract)

(Effective Date)

(1) This Act comes into effect on the date of promulgation.

Supplementary Provisions (Act No.61 of May 20, 1998) (Extract)

(Effective Date)

(1) This Act comes into effect on April 1, 1999.

Supplementary Provisions (Act No.151 of December 8, 1999) (Extract)

(Effective Date)

Article 1 This Act comes into effect on April 1, 2000.

(Transitional Measures)

Article 3 (1) Prior laws continue to govern the applicability of the amended provisions of this Act to a person with limited legal capacity and their curator, to whom prior laws continue to govern pursuant to the provisions of Article 3, paragraph (3) of the Supplementary Provisions of the Act Partially Amending the Civil Code (Act No. 149 of 1999), except for the following amended provisions:

(i) through (xxv): omitted.

Supplementary Provisions (Act No.160 of December 22, 1999) (Extract)  
(Effective Date)

Article 1 (1) This Act (excluding Article 2 and Article 3) comes into effect on January 6, 2001; provided, however, that the provisions stated in the following items come into effect on the dates specified respectively in those items:

(i) the provisions of Article 995 (limited to the part related to the provisions amending the Supplementary Provisions of the Act Partially Amending the Act on the Regulation of Nuclear Source Material, Nuclear Fuel Material and Reactors), and Article 1305, Article 1306, Article 1324, paragraph (2), Article 1326, paragraph (2) and Article 1344: the date of promulgation.

Supplementary Provisions (Act No.88 of June 15, 2007) (Extract)  
(Effective Date)

Article 1 This Act comes into effect on the day specified by Cabinet Order within a period not exceeding one year from the date of promulgation.

Supplementary Provisions (Act No.37 of June 14, 2019) (Extract)  
(Effective Date)

Article 1 (1) This Act comes into effect on the day on which three months have elapsed from the date of promulgation; provided, however, that the provisions stated in the following items come into effect on the dates specified respectively in those items:

(i) the provisions of Article 40, Article 59, Article 61, Article 75 (limited to the provisions amending Article 34-20 of the Child Welfare Act), Article 85, Article 102, Article 107 (limited to the provisions amending Article 26 of the Act on the Protection of Children Relating to Adoption by Private Adoption Agencies), Article 111, Article 143, Article 149, Article 152, Article 154 (limited to the provisions amending Article 25, item (vi) of the Act on Real Estate Appraisal), and Article 168, and the provisions of the following Article, and Article 3 and Article 6 of the Supplementary Provisions: the date of promulgation.

(Transitional Measures Concerning Acts by Administrative Agencies)

Article 2 Prior laws continue to govern dispositions or other acts made by an administrative agency before the date on which this Act comes into effect (in the case of the provisions stated in the items of the preceding Article, the relevant provisions; the same applies in this Article and the following Article) based on the provisions of laws before amendment by this Act or orders based on them (limited to those that provide for disqualification clauses or other measures related to restrictions on rights), and the effects of unemployment caused by the relevant provisions.

(Review)

Article 7 Within approximately one year after the promulgation of this Act, the government is to review the provisions of the Companies Act (Act No. 86 of 2005)

and the Act on General Incorporated Associations and General Incorporated Foundations (Act No. 48 of 2006) that restrict the qualifications of officers of corporations on the grounds that they are adult wards or persons under curatorship, and is to delete the relevant provisions or take other necessary legislative measures based on the results of the review.

Supplementary Provisions (Act No.68 of June 17, 2022) (Extract)  
(Effective Date)

(1) This Act comes into effect on the date on which the Act Partially Amending the Penal Code and Other Acts comes into effect; provided, however, that the provisions stated in the following items come into effect on the dates specified respectively in those items:

(i) the provisions of Article 509: the date of promulgation.

Supplementary Provisions (Act No.82 of December 10, 2025) (Extract)  
(Effective Date)

(1) This Act comes into effect on the day specified by Cabinet Order within a period not exceeding one year from the date of promulgation.

(Transitional Measures Concerning the Term of Office and Discharge of Volunteer Probation Officers)

(2) Prior laws continue to govern the term of office and discharge of a person who has actually been appointed as a volunteer probation officer at the time of enforcement of this Act.