



Volunteers of America®

NORTH LOUISIANA

Volunteer Policy Manual

Volunteers are valuable resources to Volunteers of America, its staff, and its clients. Volunteers are extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, to be treated as equal co-workers, to receive effective training and supervision, have full involvement and participation and receive recognition for work accomplished. In return, volunteers agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the values, goals and policies of Volunteers of America.

Volunteers may be involved in all programs and activities of the organization and serve at all levels of skill and decision-making. Volunteers will not, however, be used to displace paid employees.

Becoming a Volunteer

Applications. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer with Volunteers of America will be asked to complete a volunteer application. The application includes basic contact information, areas of interest, availability of time and emergency contact information.

Interviews. Each prospective volunteer may be interviewed by a designated Volunteers of America employee or volunteer to determine the applicant's qualifications, available days and hours, and preferred volunteer position.

Background checks. When volunteers will be placed in direct contact with clients, will be responsible for financial or other valuable organizational resources, or in other positions identified by the local office, additional screening procedures may be instituted. These procedures may include reference checks, criminal background checks, etc. Volunteers will be asked to pay for the initial background check. The charge is \$20.00 (\$10 for students above the age of 18/ or Communities in Schools volunteers). Any volunteer that will be working one-on-one with children will be required to go to the Sheriff's Department to get their fingerprints done. **Any person with a felony offense on their background check will NOT be permitted to volunteer with our organization, unless prior approval has been given by the CEO.** Volunteers who refuse permission to conduct these checks will not be accepted for placement in these identified positions.

Placement. In placing a volunteer in a position, attention will be paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and to the requirements of the volunteer position. No placement shall be made unless the requirements of both the volunteer and the supervising staff can be met. No volunteer should be assigned to a "make-work" position, and no position should be given to an unqualified or disinterested volunteer.

Orientation. All volunteers will receive a general orientation on the nature and purpose of the organization. Volunteers may be asked to attend an orientation within the first month of their volunteer placement.

Minors. All volunteers must be at least 13 years of age, unless otherwise specified by the agency. Volunteers who have not reached the age of 18 must have the written consent of a parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering. The volunteer activity that is assigned to a minor must be performed in a non-hazardous environment and comply with all appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

Supervision. Each volunteer within the organization is assigned a supervisor. This person is responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance. The supervisor will have primary responsibility for developing suitable assignments for the volunteer, involving the volunteer in the communication flow of the agency and for providing feedback to and evaluation of the volunteer's work.

Program specific policies. Individual programs within Volunteers of America may have specific standards and procedures. Volunteers are required to abide by program policies and procedures in addition to those in this handbook. Supervisors are responsible for sharing this information with the volunteers and should give out copies of written policies as part of the volunteer's training.

Dismissal of a volunteer. Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the organization or who fail to perform their volunteer assignments at a satisfactory level may be subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with their supervisors.

Reasons for dismissal. Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of organization equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of clients or co-workers, failure to abide by organization policies and procedures, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

Exit interviews. Exit interviews will be conducted with volunteers who are leaving their positions. The interview should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving the position, suggestions the volunteer may have about improving the position, and the possibility of involving the volunteer in some other capacity with the organization in the future.

General Guidelines

Attendance. Volunteers and supervisors work together to determine a schedule that works for both parties. Volunteers are asked to call their supervisors and provide as much notice as possible when unable to fulfill their commitment to serve as scheduled.

Dress code. As representatives of the organization, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to clients and the community. Volunteers are to dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Some programs may have specific dress code requirements that will need to be adhered to.

Smoking. All Volunteers of America facilities are smoke free. Smoking is permitted only outside of the buildings. A volunteer's supervisor should include this information during a volunteer's orientation to the program and the facility.

Solicitations. Staff and volunteers are not to engage in any type of solicitation while serving Volunteers of America, with the exception of Volunteers of America sponsored programs. Any staff or volunteer wishing to solicit funds or in-kind gifts on behalf of Volunteers of America must receive prior approval from the Development Director.

Volunteers becoming employees. Should a volunteer decide to apply for a paid position within Volunteers of America, he or she will go through the same hiring process as any other individual. All job openings are posted on staff bulletin boards. Dates for applying and job qualifications are listed. The volunteer may use staff and other volunteers as job references.

Accident procedures. Volunteers must immediately report any injuries while volunteering. Their supervisor will provide an Accident Report to be completed immediately. If a volunteer witnesses an accident they should notify their supervisor or any supervisor on shift immediately. A written report must also be completed.

Safety procedures. Each staff and volunteer are expected to obey safety rules and exercise caution in all work activities. Immediately report any unsafe condition or hazardous situations that you observe to your supervisor or other appropriate supervisor. If you are unsure how to do a job safely, ask your supervisor.

Client, staff and volunteer rights. All Volunteers of America clients, staff and volunteers have the right to be treated in a considerate and respectful manner that emphasizes human dignity.

Client/staff relationships. Volunteers must maintain a professional relationship with program service recipients (clients) at all times. Volunteers should not engage in personal associations with clients and should discourage any attempts on the part of the clients to develop such relationships.

Confidentiality. Information, both verbal and written, regarding clients, employees or volunteers is to be kept confidential at all times. Any volunteer that who interacts with donors is also asked to keep confidential the specifics of the donor activity. It is mandatory that all information be held in the strictest confidence, both within and outside of the facilities of Volunteers of America.

Conflict of interest. No person who has a conflict of interest with any activity or program of the organization, whether personal, philosophical, or financial shall be accepted or serve as a volunteer. Those volunteers who find themselves to be in a conflict situation should immediately report the nature of the conflict to their immediate supervisor.

Drug free workplace. The possession, distribution or use of alcohol or illegal drugs at any Volunteers of America facility or while volunteering in any Volunteers of America program is forbidden.

Equal opportunity. It is the policy of Volunteers of America not to discriminate against any volunteer because of race, religion, creed, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, disability or veteran's status.

Mandate Reporting. I understand that under Children's Code Article 609(A) I will be considered a "mandatory reporter", and will be obligated to report to staff any abuse or neglect of a child or other client of Volunteers of America.

Grievance. Whenever a volunteer has a job related question, problem or concern with Volunteers of America there are people available to help resolve the matter. The volunteer should discuss the issue with their supervisor. It is expected that most disagreements will be dealt with at the lowest level of the chain of command. In the event that informal conflict resolution fails to resolve a volunteer's problem, a grievance may be completed and submitted to the appropriate management staff member.

Harassment. It is the policy of Volunteers of America that it will not permit verbal or physical conduct by an employee or volunteer which harasses, disrupts or interferes with another's work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile environment.

Medications for clients. Volunteers may not administer medications of any kind, including over the counter medicines, to clients in any Volunteers of America program.

News media inquiries. No volunteer may give information concerning Volunteers of America or any of its programs or clients to the news media unless specifically authorized to do so by management. These inquiries should be referred to the Director of Communications.

Representation of the organization. Prior to any action or statement which might significantly affect or obligate the organization, volunteers should seek prior consultation and approval from appropriate staff. These actions may include, but are not limited to public statements to the press, lobbying efforts with other organizations, collaborations or joint initiatives, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations. Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the organization as specifically indicated within their job descriptions and only to the extent of such written specifications.