



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 service opportunities, to be treated respectfully, to receive effective training and supervision, have full involvement and participation and receive recognition for their time and talents. 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.

If volunteers choose to interact outside of these policies, you will be doing so in a **personal capacity** and no longer considered an agency volunteer. Volunteers of America North Louisiana will not be liable or responsible for any risks, claims, accidents or injuries of any kind that may arise as a result.

We ask all volunteers to agree with these guidelines and perform their duties to the best of their abilities while remaining loyal to the mission and core values of Volunteers of America North Louisiana.

Becoming a Volunteer

Applications. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer with Volunteers of America North Louisiana must complete a volunteer application. The application includes basic contact information, background information, areas of interest and availability of time.

Interviews. A designated Volunteers of America North Louisiana employee may interview a prospective volunteer to determine the individual's qualifications, available days and hours and preferred volunteer placement.

Background Checks. When volunteers will be placed in direct contact with clients, the volunteer 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 are asked to pay for their initial background check. **The charge is \$20.00 for potential volunteers (\$10 for students above the age of 18).**

An individual with a felony offense on their background check will NOT be permitted to volunteer with our organization, unless prior approval from management staff has been given. Volunteers who refuse permission to conduct these checks will not be considered for placement within the agency.

Minors. Volunteers who have not reached the age of 18 must have the written consent of a parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering. A parent or adult must accompany volunteers who have not reached the age of 13. 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.

Volunteer Guidelines

Attendance. Volunteers and their assigned supervisors work together to determine a schedule that works for both parties. In this case, a volunteer is unable to fulfill their commitment to serve as scheduled; their supervisor must receive as much advanced notice as possible. While serving in our programs, volunteers are expected to be on time, prepared for their duties and record volunteer hours as directed by their supervisor.

Cell Phones. Volunteers are asked to keep their cell phones on silent during program hours and limit usage as much as possible.

Dismissal. Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the organization or who fail to perform their volunteer duties at a satisfactory level may be subject to dismissal. A volunteer will not be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with agency staff.

Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to 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 volunteer duties.

Donations/Gifts. Any items donated to an agency program or gifts donated to a client of Volunteers of America North Louisiana must go through the appropriate channels. Donations and gifts must be given to the program director, program supervisor or the community engagement coordinator. Gifts may not be given directly to clients without prior approval from a staff member. Staff may use their discretion to determine if gifts will be given directly or presented from a staff member.

Dress code. As representatives of the organization, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a positive image to the public and clients/consumers. 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 as well.

Exit Interviews. Exit interviews may be conducted with volunteers who are leaving their duties. The interview should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving the agency, suggestions the volunteer may have about improving the volunteer experience, and the possibility of involving the volunteer in another capacity with the organization in the future.

Grievance. Whenever a volunteer has a job-related issue, problem or concern with Volunteers of America North Louisiana, there are people available to help resolve the matter. The volunteer should first discuss the issue with their supervisor. 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.

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

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.

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

News Media Inquiries. No volunteer may give information concerning Volunteers of America North Louisiana, including but not limited to program data, client personal records, etc. to the news media unless specifically authorized to do so by staff management. These inquiries should be referred to the Communications Director.

Orientation. All volunteers will receive a general orientation on the nature and purpose of their volunteer duties, as well as an agency overview. Volunteers may be asked to attend a specific program orientation within the first month of their volunteer placement.

Personal Information. A volunteer may not give out their personal information to Volunteers of America North Louisiana clients. This includes, but is not limited to their mailing address, phone number, email address, etc. Volunteers may choose to share their personal information directly with their supervisor or program staff. In this case, agency staff are not authorized to disclose a volunteer's personal information.

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 duties. 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 volunteer duties should be given to an unqualified or disinterested volunteer.

Representation of the Agency. Volunteers are expected to act professionally, and to refrain from any behavior that could adversely impact Volunteers of America North Louisiana’s reputation or ability to carry its mission forward.

Prior to any Volunteers of America related actions or statement which might result in significant negative implications, volunteers should seek prior consultation and approval from management staff. These actions may include, but are not limited to public statements, lobbying efforts with other organizations, collaborations or joint initiatives or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations.

Social Media. In order to protect the privacy of our clients and staff, as well to ensure that Volunteers of America North Louisiana maintains a positive and professional brand, volunteers must abide by these expectations when using social media in relation to their volunteer duties.

Volunteers may post volunteer-related images or videos, along with an appropriate caption, to their personal social media accounts only if they have been given express permission from management staff to do so. **Posts may only be made on social media platforms on which Volunteers of America North Louisiana has an official social media account, which platforms are currently: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.** Posting on other social media platforms is prohibited. In any post, volunteers must abide by the following:

- A post must not reveal any personal identifying information of any client. Personal identifying information may include, but is not limited to, a client’s name, age, or grade, as applicable.
- Any post must be of a positive, uplifting, and respectful nature, and must also align with the agency’s mission and core values. Language or images that may be perceived as disrespectful, derogatory, or discriminatory must not be included in any post.
- A post must not disclose any sensitive, proprietary or confidential information about Volunteers of America North Louisiana, its partners, vendors, employees or volunteers.
- Volunteers of America North Louisiana’s official social media account for the posting platform must be tagged in any post. Please also include the hashtags *#voawhy* and/or *#wearevoa*.

Volunteers of America North Louisiana prohibits the use of its name or logo on social media or other websites which include obscene, controversial, or violent content, or places that are contrary to the agency’s mission, core values or that would be detrimental to our brand in the community. Volunteers of America North Louisiana reserves the right to demand removal of any post or agency reference failing to conform to the guidelines set forth herein.

Transportation. Under no circumstances are volunteers authorized to provide transportation for any Volunteers of America North Louisiana client.

General Guidelines

Client, Staff and Volunteer Rights. All Volunteers of America North Louisiana clients, staff and volunteers have the right to be treated in a considerate and respectful manner that emphasizes human dignity.

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 North Louisiana.

Conflict of Interest. No person who has a conflict of interest within the agency, whether personal, philosophical, or financial, shall 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 supervisor or to the community engagement coordinator.

Drug-Free Workplace. The possession, distribution or use of alcohol or illegal drugs at any Volunteers of America North Louisiana facility or while volunteering within this agency is prohibited.

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

Harassment. It is the policy of Volunteers of America North Louisiana 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.

Inappropriate Relationships. Volunteers must maintain a professional relationship with Volunteers of America North Louisiana clients and staff at all times. Inappropriate relationships are not acceptable and may result in dismissal from the agency.

Program Specific Policies. Individual programs may have specific standards and procedures. Volunteers are required to abide by program policies and guidelines in addition to those in this handbook. Staff are responsible for sharing this pertinent information with the volunteers and should give out copies of any program specific policies as part of the volunteers training.

- **Children and Families Volunteer Policy:** Any interactions between a volunteer and a child participating in one of our children and families programs will only take place at a Communities In Schools (CIS) or LightHouse site location. Any offsite activities will be limited to group events sanctioned by Volunteers of America North Louisiana (VOANLA).
- If you choose to attend a VOANLA non-sanctioned public event (i.e. sporting events, award performances, field days, etc.), you do so in a personal capacity.
- **For CIS-Specific Volunteers:** If volunteers are assigned to tutor or mentor minors in the Communities In Schools program, please be aware that parental consent has been received to provide CIS services.

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, please ask your supervisor.

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.

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 vice president of development and communications.

Tobacco-Free Environment. Volunteers of America prohibits the use of all tobacco products in agency buildings, within our programs and on campus grounds that are owned or leased by the agency. This includes products related to smoking, as well as chewing tobacco, snuff, vapors or other smokeless tobacco.

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 online at www.voanorthla.org. Dates for applying and job qualifications are listed. The volunteer may use their supervisor, staff and other volunteers as job references.