



Volunteers of America®

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Community Engagement Program Volunteer Handbook

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Introduction

Volunteers are valuable resources to Volunteers of America of Kentucky and its staff and clients. Volunteers of America of Kentucky could not accomplish our work without the commitment of the individuals, groups and corporate volunteers that engage in our mission. Volunteers are a priceless gift to Volunteers of America of Kentucky. Volunteers of America of Kentucky recognizes contributions of volunteers as vital to the operation of the agency and as a fulfillment of the agency's mission to serve all people by responding to those whose need is to serve; therefore the agency strives to incorporate volunteer participation in all aspects of its programming and operations.

To ensure Volunteers and Staff at Volunteers of America of Kentucky understand their roles and how to create positive experiences for volunteers, this handbook may be used as a both a guide to volunteers to understand their roles and expectations and as a tool for staff to implement their best practices in order to properly manage volunteers.

Volunteers of America creates positive change in the lives of individuals and communities through a ministry of service.



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About Volunteers of America of Kentucky Services Overview

Overview

Founded in 1896, Volunteers of America is one of the largest and most diversified not-for-profit human services agencies in Kentucky. We offer many different programs that help people help themselves. Our programs reach more than 28,000 individuals every year. We are able to return **7 out of every 10** homeless families we serve to self-sufficiency and spend more than **88 cents** of every dollar generated on client services.

Clinical Services

Halfway Back: Volunteers of America's Halfway Back Program has provided residential alcohol and drug treatment to men recovering from addiction and exiting a correctional facility since 1987. This 50-bed treatment program uses a Twelve Step recovery approach, and men live in the Milieu Therapy setting for six to 18 months.

Shelby Men's Center: Designed for men facing the challenges of substance abuse, homelessness and mental illness, the Shelby Men's Center provides life skills training, individual and group counseling, employment readiness, and long-term housing. Clients may live at the Shelby Men's Center for up to two years.

Third Step: Volunteers of America's Third Step Program is an 18-bed licensed residential alcohol and drug treatment program for men ages 18 to 45 that includes individual and group counseling, psycho-educational sessions, relapse prevention, anger and stress management, and GED education. Average length of stay is six months, followed by six months of after care services.

Women's Substance Abuse Treatment Services: Volunteers of America's Freedom House is a long-term residential treatment program for alcoholic or drug-dependent pregnant and parenting women. The holistic and comprehensive program is designed to treat the women's chemical dependency, break the cycle of addiction in families, reunite families broken apart by chemical dependency, and promote the birth of clean, sober, healthy babies.

STOP: Volunteers of America's S.T.O.P. (Stop The Spread of HIV Through Outreach and Prevention) program serves Metro Louisville, and Lexington with HIV/AIDS and Syphilis prevention, testing, and outreach. Program staff provide educational information and safe sex supplies to prevent the spread of HIV and Syphilis, pre-test and post-test counseling, and referrals to HIV-related and non-HIV related resources.

Kentucky Care Coordinator Program: Volunteers of America's Kentucky Care Coordinator Program (KCCP) is the largest HIV/AIDS program in Kentucky, serving more than 1,100 clients annually. Through referrals and direct assistance, KCCP stabilizes people living with HIV/AIDS so they can better manage the



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disease and enjoy a higher quality of life. Additionally, KCCP assists clients dealing with substance abuse and mental health issues by referring them to appropriate programs.

HOPWA: The HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS) program provides emergency financial assistance to individuals with HIV/AIDS who are in danger of becoming homeless. Recognizing that substance abuse can threaten the stability of permanent housing, HOPWA staff screen each client and refer clients to treatment services that would otherwise be unaffordable or unattainable for them.

Housing Services

Eviction Prevention: Volunteers of America's Eviction Prevention Program stabilizes resident families and individuals living in Louisville Metro Housing Authority Properties by preventing evictions through financial assistance, crisis intervention, mediation, and collaborations with other service providers.

Family Emergency Shelter: Since 1984, Volunteers of America's Family Emergency Shelter has responded to the growing population of homeless families in Louisville, Kentucky. The program provides safe emergency shelter for families who become homeless due to a wide range of factors. The shelter's hallmark is a commitment to serving the whole family in one location. The program also provides individualized case management, housing placement, and other services to help families transition back to the community and become self-sufficient.

Family Housing Program: Volunteers of America's Lexington Family Housing Program is a scattered-site, neighborhood-based transitional housing program for homeless and marginally-housed families. Through a partnership with the Lexington Housing Authority, the program provides housing vouchers for a 12-month lease while the family receives case management services that includes setting goals such as securing permanent housing, finding employment, enrolling in school, and taking care of children's needs.

Family Follow-Up: Volunteers of America's Family Follow-Up Program serves homeless families who are transitioning from homelessness into permanent housing. The Family Follow-Up Program (FUP) began in 1989 and provides six months of case management in the home to stabilize families and prevent their return to homelessness.

Transitional Housing: Volunteers of America's Transitional Housing Program began in 1987. Recognizing the need to build a bridge between homelessness and permanent housing, the Transitional Housing Program offers families a place to live for up to two years after leaving the Volunteers of America of Kentucky's Family Emergency Shelter, as well as case management and housing placement services.

Senior Housing: Volunteers of America provides permanent, safe, affordable housing for low-income seniors at two complexes in the Louisville area. Although residents live independently, community rooms, regular activities, and on-site staff provide opportunities for socialization and help facilitate a support network among residents.



Veterans Services

Homeless Veteran Transitional Treatment Program: Located at the Lexington Veteran Affairs Medical Center, Volunteers of America's Homeless Veterans Transitional Treatment Program (HVTTP) provides an intensive, residential therapeutic treatment setting for up to 40 homeless male veterans struggling with addiction and alcoholism. Clients undergo individual and group counseling by certified alcohol and drug counselors, attend psycho-educational and 12-Step support group meetings, and receive referrals for educational and career development. Additionally, many clients in the later stages of the program are employed and working toward securing permanent housing of their own.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families: Through a grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program provides homelessness prevention services and case management for veterans and their families in the Louisville, Lexington, and Ashland areas of Kentucky. The SSVF program connects veterans with benefits such as vocational and rehabilitation counseling, job training and educational assistance, health care services, transportation, legal assistance, child care, and other services.

Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program: Recognizing the need to reach out to homeless veterans in their everyday world, our Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project helps veterans find secure employment and stable, affordable housing. Outreach workers can arrange home visits with veterans in outlying areas who are unable to travel to the program office. Through partnerships with state, federal, and local community agencies, this innovative program provides access to career counseling, job training, case management, support groups, and follow-up services.

Developmental Disability Services

Development Disability Services: Volunteers of America strives help individuals with developmental disabilities live safe, healthy, and engaged lives. Services include health care coordination, transportation, and around-the-clock care at three group homes with seven or eight residents each; three neighborhood-based homes with three residents each; a respite home that offers short stays for individuals with developmental disabilities who live with family members; and community living supports for family members who care for individuals with developmental disabilities at home.



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Recruiting and Placing Volunteers

Recruitment: Volunteers are recruited by Volunteers of America of Kentucky with the intent of broadening and expanding the involvement of the community in the organization and expanding and enhancing services to its clientele. Volunteers are recruited without regard to gender, disability, age, race, religion, or sexual identity. The qualification for volunteer's placement is based on the volunteer's ability to perform a task or responsibility on behalf of Volunteers of America of Kentucky.

Recruitment of minors: 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 non-hazardous environment and comply with all requirements of child labor laws. Youth volunteers must also be supervised by a staff member or an approved adult volunteer. In some cases, Volunteers of America of Kentucky may require youth volunteer groups to provide their own adult supervision.

Application: Each individual interested in volunteering at Volunteers of America of Kentucky must submit an application through our online website. Applications will kept in a secure and locked location managed by the CEP Coordinator. Volunteers have the right to receive a copy of their application and must request a copy in writing to the CEP Coordinator located at 570 S. 4th Street, Louisville, KY 40202 or at joshk@voaky.org. (Group volunteers will be handled with directly by the CEP Coordinator as well)

Orientation: After submission, an email will be sent including dates for upcoming volunteer orientations, of which one is required before initiating services. The orientation will include an overview of services and opportunities from which a more specific agenda based on applicants qualifications, availability, and preference will be developed. Upon orientation completion a background check will be conducted to be cleared for services.

Health Screenings: For some volunteer positions, a health screening process may be required prior to approving the assignment. In addition, if there are physical requirements necessary for performance of volunteer tasks, a screening or testing procedure may be required to determine the ability of the volunteer to safely perform that task. Please indicate if you have any specific needs or special accommodations that will help you carry out your assignment.

Background Checks: When volunteers will be placed in direct contact with clients, or will be responsible for financial and other valuable organization resources, additional screening procedures may be instituted. These procedures may include reference checks, criminal background checks, etc.



Volunteers who refuse permission to conduct these checks will not be accepted for placement in these identified positions.

Falsification of information: Falsification of information, including material omission or misrepresentation on a volunteer application is grounds for dismissal or reassignment.

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 it work” position, and no position should be given to an unqualified or disinterested volunteer.



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Supervision and Evaluation

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.

Evaluations: Ongoing volunteers will participate periodically with their supervisors in evaluations to review their work. Evaluation includes both an examination of the volunteer's performance of his or her responsibilities and a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have concerning the position or project with which the volunteer is connected.

Corrective action: If performance or behavior is not meeting expected standards, corrective action may be taken, usually following an evaluation session. Examples of corrective action may include the requirement for additional training, reassignment or the volunteer to a new position, suspension of the volunteer or dismissal from volunteer service.

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. Prior to dismissal, the supervisor will consult with the volunteer services manager or director.

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 procedure, failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

Resignation: Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide at least a two-week advance notice before their departure.

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.



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Training and Development

Orientation: All volunteers will receive a general orientation on the nature and purpose of the organization, an orientation to the program or activity for which they are recruited, and a job specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of the position that they are accepting.

Training and on-the-job training: Volunteers will receive training or on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment.

Program specific requirements: Each program determines program specific requirements for volunteer training and development. When such requirements are required for a specific volunteer activity, the requirements are listed on the volunteer position description. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to meet all requirements for the position he/she holds. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to keep the volunteer informed of the training schedule.

Special events orientation: The volunteer site coordinator or designee will carry out a modified special events orientation for groups. This orientation will include at a minimum: an overview of the Volunteers of America, overview of the specific program, duties, safety requirements, facility lay out and any special conditions unique to the event or program.

In-service training: Volunteers will be informed of ongoing training opportunities in areas relating to the volunteers' fields of service. Some programs may require volunteer attendance at regularly scheduled training.



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Benefits

Parking: Free parking is available at most Volunteers of America locations and is available on a first come first-serve basis. The volunteer site coordinator or supervisor will provide volunteer with site specific parking information.

References: Upon request, references are provided for volunteers in good standing. References are available to past and present volunteers.

Recognition: Recognition is how Volunteers of America shows its appreciation to our volunteers. Volunteers should be acknowledged and appreciated for their valuable contributions. Recognition events take place throughout the year.

Tax deductions: Income tax deductions may be available for some volunteer expenses. Volunteers are encouraged to contact the IRS or their accountants for specific information on what deductions are available and apply to their individual situations.

Training and experience: Most volunteer positions offer benefits such as learning new skills, sharpening old skills in preparation for returning to the job market, gaining job experience or having access to special training programs. Volunteers are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities.



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General Practices

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. Two days notice is requested. Since Volunteers of America depends on volunteers to fulfill their commitments, continual absentee problems will result in a review of the volunteer's work assignment and possible reassignment or termination.

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.

Equipment/property: Staff and volunteers use Volunteers of America property or equipment only for officially approved activities. Staff and volunteers are responsible for the care and upkeep of Volunteers of America property assigned for their use.

Telephone and computer use: Telephones and computers are provided for business purposes. Personal calls may be made on Volunteers of America of America phones but should be brief, infrequent and not interfere with the needs of the organizations. Emergency incoming calls will be forwarded to the volunteer immediately. Personal use of the telephone for long-distance and toll calls is not permitted. Computers should only be used for business purposes. Personal use will need approval from a volunteer's supervisor.

Mailroom, photocopying and faxes: The mailroom and its facilities and all Volunteers of America photocopying and fax machines are to be used for business purposes only. The use of Volunteers of America paid postage for personal correspondence is not permitted.

Inclement weather procedure: Volunteers are encouraged to call their site supervisor. Residential facilities will remain open and may welcome additional volunteer work shifts since they may be short staffed. Other offices may be closed.

Open-door policy: A volunteer may have concerns regarding hi/her assignment, work conditions or some other related matter. Volunteers of America encourages volunteers to seek assistance in solving their on-the-job concerns so that they may be resolved quickly and equitably. Volunteers should contact their supervisors or the Community Engagement Coordinator with their concerns.

Program specific policies: Individual programs within Volunteers of America may have specific standards and procedures. Volunteers are required to abide by program policies and procedure in addition to those in this handbook



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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 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.

Time sheets: Volunteers are asked to track their volunteer hours on a time sheet that will be located at their volunteer stations or given to them. Volunteers are to complete the record sheet each volunteer day. Groups should have all their members record their names and time on time sheets. The time should include the activity as well as any planning and/or preparation time involved.

Vehicle usage: Volunteers who drive Volunteers of America vehicles will comply with all procedures set forth regarding vehicle use. Those who do so must first be registered and added to Volunteers of America's insurance program. A driver's background check will be required. Volunteers who run errands in private vehicles are not included under Volunteers of America's insurance and assume full liability.

Volunteer files: Files are kept for each volunteer. The files contain basic volunteer information from the volunteer application such as address and phone number, who to contact in an emergency and hours worked. A copy of any awards and certificates earned while a volunteer may also be kept in addition to any documentation of disciplinary action. Volunteers are requested to submit address, name or telephone emergency information changes to their supervisor and the Community Engagement Program Manager at their earliest convenience. These files are kept confidential in the CEP Manager's office and are available only to staff authorized by the CEP Manager.

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.

Work hours and schedules: Hours of work and work schedules are established by each program/department. Volunteers of America observes the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Friday after Thanksgiving
Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday	Christmas Day
Memorial Day	
Independence Day	
Labor Day	
Veteran's Day	
Thanksgiving Day	



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Worksite: An appropriate worksite shall be established prior to the enrollment of any volunteer. This worksite shall contain necessary facilities, equipment, and space to enable volunteers to effectively and comfortably perform their duties.

Accident procedure: Volunteers must immediately report and 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 procedure: Each staff and volunteer are expected to obey safety rules and exercise caution in all work activities. A volunteer should immediately report any unsafe conditions 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.

Emergency procedures: All Volunteers of America facilities have and follow written procedures for emergencies in that facility. Written procedures will be reviewed in orientation. If you encounter an emergency situation inform your supervisor or any supervisor on shift immediately.

Hazardous materials: Volunteers will not be permitted to handle hazardous materials without prior instruction by an authorized OSHA instructor.

Personal safety: When leaving Volunteers of America after dark, walk in a group or with an escort, check under your car and nearby parked cars and have your key ready when approaching your car door. If you observe any suspicious activities or individuals call the staff supervisor in charge.

Valuables: Please avoid bringing valuables to your volunteer work as Volunteers of America cannot be responsible for any damage or loss. If you need to bring a purse, etc. please ask your supervisor for a safe place to put your belongings.



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Work Place Conduct

Client records: Volunteers are not allowed to read or write in a client's file except where informed consent has been obtained from a client and is approved by the program manager. In all other cases volunteers should inform their staff supervisor of any observations/information they feel might be pertinent to a client's case.

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. 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 or the CEP Manager.

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.

Financial resources: Volunteers are not permitted to handle cash receipts, or money without prior permission from a manager.

Grievance: Whenever a volunteer has a job related question, problem or concern, Volunteers of America there are people available to help resolve the matter. The volunteer should discuss the issue with their supervisor or the Manager. It is expected that most disagreements will be dealt with at the lowest level or 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.

Gratuity/gifts: Volunteers are not allowed to accept any form of cash, tips or gratuity from clients. Volunteers are also not allowed to give gifts to clients.



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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 work environment.

Legal documents: Signing legal documents for clients is strictly forbidden. Refer any requests of this nature to your supervisor.

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 inquires: 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 inquires should be referred to the Development staff.

Professionalism: A volunteer's attitude toward volunteer work needs to be professional. Volunteers have made a commitment to the assigned work, to those who direct the program, to colleagues, to clients and to act professionally in their capacity as a representative of Volunteers of America.

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.