



**Volunteers of America®**

**MID-STATES**

**Community Engagement Program  
Volunteer Handbook**

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## **Introduction**

Volunteers are valuable resources to Volunteers of America Mid-States and their staff and consumers. Volunteers of America Mid-States 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 Mid-States. Volunteers of America Mid-States 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 Mid-States 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 to effectively manage volunteers.

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

## **About Volunteers of America Mid-States Services Overview**

Founded in 1896 by volunteers who wished to serve their local community, Volunteers of America Mid-States today is a full service, accredited and licensed not-for-profit business. VOA Mid-States serves several thousand community members each year across all programs. With unprecedented growth and expansion forecasted, we anticipate serving many thousands more. Today, we reach people annually through 50 distinct human service programs operating in Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia and Clark and Floyd counties in Indiana. These include:

- Shelter, transitional housing and support services for families who are homeless; Affordable housing for seniors with low-incomes, and addiction recovery treatment for women and men) with substance use disorder;
- Addiction recovery services for specific populations, including pregnant and parenting women and formerly incarcerated men;
- Home-based and non-residential support for people with developmental disabilities;
- Homelessness prevention, employment, and other supportive services for veterans and their family members; and
- HIV testing and prevention services and housing support for people living with HIV/AIDS; as well as Community Health Outreach
- Restorative Justice provides an alternative to our criminal justice system to individuals that range in age from 10-25.

## **Recruiting and Placing Volunteers**

**Recruitment:** Volunteers are recruited by Volunteers of America Mid-States to broaden and expand the community's involvement in the organization and expand and enhance services to its consumers. Volunteers are recruited without regard to gender, disability, age, race, religion, or sexual identity. The qualification for the volunteer's placement is based on the volunteer's ability to perform a task or responsibility on behalf of Volunteers of America Mid-States.

**Recruitment of minors:** The volunteer activity assigned to a minor must be performed in a non-hazardous environment and comply with all requirements of child labor laws. Youth volunteers must be supervised by a staff member or an approved adult volunteer. In some cases, Volunteers of America Mid-States may require youth volunteer individuals or groups to provide their own adult supervision.

**Application:** Each individual interested in volunteering continuously at Volunteers of America Mid-States must submit an application. Volunteers have the right to receive a copy of their application and must request a copy in writing to the CE Coordinator located at 570 S. 4th Street, Louisville, KY 40202 or at [diamonds@voamid.org](mailto:diamonds@voamid.org) (Group volunteers Agreement Forms will be handled directly by the CE Coordinator as well or designee)

**Orientation:** Volunteers will attend a general orientation prior to volunteering. The orientation may include an overview of services and opportunities from which a more specific agenda based on applicants' qualifications, availability, and preference will be developed. Following will be an onsite orientation, and a background check completion will be conducted to be cleared for services.

**Background Checks:** When volunteers are placed in direct contact with consumers 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.

Any volunteer that provides direct services to or will be alone with consumers such as children, the elderly, or other persons determined by the organization to be vulnerable or at risk; or work with sensitive or confidential information such as personnel files and case records must have a background check completed. If a group of adult volunteers will be in direct contact with a consumer, then the consumer is not considered alone. Ongoing/recurrent volunteers who may be alone with consumers (meaning no other adult present) will require a background check.

No one in a group will be assigned to work alone on any volunteer activity without a background check completed. Volunteers will be encouraged to use staff bathrooms.

**Falsification of information:** Falsification of information, including material omission or misrepresentation on a volunteer application may be grounds for dismissal.

**Placement:** In placing a volunteer in a position, attention will be paid to the volunteer's interests and capabilities and to the requirements of the volunteer position. No placement shall be made unless the volunteer and supervising staff's requirements are met.

## Supervision and Evaluation

**Supervision:** Community Engagement Staff will provide oversight and coordination of each volunteer within the organization. This person is responsible for daily management and guidance of the volunteer's work and shall be available to them 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:** Recurring 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 placing the volunteer into a new position, suspension of the volunteer or dismissal from volunteer service.

**Dismissal of a volunteer:** Volunteers who do not adhere to the organization's rules and procedures or fail to perform their volunteer assignments at a satisfactory level may be subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until they have discussed the reasons for dismissal with their supervisors. Prior to dismissal, the supervisor will consult with the Community Engagement staff.

**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 consumers 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 two weeks' advance notice before their departure.

**Exit interviews:** Exit interviews will be conducted with recurring 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.

## 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. The volunteer is responsible for meeting all requirements for the position he/she holds. The supervisor is responsible for keeping 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 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 may 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.

## **Benefits**

**Parking:** Free parking is available at most Volunteers of America Mid-States locations and is available on a first come first-serve basis.

**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 Mid-States shows its appreciation to our volunteers. Volunteers are acknowledged and appreciated for their valuable contributions.

**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.

## 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 where possible. Since Volunteers of America depend on volunteers to fulfill their commitments, continual absentee problems will result in a review of the volunteer's work assignment, possible reassignment or termination.

**Dress code:** As representatives of the organization, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to consumers 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 Mid-States property or equipment only for officially approved activities. Staff and volunteers are responsible for the care and upkeep, or 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 Mid-States 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 international and toll calls is not permitted. Computers should only be used for business purposes. Personal use will need approval from a volunteer supervisor.

**Mailroom, photocopying and faxes:** The mailroom and its facilities and all Volunteers of America Mid-States photocopying, and fax machines are to be used for business purposes only. The use of Volunteers of America Mid-States 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 we 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 his/her assignment, work conditions or some other related matter. Volunteers of America Mid-States encourage 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 CE Coordinator with their concerns.

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

**Smoking:** All Volunteers of America Mid-States 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 Mid-States, except Volunteers of America Mid-States sponsored programs. Any staff or volunteer wishing to solicit funds or in-kind gifts on behalf of Volunteers of America Mid-States must receive prior approval from the External Relations Staff

**Time sheets:** Volunteers are asked to sign in/out using the volunteer log located at the reception area. In addition, volunteers are asked to track their volunteer hours on Better Impact, that can be accessed through their personal phones via app or computer. Volunteers are to log their hours each day they volunteer.

**Vehicle usage:** Volunteers who drive Volunteers of America Mid-States 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 Mid-States 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 Mid-States insurance and assume full liability.

**Volunteer files:** Digital 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 CE Coordinator at their earliest convenience. These files are kept confidential and are available only to staff authorized by the CE Coordinator.

**Volunteers becoming employees:** Should a volunteer decide to apply for a paid position within Volunteers of America Mid-States, he or she will go through the same hiring process as any other individual. All job openings are posted at voamid.org. 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 States observes the following holidays:

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

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

**Accident procedure:** Volunteers must immediately report 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 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 Mid-States facilities have and follow written procedures for emergencies in that facility. Written procedures will be reviewed in orientation. If you encounter an emergency, 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 Mid-States use reasonable precautions. If you observe any suspicious activities or individuals call the staff supervisor in charge.

**Valuables:** Please avoid bringing valuables to your volunteer location, as Volunteers of America Mid-States cannot be responsible for any damage or loss. If you need to bring a purse or other valuables, please ask staff for a safe place to put your belongings or secure it in your vehicle.

**Wellness:** You are encouraged to practice self-care. Intentionally plan restorative rest or healthy activities for yourself that help sustain you in volunteer work that can be challenging. For tips on how to practice self-care or if you feel as if you are burning out, please let CE Coordinator know.

## Workplace Conduct

**Consumer records:** Volunteers are not allowed to read or write in a consumer's file except where informed consent has been obtained from a consumer 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 consumer's case.

**Consumer, staff and volunteer rights:** All Volunteers of America Mid-States consumers, staff and volunteers have the right to be treated in a considerate and respectful manner that emphasizes human dignity.

**Consumer/staff relationships:** Volunteers must maintain a professional relationship with program consumers at all times. Volunteers should not engage in personal associations with consumers and should discourage any attempts on the part of the consumer to develop such relationships. If a consumer attempts a personal relationship, including asking for personal information, flirting, harassment, etc., please report to CE Coordinator immediately.

**Confidentiality:** Information, both verbal and written, regarding consumers, 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 Mid-States. Please do not take photographs of consumers or have contact with them on social media.

**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 CE Coordinator.

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

**Equal opportunity:** It is the policy of Volunteers of America Mid-States not to discriminate against any volunteer because of race, religion, creed, sex, age, sexual identity, 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 Mid-States has people available to help resolve the matter. The volunteer should discuss the issue with their supervisor or the CE Coordinator. It is expected that most disagreements will be dealt with at the lowest level or the chain of command. If 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 consumers. Volunteers are also not allowed to give money and/or gifts to consumers without External Relations Staff prior approval.

**Harassment:** It is the policy of Volunteers of America Mid-States that it will not permit verbal or physical conduct by an employee or volunteer that 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 consumers is strictly forbidden. Refer any requests of this nature to your supervisor.

**Medications for consumer:** Volunteers may not administer medications of any kind including over the counter medicines, to consumers in any Volunteers of America Mid-States program.

**News media inquiries:** No volunteer may give information concerning Volunteers of America Mid-States or any of its programs or consumers to the news media unless specifically authorized to do so by management. These inquiries should be referred to the Communications staff. Any volunteer who may receive a contact from the media should record the name, media outlet, and contact information to relay the message to the appropriate person.

**Professionalism:** A volunteer's attitude toward volunteer work needs to be professional. Volunteers have made a commitment to the assigned work, program staff, colleagues, and consumers; they will act professionally in their capacity as a representative of Volunteers of America Mid-States.

**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.

## Volunteer Agreement

Thank you for your generous donation of your time! Here are a few things that would help us be successful for you and VOA consumers:

- I understand how to log my time on Better Impact.
- I will stay in communication about changes in my volunteer service schedule with my main contact:

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- Donna Trabue: 502-489-4671
  - Diamond Stewart: 502-646-4638

- Maintain confidentiality and healthy boundaries.
- Immediately inform Donna or Diamond if issues arise.
- Participate in a yearly volunteer evaluation.
- I agree to use my talents and gift of time towards upholding the VOA Mid-States core values (Diversity, Justice, Commitment, Integrity, and Compassion)

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Signature

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Print Name

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Date