



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; therefore, the agency strives to incorporate volunteer participation in all possible 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 both a guide for 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.

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 distinct human service programs operating in Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Clark and Floyd counties in Indiana. These include but are not limited to:

- Shelter, transitional housing and support services for families who are homeless, affordable housing for seniors with low-incomes
- Addiction recovery services for specific populations, including men and pregnant and parenting women with their children
- Home-based and non-residential support for people with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities;
- Homelessness prevention, employment, and other supportive services for veterans and their family members;
- HIV testing and prevention services and housing support for people living with HIV/AIDS; as well as community health outreach
- Restorative Justice which 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. 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 will be assisted in creating an application profile. Group Volunteer Agreement Forms will be completed by each individual volunteering with a group onsite at a VOA Mid-States location.

Orientation: Volunteers will receive orientation/guidance regarding the organization, program, and their role/function in volunteering.

Background Checks: When volunteers are placed in ongoing volunteer roles with direct contact with consumers or will be responsible for financial and other valuable organizational resources, additional screening procedures may be instituted including criminal background checks, reference checks, etc. Volunteers who refuse permission to conduct these checks will not be accepted for placement. Criminal history/background check results will be reviewed and volunteer eligibility will be assessed and communicated to the volunteer applicant.

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 in direct contact with clients 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 profile 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 with responsibility 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 any ongoing/recurring 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 policies 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 program supervisor will consult with the Community Engagement staff for guidance and review of the issues and performance.

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 procedures, failure to meet 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. All volunteers will agree to release of liability and if in contact with clients the requirements for adhering to confidentiality to protect the rights of clients served in the programs.

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. 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 Mid-States, 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.

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 Mid-States depends on volunteers to fulfill their commitments and 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 of organizational 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's supervisor.

Mailroom, photocopying: The mailroom and its facilities and all Volunteers of America Mid-States photocopying is 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 in case of inclement weather. Residential facilities will remain open. 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 addressing their on-the-job concerns so that they may be resolved quickly and fairly. Volunteers should contact their supervisors or the Community Engagement staff 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 onsite at the reception area where applicable and recurring/ongoing volunteers are asked to track their service hours on Better Impact volunteer management system once trained on timekeeping in that system that can be accessed through their personal phones via app or computer. Volunteers are to log their hours each day they volunteer. Off-site hours of service by volunteers should be tracked/reported as well.

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 driving record 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: Confidential digital files are kept for each volunteer. The files contain basic volunteer information from the volunteer agreement form or application profile such as address and phone number, who to contact in an emergency and hours worked. Volunteers are requested to

submit address, name or telephone emergency information changes to their supervisor and the Community Engagement staff at their earliest convenience.

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.

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 observed to the supervisor or other appropriate staff. If a volunteer is unsure how to do a job safely, guidance should be requested from supervisor/staff.

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. Volunteers who encounter an emergency should inform their supervisor or any supervisor on shift immediately and Community Engagement staff.

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 volunteers should use reasonable precautions. If volunteers observe any suspicious activities or individuals, the onsite staff and supervisor should be alerted.

Valuables: Volunteers should avoid bringing valuables to your volunteer location, as Volunteers of America Mid-States cannot be responsible for any damage or loss. Volunteers are to retain responsibility for their possessions. They may ask to secure them in locked or secure locations but retain ultimate responsibility for any and all possessions brought onsite.

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 Community Engagement staff immediately. Volunteers are not to meet/engage with clients away from VOA Mid-States program locations or activities without the knowledge and approval of the Community Engagement staff and are not to share personal contact information such as phone numbers, addresses, social media information, etc. Volunteers are to engage with clients in a friendly manner but are not to develop friendships outside the scope of the volunteer assignment.

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. Volunteers are not permitted to take photographs of consumers or have contact with them on social media. Any volunteer who receives a social media invitation from a client should report to the Community Engagement staff who will explain to the client or former client that the volunteer is not permitted to engage with social media with them.

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. Volunteers who find themselves to be in a conflict of interest situation should immediately report the nature of the conflict to the Community Engagement staff.

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. Any volunteer noticed by staff, volunteers, or clients demonstrating behavior or other signs of possible intoxication or possibly being under the influence of alcohol or drugs must leave the program or other Volunteers of America Mid-States location and Community Engagement staff should be notified.

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 and Community Engagement staff.

Grievance: Whenever a volunteer has a job-related question, problem or concern Volunteers of America Mid-States, it should be reported to and discussed with the Community Engagement staff. 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 supervisor of Community Engagement staff.

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 Community Engagement Staff prior approval.

Harassment: Volunteers of America Mid-States does not permit verbal or physical conduct, including sexual harassment, 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. If a volunteer has experienced harassment, it should be reported immediately to the Community Engagement staff.

Legal documents: Signing legal documents for consumers is strictly forbidden for volunteers, who should refer any requests of this nature to Community Engagement staff.

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. Volunteers are not permitted to have access to any medications belonging to consumers.

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 as directed by Community Engagement staff.

Professionalism: A volunteer's attitude toward volunteer work needs to be professional and aligned with the organization's mission of creating positive change. 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 roles or job descriptions where provided and only to the extent of such written specifications.

