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Neighborhood House
Volunteer Guidelines & Code of Conduct
Contents:

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Purpose 2
Mission & History 2
Volunteer Screening 2
Code of Conduct 3
Policies 3
Standards 4
Alcohol-Free Events 6
Dress Code 6
Onboarding & Supervision 6
On-Site Expectations – To Do's 6
Tracking Volunteer Time 6
Safety, Conflict Resolution & Emergencies 7
Volunteer Insurance Coverage 7
Volunteer Driving Policy 7
Volunteer Driver Agreement Waiver 7
Volunteer Data Policy 8
Age Requirements 8
Dismissal 8
Recap – Social Media & Media (Privacy) 10
Recap – Role as a Volunteer 11
Recap – Trauma-Informed Engagement 12

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Purpose

Neighborhood House is deeply grateful for the time, energy, and care our volunteers contribute. To ensure a safe, respectful, and effective environment for everyone, volunteers are expected to uphold the guidelines outlined in this document.

The following policies provide overall guidance and direction to people engaged in volunteering activities with Neighborhood House. These policies do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement.

Neighborhood House reserves the exclusive right to change any of these policies at any time and to expect adherence.

Thank you! Your contributions are vital to the sustainability of our programs! We are truly a collective of neighbors helping neighbors. We appreciate your time. Should you ever have any questions or concerns, please contact Volunteer@nhpdx.org.

Mission & History

Our mission**: We connect neighbors, build community and improve lives. Our vision is for every neighbor to have the community and support they need to thrive.** Neighborhood House serves approximately 18,000 low-income children, families, and seniors each year across the greater Portland area. Our clients represent a remarkably diverse mix of ethnicities and cultures, including immigrants.

Founded in 1905 by National Council for Jewish Women, Portland Section, Neighborhood House (NH) was the city's first organization established to help the many immigrants who were arriving and settling in South Portland at that time. For over a century, Neighborhood House has been the primary resource for people in need; our programs are evolving to meet the changing needs of the surrounding community. **Our programs** strive to prepare children for success in school and life, help with small business growth and development, bring older adults together for mental and physical health, provide nutritious food, and support affordable housing and community health.

Volunteer Screening

Volunteer Requirements:

All volunteers* engaging with the population Neighborhood House serves must complete a **volunteer application and waiver**. Volunteers must also successfully pass a **criminal background check**. Volunteers must also complete any **required training(s) and/orientation**. *(*specific background checks, requirements, and trainings vary by program and/or volunteer role)*

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Neighborhood House reserves the right to turn volunteers away. This will not be done lightly, and only in specific circumstances. These circumstances could include:

- *Background check findings.
- Failure to complete or refusing to complete mandatory volunteer training, screenings, background checks, etc.
- Individuals that do not meet the program specific requirements.
- Volunteer shift availability within a specific program.

Background Check Disqualifiers:

- We do not accept volunteers whose charge relates to an act of violence, bias and hate crimes, weapons and firearm offenses and sexual misconduct.
- Background check findings that disqualify a volunteer are found within the ODHS/OHA Potentially Disqualifying Conviction List.

Code of Conduct

Volunteers should conduct themselves in an acceptable manner, in accordance with the operating principles of Neighborhood House (NH). Volunteers are expected to perform the task(s) assigned to them in a manner that meets NH's **standards and policies** and make every effort to maintain positive interactions with community members, fellow volunteers, and staff.

Policies

Human Dignity Policy**:** Neighborhood House is committed to an environment free of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment, and intimidation. No staff, volunteer or program participant will be subject to harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected status. Harassment is strictly against Neighborhood House's policies and will not be permitted.

Confidentiality Policy: All Neighborhood House program participant information is considered strictly confidential, including names, records, contact information and services provided. Under no circumstance is program participant information to be shared, discussed, published or otherwise made available to an individual or organization outside of Neighborhood House.

Social Media and Media Policy: Before creating online content, volunteers must consider risks and how your actions may affect others. Any of your conduct online that adversely affects your volunteer role, or the role of fellow volunteers, staff, program participants, or Neighborhood House's interests, may result in termination.

Social Media & Media Don'ts:

- Do not take photos while volunteering if fellow volunteers, or program participants are in the background. **You have an obligation to respect other's privacy.**
- Do not friend program participants on social media.
- Do not post any identifying information (pictures, names, etc.) about program participants on social media.

- As a volunteer you are not allowed to take inquiries from local media. Direct any media requests to Development@nhpdx.org.

Political Policy: Neighborhood House is committed to maintaining a neutral environment in all of its operations. To uphold this standard, volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any political activities during their volunteers hours, while performing duties assigned by Neighborhood House.

Prohibited Activities: (Definitions: For the purposes of this policy, "political activities" include, but are not limited to, the display of political buttons, badges, or apparel, as well as the distribution of political literature/info.)

- Engaging in political activities while volunteering, including during breaks or within Neighborhood House's facilities.
- Wearing political buttons, badges, or apparel that support specific political parties, candidates, or causes while volunteering.
- Distributing political literature or materials within or near Neighborhood House's premises.

Solicitations, Distributions, and Posting of Materials: Neighborhood House prohibits the solicitation, distribution, and posting of materials on or at Neighborhood House property by a volunteer, except as may be permitted by this policy. The sole exceptions to this policy are charitable and community activities supported by Neighborhood House management and programs related to Neighborhood House's products and services.

Helpful Guidelines:

- Volunteers may not solicit employees or distribute literature of any kind on Neighborhood House premises at any time.
- Volunteers may not solicit other volunteers and/or employees or program participants during their volunteer shift, except in connection with an event sponsored or approved by Neighborhood House.
- Volunteers may not distribute literature of any kind during their volunteer shift, or in any work area at any time, except in connection with an event sponsored or approved by Neighborhood House.
- The posting of materials or electronic announcements are permitted **with approval** from the appropriate Program Manager.

Violence Free Policy

As a volunteer at Neighborhood House, you must also be committed to providing and maintaining an environment free from violence or the threat of violence. Violence or the threat of violence in any form will not be tolerated, and could result in possible disciplinary action including dismissal.

Standards

Neighborhood House is committed to fostering a culture of integrity, respect, and inclusion. In alignment with our values, these **standards** outline the expectations volunteers are responsible for always adhering to:

Integrity and Ethics:

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- Act with honesty, transparency, and accountability in all interactions.
- Follow Neighborhood House's policies, applicable laws, and licensing standards and regulations.
- Use Neighborhood House resources responsibly and only for their intended purposes.
- Maintain the confidentiality of all personal and sensitive information.
- Do not share any confidential information without proper authorization.
- Take responsibility for your actions.
- Report any illegal, unethical, or unsafe behavior to Program Manager **immediately.**

Respect & Inclusivity

- Treat fellow volunteers, staff, participant, and community partners with dignity, respect, and fairness.
- Respect differences in culture, background, identity, and perspective.
- Contribute to an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome and valued.
- Respect the expertise, abilities, roles, and boundaries of others.
- Neighborhood House has zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, or bullying of any kind.

Communication

- Practice respectful, inclusive and professional communication always.
- Listen actively and seek to understand others' perspectives before responding.
- When uncertain, ask clarifying questions to avoid misunderstandings and assumptions.
- Provide constructive feedback with sensitivity, addressing issues directly with the appropriate Program Manager.
- Refrain from gossiping, spreading rumors, and sharing unverified information.
- Seek privacy when having sensitive conversations.
- Approach conflicts and disagreements constructively and with empathy, seeking resolution.
- Adhere to established timelines and communicate proactively if delays or barriers arise.

Collaboration and Teamwork

- Work cooperatively, sharing knowledge and resources to achieve common goals.
- Assume positive intent and maintain a solution-oriented attitude.
- Provide guidance, mentorship, and support to encourage fellow volunteers.
- Represent Neighborhood House positively in all external community interactions.

Health, Safety & Drug/Alcohol-Free

- Volunteers must participate in ongoing basic safety training, including emergency protocols and safe handling procedures for any physical tasks, including food. **Follow all safety protocols and report hazards and incidents immediately.**
- Ensure a safe and healthy environment for fellow volunteers, employees, and program participants, and support a culture of wellbeing.

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- All volunteers are expected to report to work fit for duty, free from the effects of alcohol, drugs, or any other substances that could impair their ability to perform their duties safely and effectively.
- Volunteers must follow all smoking and vaping rules and regulations established by Neighborhood House while on-site or on Neighborhood House property.
- If a volunteer is sick, they should not report for their shift. NH staff may ask a volunteer to return home if they are contagious or appear too ill to participate.

Alcohol-Free Events

When volunteering at any Neighborhood House event where alcohol is served, volunteers are required to remain alcohol-free for the duration of their volunteer shift.

Dress Code

Volunteers should wear comfortable, modest clothing suitable for the tasks they are performing. Clothing cannot have offensive language or images or be revealing. Volunteers are not permitted to wear or display any politically themed memorabilia, including clothing or accessories while volunteering. This ensures a neutral and inclusive environment for all participants.

Volunteers are responsible for dressing according to the weather conditions, including hats, sunscreen, closed-toed shoes, and rain gear if necessary. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own water and snacks.

Onboarding & Supervision

The Volunteer & Community Engagement Specialist oversees the full onboarding process for all new volunteers, including the application and waiver, background check, required trainings and orientation. After onboarding is complete, the Volunteer Specialist will introduce the new volunteer to their Program Manager, who will serve as their primary point of contact.

The Program Manager, program staff, and experienced volunteers will provide roles with specific training, ongoing guidance, and support for any future questions or concerns as the volunteer settles into their position. The Volunteer & Community Engagement Specialist can be reached for any administrative questions or concerns, or if other issues arise.

On-Site Expectations – To Do's

- Sign up for shifts and manage schedule via Volgistics
- Clock-in and clock-out of volunteer shift(s)
- Wear a volunteer name badge
- Check-in with staff and/or experienced volunteer for day's task and/or training

Tracking Volunteer Time

Accurately tracking volunteer service is essential for several reasons. It allows us to meet the requirements of grants, provide accurate reports to funders and stakeholders, and to better understand the amount of time and effort it takes to maintain our programs. We appreciate you helping us to maintain accurate data.

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Volunteers can track their service time using one of the following methods: (program dependent)

- Tablet - VicTouch: Use your volunteer pin number to sign in and out.
- QR Code – VicTouch: Use your volunteer pin number to sign in and out. (Forgot your pin? Reach out to the Volunteer Specialist!)
- Sign In Sheets: Signing in and out of paper sheets

Safety, Conflict Resolution & Emergencies

Safety and wellbeing are our top priorities. If at any point you feel unsafe, or if a program participant, or fellow volunteer poses a safety risk to themselves, to you, or to anyone else, please notify the nearest staff member ***immediately***.

If a program participant, fellow volunteer etc., becomes difficult to work with, or behaves disrespectfully - calmly disengage and inform a staff member right away. In any emergency, medical, behavioral, or environmental, contact a staff member immediately so they can follow established emergency procedures. **You should not manage crises alone, so reach out to staff supervisors with any concerns.**

Volunteer Insurance Coverage

Neighborhood House maintains a limited accident policy for its' volunteers only while they are performing duties on behalf of Neighborhood House, and only within the scope of their volunteerism. Volunteers should carry their own medical insurance as they are ***not*** covered under Neighborhood House's Compensation insurance.

Volunteer Driving Policy

Unless a volunteer has been formally approved, onboarded as a Volunteer Driver, and has completed all required steps, under ***no circumstances*** may a volunteer drive ***their personal*** vehicle on behalf of Neighborhood House to transport goods, drive agency ***clients, or*** drive/operate a ***NH vehicle.***

Volunteer Drivers (transport goods)

Volunteers who are authorized to use their **personal vehicles** to transport **goods** must complete the following:

- Complete the Volunteer Driver and Liability Acknowledgement and Waiver
- Provide proof of current auto insurance
- Provide a valid state issued driver's license

Volunteer Driver Agreement Waiver

I understand that driving as a Neighborhood House volunteer involves certain risks, including the risk of motor vehicle accidents. Volunteer Drivers must agree to the following and complete the following steps:

- **I understand that when using my personal vehicle, my own insurance is primary.** Neighborhood House does not provide coverage for accidents, damage to my vehicle, or liability arising from such use.

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- I will operate my vehicle safely and obey all traffic laws.
- I confirm that I hold a valid driver's license and carry personal auto liability limits of no less than $500,000 per occurrence.
- I release and hold harmless Neighborhood House, its officers, employees and agents from any liabilities, claims or demands of whatever kind of nature, either in law or in equity, which arise or may hereafter arise from volunteer driving activities.
- I understand Neighborhood House may require additional documentation (such as an MVR check) if I drive regularly or transport items of significant value.
- I agree to provide updated proof of insurance and license as requested and will notify Neighborhood House promptly of any changes.

Volunteer Drivers (NH vehicle and/or agency clients)
Volunteers who are authorized to drive a **Neighborhood House vehicle** or transport **agency clients** as part of their volunteer duties, must also complete the full onboarding, training, and testing process in conjunction with Ride Connection:

- Background and DMV check
- Proof of current auto insurance
- Provide a valid state issued driver's license
- Bloodborne Pathogens training and completion
- Defensive Driving in-person training and completion
- Best Ride training and Completion
- Vehicle Orientation & Road Test completion

Volunteer Data Policy

Volunteers who are granted access to Neighborhood House systems, forms, or documents must use only approved platforms and devices when handling organizational information. This level of access is limited to volunteers serving in roles that have completed specific onboarding. Sensitive data, including client names, addresses, and any identifying details etc. may not be stored on personal devices or shared through unapproved channels such as WhatsApp or personal email accounts. Any loss of data, device theft, or suspected security breach must be reported to the volunteer's Program Manager within 24 hours. In addition, all volunteers must meet the following requirements:

- Completion of HIPAA training prior to accessing any client related information
- Successful completion of an ORCHARDS background check before beginning volunteer duties

Age Requirements

Volunteers must be 18 years old with the following exceptions:

- Free Food Market: 16 years old | 12 – 15 accompanied by a parent/guardian

Dismissal

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To maintain a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for everyone we serve, all volunteers are expected to follow the Volunteer Guidelines & Code of Conduct. These standards protect participants, staff, fellow volunteers, and the integrity of our programs.

Depending on the nature of the violation, consequences may range from permanent removal from all volunteer activities to further action taken by Neighborhood House's human resources. Neighborhood House reserves the right to determine the appropriate response to any violation, including ending a volunteer's involvement at any time.

Two Strike Policy: Depending on the severity of the action, a warning will be given. A second offensive of any kind will result in dismissal.

Reasons for suspension or dismissal include but are not limited to the following, and are at the discretion of the Program Manager and/or NH leadership:

- Exhibiting inappropriate or disrespectful behavior; harassing or discriminating against staff, fellow volunteers, or participants.
- Failure to uphold a policy or guideline outlined within the Volunteer Guidelines & Code of Conduct.
- Refusing to follow directions or engaging in argumentative behavior.
- Repeated tardiness or cancellations.
- Failing to attend scheduled volunteer shifts or failure to complete mandatory trainings and/or screenings.

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Recap – Social Media & Media (Privacy)

DO'S & DON'TS – PRIVACY

DO tell your friends, family, and community about Neighborhood's mission, programs/services, and how they can also support!

DON'T take **photos** while volunteering - if fellow volunteers or program participants are in the background.

DON'T friend program participants on social media. (IF a program participant friends you - okay to accept, and only if you want to.)

DON'T post any identifying information (pictures, names, etc.) about **program participants** on **social media**.

DON'T post any identifying information about **fellow volunteers or staff** on **social media** without their consent.

DON'T take any inquiries from local media. Direct any media requests to Development@nhpdx.org.

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Recap – Role as a Volunteer

RECAP

As volunteers, you are:

- Fellow human beings who help their neighbors.
- Treating everyone with **respect** & **dignity**.
- Responsible for **reporting safety** or **behavioral** concerns to staff immediately.
- Responsible for following **food safety** protocols.
- Essential to Neighborhood House's work – we would not be successful without you!

As a volunteer, you are ***not*** *a*:

- Case manager, counselor, staff, or the Program Manager

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Recap – Trauma-Informed Engagement

TRAUMA-INFORMED ENGAGEMENT

IT IS...CREATING A SENSE OF SAFETY AND TRUST

- Understanding that others' behavior signals **stress, needs,** or **emotions**
- Create safe, predictable spaces and interactions
- Build trust through consistency
- **Lead with empathy, not judgment**
- Model **calm**, supportive behavior
- Focus on connection, not correction