Volunteers of America Western Washington serves people and communities in need and creates opportunities for people to experience the joy of serving others.
# Table of Contents

Mission, Vision, & History ............................................................................................................................. 2

Mission ...................................................................................................................................................... 2

Vision ......................................................................................................................................................... 2

National History ........................................................................................................................................ 2

Policies .......................................................................................................................................................... 3

Absences ................................................................................................................................................... 3

Accessibility of Services ............................................................................................................................ 3

Background Checks ................................................................................................................................... 3

Client Boundaries ...................................................................................................................................... 3

Confidentiality ........................................................................................................................................... 3

Dress Guidelines for Employees, Volunteers & Interns ............................................................................ 3

Drivers (Agency Vehicles Only) .................................................................................................................. 4

Drug & Alcohol Policy ................................................................................................................................ 4

Harassment Including Sexual Harassment ............................................................................................. 4

  Reporting Harassment or Discrimination ............................................................................................. 4

In-Kind Donations from Volunteers .......................................................................................................... 5

Professionalism ......................................................................................................................................... 5

Record of Volunteer Hours ....................................................................................................................... 5

Safety ........................................................................................................................................................ 5

  Working Alone ...................................................................................................................................... 5

Technology ................................................................................................................................................ 6

Volunteers of America Property ............................................................................................................... 6

Volunteer Orientation ............................................................................................................................... 6

Weapons ................................................................................................................................................... 6

Youth Volunteers ...................................................................................................................................... 6

Warning & Dismissal ..................................................................................................................................... 7

Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities ........................................................................................................... 8

Next Steps ..................................................................................................................................................... 9
Mission
Volunteers of America Western Washington serves people and communities in need and creates opportunities for people to experience the joy of serving others.

Vision
Our Vision is a community where all people live in safety, with social, emotional and physical well-being, spiritual fulfillment, justice and hope.

National History
Volunteers of America was started in New York by Maude and Ballington Booth in 1896. Their basic philosophy was: “Go wherever needed & do whatever comes to hand.”

Volunteers of America is now a national nonprofit organization that provides affordable housing and other assistance services primarily to low-income people throughout the United States. Headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, the organization includes 36 affiliates providing services in approximately 400 communities in 46 states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Volunteers of America Western Washington is one of these affiliates and serves all of Western Washington.

In 2011, the organization served more than 2 million people around the nation. Services help people who need affordable housing, veterans, low-income seniors, children and families, the homeless, those with intellectual disabilities, those recovering from addiction and the incarcerated.
Policies

Absences
We know that emergencies happen and that volunteers may not be able to come in for their designated volunteer time. In the case of an emergency, it is important that you notify your supervisor as soon as possible. If the volunteer is not able to contact the supervisor, he or she should contact the agency receptionist. The regular, dependable attendance of each volunteer is considered an essential part of our successful service and operation.

Accessibility of Services
All volunteers and community service workers may access Volunteers of America services for which they meet the requirements and all persons who receive Volunteers of America assistance may also serve as volunteers with the agency. A volunteer who is interested in accessing food must go through the same process a client undergoes. Status as a volunteer or community service worker will not affect the manner in which a volunteer accesses services.

Background Checks
All individuals 16 and older will be required to have a Washington State Patrol Criminal Background Check completed before volunteering with Volunteers of America. In considering a volunteer, we may conduct an investigation of the individual’s background, and this may vary by program. This policy is a liability measure on behalf of the agency to prevent anyone with certain crimes from working with the vulnerable populations we serve. Volunteers of America uses the Washington State DSHS Secretary’s List of Crimes and Negative Actions as a reference for determining eligibility.

Client Boundaries
Clients may ask for a ride to or from the programs, to borrow money, or to receive privileges that are not received by other clients. It is important that volunteers with VOAWW do not provide transportation to clients, do not lend money, or do not develop relationships where special privileges may become an issue. Volunteers can refer any client to agency policy for clarification. Boundary policies are in place for your safety.

Confidentiality
It is imperative that anything you see, hear, know, or witness regarding any of our clients and their circumstances remains strictly confidential. Volunteers are not to disclose client information to anyone, including other clients, volunteers or individuals on or off Volunteers of America premises, except as mandated by law. This includes seeing someone you know accessing any of our services. Confidentiality extends to include any knowledge of a client’s history. If you believe that a client’s history would restrict them from receiving services, please inform your supervisor.

Dress Guidelines for Employees, Volunteers & Interns
In a professional/casual work setting, volunteers should wear clothing that is comfortable and practical for work, but not distracting or offensive to others. Any clothing that has words, terms, or pictures that may be offensive to other volunteers or employees is unacceptable.
In the food bank, volunteers are encouraged to wear comfortable clothes and dress in layers to accommodate varying temperatures. Volunteers are required to wear close-toed shoes in the food bank warehouse.

Supervisors will have the discretion to determine if attire is appropriate at their particular program.

Drivers (Agency Vehicles Only)
Volunteer drivers must have a valid Washington driver’s license, and a driving record on file prior to operating agency vehicles. They must also complete a driver safety class. Both of these are offered by our agency, free of cost.

Drug & Alcohol Policy
Inappropriate behavior includes: Reporting to your volunteer position (or while volunteering, becoming) intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol, non-prescription or prescribed drugs or illegal manufacture, possession, use, sale, distribution, or transportation of drugs on agency property. The agency strives to maintain a drug-free workplace.

Harassment Including Sexual Harassment
It is our intent to provide a work environment free from all verbal, physical and visual forms of unlawful harassment. All volunteers are expected to be sensitive to, and respectful of, their co-workers and others with whom they come into contact with while representing Volunteers of America. Volunteers of America expressly prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment, whether due to sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, color, national origin, citizen status, creed, religion, age, mental or physical disability, status as a veteran, political ideology or any other reason protected by law. Any unwanted behavior, jokes or comments are considered to be harassment. Examples of harassment include but are not limited to the following:

- **Physical Conduct:** unwelcome touching, standing too close, inappropriate or threatening staring or glaring; any obscene, threatening or offensive gestures.
- **Verbal Conduct:** Inappropriate references to body parts; derogatory or demeaning comments, jokes or personal questions, sexual innuendoes, offensive remarks about race, gender, religion, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, political beliefs, marital status or disability.
- **Visual Conduct:** Pictures of nude or offensively clad people, intimidating or offensive political or other symbols.
- **Vocal Conduct:** Cat-calls, whistles, sexually suggestive sounds, loud, aggressive, inappropriate comments or verbal abuse.

Reporting Harassment or Discrimination
If you feel you have been subjected to such harassment, or retaliation, report the conduct to your supervisor and the HR Director immediately. Allegations of harassment will be investigated immediately. Any employee who has been found to have harassed another employee or client will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. No employee will suffer retaliation of any kind for seeking resolution to a concern and/or problem.
In-Kind Donations from Volunteers
Volunteers are welcome to make in-kind donations of material goods and supplies to the programs in which they serve. Volunteers are not permitted to make reimbursable purchases for any program. If you make a purchase for a program, you understand that it is an in-kind donation and you may not request reimbursement.

Outside Interactions
Based on the vulnerability of our clients, if you see a client outside of Volunteers of America, contact and acknowledgment is at the discretion of the client. Otherwise, a simple courtesy “hello” or smile is appropriate.

Professionalism
It is important to us at Volunteers of America that our clients, volunteers, donors and staff are treated with respect and courtesy. Please remember that your actions are representative of the agency. To this end, please do not use cell phones, head phones, text messaging or use any other device that may cause distraction from your given task. If you see unprofessional conduct from anyone, please bring it to your supervisor’s attention.

Record of Volunteer Hours
The contribution of our volunteers’ time is important. We must keep an accurate record of volunteer hours to show the contribution to the agency from the community. This information is important to our grantors when Volunteers of America applies for funding. Therefore, we ask that you record your volunteer hours per the procedure of the program in which you are volunteering. If you are fulfilling a community service requirement, you must check in and out with a staff member to be credited for hours worked. In order for community service hours to be valid, a staff must initial your timesheet on the day the service was provided and timesheets should be turned in monthly to your supervisor.

Safety
Working Alone
Volunteers are not to be working in any VOAWW building alone.

Reporting Injuries
Report immediately to supervisor or designated personnel the nature of the injury and all circumstances surrounding the incident.

Comply with instructions regarding seeking medical treatment including all of the following:
In all cases where an employee’s or volunteer’s condition appears life threatening, call 911 before doing anything else.

In cases of minor accidents, find the nearest First Aid Kit in the building.

If outside medical attention is sought, notify the medical provider that the injury occurred while volunteering for Volunteers of America and provide correct information regarding the incident and previous injuries. This will generate a Labor & Industries claim form.
Whether the injury is minor or major, a Volunteers of America staff member must complete a Report of Incident Form and forward to Volunteers of America’s HR Department. The form should be forwarded to the Volunteer Services Director and HR within 48 hours of the incident.

If you are unable to work following the injury, keep in contact with your Volunteers of America volunteer supervisor or Volunteer Engagement Director.

**Technology**

If your volunteer position requires computer use, or other devices, the expectation is that you will use this technology solely for your volunteer work with our organization. VOA computers and other devices are not for personal use.

**Volunteers of America Property**

All Volunteers of America property and donations must remain at the Volunteers of America site, unless otherwise approved by an appropriate staff person.

**Volunteer Orientation**

All regular volunteers and interns are asked to attend an agency volunteer orientation and complete an application which includes a background check. The orientation gives volunteers the opportunity to learn more about Volunteers of America, meet fellow volunteers and discover which volunteer opportunities are a good fit for their skills and interests. We also cover general policies and procedures at orientation.

**Weapons**

Weapons are prohibited on Volunteers of America’s premises. This policy applies to weapons of all kinds, including guns and knives and related paraphernalia such as ammunition.

**Youth Volunteers**

Due to the nature of our agency and the services we provide, some programs require volunteers to be a certain age or older to volunteer. All youth volunteers must come to their first volunteer shift with a signed parent/guardian consent form.

- **Food Banks:** 14 and older (under 13 depending on volunteer position, must have parent or guardian present)
- **Preschools:** 16 and older (12–15 with parent or guardian present)
- **Senior Center:** 16 and older (12–15 with parent or guardian present)
- **Youth Action Team:** Any student in high school
Warning & Dismissal

Unprofessional, inappropriate or unsafe behavior (refer to policies) are grounds for warning and/or dismissal. **Supervisors reserve the right to dismiss a volunteer at any point in the tenure at their discretion, regardless of the suggested steps below.**

**Forewarning/Notice:** If the volunteer and staff policies are violated, the volunteer will receive a verbal warning. The unacceptable performance or behavior will be documented, the volunteer will be counseled on appropriate work performance, and the volunteer position description will be reviewed. A check-in date will be calendared as a follow-up to the verbal warning to see how performance or behavior has improved.

**Investigation:** Failure to conform to the quality standard after the first verbal warning may become grounds for termination. Appropriate investigation of the volunteer’s performance will be conducted including, if necessary, testimony from staff or other volunteers. The volunteer may be suspended while investigating the situation and a final written warning will be issued to the volunteer and recorded in the volunteer’s file.

**Dismissal:** If the decision of dismissal is made, the volunteer and supervisor will meet in private and the final decision will be documented.
Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

Volunteers are a valuable resource to Volunteers of America, to its staff, and to the people we serve. Volunteers have the right to be given meaningful assignments, to be treated as co-workers, and to receive effective supervision. Volunteers have the right to full involvement and participation and to be recognized for their accomplishments. In return, volunteers agree to perform their duties to the best of their abilities. They are expected to be loyal to the mission, goals and people of Volunteers of America and operate according to the agency’s policies and procedures.

A volunteer has the right:

- To expect that his/her time will be used wisely.
- To have a mutually agreed upon written volunteer position description that has clear expectations, responsibilities, duties, supervision, and time commitment.
- To be provided appropriate workspace, equipment, orientation, training, feedback, and supervision for the position he/she accepts.
- To be informed how his/her position supports the mission and goals.
- To have his/her ideas and suggestions heard and be involved in the planning of his/her work.
- To be informed of policies, procedures, and benefits associated with the position.
- To ask questions and to ask for help if unclear or don’t know how to proceed with an assignment or duty.
- To discuss problems, concerns and suggestions with his/her supervisor or the volunteer director.

A volunteer has the responsibility:

- To respect the confidentiality of the organization, the people served, staff and fellow volunteers.
- To be punctual and reliable, notifying his/her supervisor of absences as far in advance as possible.
- To demonstrate professional, respectful behavior at all times, including when faced with challenging situations.
- To be cooperative and treat others with respect at all times, maintaining good working relationships.
Next Steps

Thank you for attending orientation! You are almost ready to start volunteering.

If you are volunteering in a **food bank**, your first shift will be scheduled today, and you will have a volunteer buddy assigned to you at your first shift.

Your volunteer supervisor is: ________________________________

Contact info for supervisor: 425-259-3191 x_______________

If you will be volunteering in **any other VOAWW program**, you will be contacted directly by the program supervisor to schedule your shifts.
Thank you for signing up to volunteer with our Hunger Prevention Services program! As a volunteer, you have the amazing opportunity to become a champion for hunger relief, and a local hero to families in need who are shopping our food pantries. This FAQ page is intended to answer some basic questions about the program. If you have more questions, please email food@voaww.org

What is a food bank or a food pantry?
A food bank or food pantry is a place where people can come to receive free food.

What is a pop-up food pantry?
A pop-up food pantry is a small, local food pantry intended to bring food as close as possible to those receiving services. We pack up a truck full of food and “pop-up” at regular location on a consistent day and time. Currently, VOAWW operates 2 pop-up food pantries, and will be opening a 3rd in January 2017.

Who can shop at the food bank?
Anyone can shop at the food bank. To prevent duplicated services with other food banks, we serve individuals and families in certain zip codes. See the Hunger Prevention Services brochure for more information.

How often can someone shop at the food bank?
Once per month at the VOAWW Everett Food Bank and twice per month at the VOAWW South Everett & Mill Creek Pop-up Food Pantries.

What does someone need to bring to shop at the food bank?
Just a piece of ID and a piece of mail!

What other programs does the VOAWW Hunger Prevention Services operate?
The VOAWW Hunger Prevention Services operates several programs, all working towards the mission of reducing hunger. The largest program within Hunger Prevention Services is the Snohomish County Distribution Center, which distributes food to 21 food banks and 18 hot meal programs in Snohomish County. VOAWW Hunger Prevention Services also operates 5 food banks or pop-up food pantries.

Through the VOAWW Everett Food Bank, we operate a Senior Home Delivery Program and a Children’s Snack Pack Program. These programs allow us to bring food closer to those in need.

What kind of work do volunteers do?
Volunteers are the backbone of our operations, enabling us to provide food to thousands of families each month. There is a wide array of volunteer tasks to match all skill sets! We work with volunteers throughout the week to sort food, stock shelves, serve on the distribution line, do administrative work, and more. Volunteers who prefer to work independently or who are highly organized may prefer sorting food, stocking shelves, or administrative work. Volunteers who love working with the public may enjoy guest intake, food distribution, or joining the Volunteer Welcoming Team or Speaker’s Bureau. There is something for everyone!
The families we serve rely on us to follow best practices and provide safe food. Everyone who works in a food bank takes responsibility for delivering safe food services to the public. Keep these basic tips in mind and you’ll be a food safety guru in no time!

Start your volunteer shift off right, by thoroughly washing your hands!

Wear gloves whenever handling raw food (produce, meat)
- Wash hands before wearing gloves
- Switch gloves any time you switch tasks or touch other surfaces/items that might be dirty

Follow consumption guidelines
Did you know that most food is good past the expiration date? It’s true! We have Food Consumption Guidelines posted throughout the food bank. Please reference this whenever you are sorting food. When in doubt, throw it out!

Clean
Keep surfaces and food bins clean. Use bleach water solution to clean surfaces (1 capful of bleach & fill bottle with water). To clean food bins, scrub with dish soap & water solution, rinse, and spray liberally with bleach water solution (1 capful of bleach & fill bottle with water). Turn bins upside down to air dry.

Separate
Always separate raw meat from other foods. Pet food should be treated as raw meat. Separate produce bins (green trim) from meat and other usage bins.

Chill
We receive many perishable goods that are refrigerated and frozen. Items can be out of cool storage for up to 1 hour while they are being put away and stocked. Items that are frozen should stay frozen.
ANNUAL CIVIL RIGHTS TRAINING CHECKLIST
FOR FRONTLINE STAFF/VOLUNTEERS/MANAGERS
WHO ASSIST WITH TEFAP AND/OR CSFP

Please initial each bullet indicating that you have read and understood the content.

Section 1 - All Frontline Staff, Volunteers and Program Managers

___ Goals of civil rights – fairness and equality of treatment and benefit delivery.

___ Types of discrimination – Disparate treatment (treating a person differently from others); disparate impact (neutral rule impacts disproportionately on a group); reprisal/retaliation against complainant or his/her family, associates or others involved in complaint process or exercising civil rights.

___ Exceptions – Congress can establish a program that is intended for certain groups of people and it is not discrimination to exclude those who do not meet eligibility requirements. For example, Congress can set age limits and this is not age discrimination for those who do not meet the age limits.

___ When do civil rights rules apply? Federal civil rights rules apply any time there is any federal financial assistance. Federal financial assistance is receiving anything of value from the federal government – not just cash. It can include commodities, training, equipment, and other goods and services.

___ Legal prohibitions – The policy of the WSDA Food Assistance Programs is to not discriminate against any class of persons in all services to clients. WSDA expects local programs to provide food to every person who seeks it, regardless of their status as a member of any class of persons. Any agency that directly or through a subcontractor is found after investigation to be discriminating against any class of people is at risk of termination from the program.
Federal Protected Classes – Under federal law, specific classes of persons have a right to file a federal discrimination complaint with USDA if a local program using federal resources discriminates against them. Under federal law for the purposes of TEFAP and CSFP, the protected classes under which a client may file a discrimination complaint are race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, and political beliefs.

Washington Protected Classes – Washington’s nondiscrimination law includes the above protected classes as well as familial or parental status, marital status, political beliefs, creed, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation/gender identity, use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability, all or part of the individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program, and reprisals.

Filing a Federal Civil Rights Complaint – Advise people who allege discrimination based on one or more of the federal protected classes listed above on how to file a complaint by using the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-8027) found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410

Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider.

Almost all complaints are investigated by staff from the FNS field offices located in the state where the complaint originated.

Filing a State Discrimination Complaint – Advise people who allege discrimination based on one or more of the state protected classes of people listed above that they may file a discrimination complaint with the Washington State Human Rights Commission. A description of the processes and a link to the forms are online and can be found at: http://www.hum.wa.gov/complaintProcess/Index.html
Additional Nondiscrimination Laws – In addition to federal and state law, local programs may be subject to city or county nondiscrimination laws. Programs should check with their local government to confirm whether there are any local nondiscrimination laws. Agencies must comply with local laws.

Maintain confidentiality – Do not talk about or make remarks about people receiving benefits. Never share information with others even if your intention is to help recipients with other services or assistance. Refer all requests for information about recipients from other agencies or programs to managers. Always get a recipient’s written approval to share their information or make referrals on their behalf. What happens at the site stays at the site. The exception, of course, is any illegal or inappropriate behavior that should be reported to State or Federal officials.

Cooperate with State and Federal reviewers – USDA and WA State Department of Agriculture are required to conduct periodic compliance reviews to help ensure compliance with program and civil rights rules.

Local Agencies must take action – Local Agencies must accept and process all complaints (program, vendor or civil rights) received by the agency regardless of whether the complaints are written, verbal, or anonymous. Details for filing complaints are outlined in Section XV of the FNS 113-1 document. The complaint may be sent to the address above for recipients’ filings or sent directly to:

Food and Nutrition Service Civil Rights Division (CRD)
3103 Park Center Drive, Suite 808
Alexandria, VA 22302

Corrective Action for Non-Complying Agencies – If there is non-compliance with federal nondiscrimination law by a contractor or subcontractor; the state will file a report with the FNS Regional Administrator at USDA and will immediately seek correction of the violation by voluntary compliance. Failure of a contractor or subcontractor to correct any non-compliance with civil rights rules can lead to legal actions and termination from the Federal programs TEFAP and CSFP, as applicable.

Services for People with Disabilities – Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider. Almost all
complaints are investigated by staff from the FNS field offices located in the state where the complaint originated.

____ **Sexual harassment is prohibited** – Do not engage in or tolerate unwanted or unwelcomed sexual behavior, including jokes, touching, request for sexual favors, etc. Report all violations to your management, State or Federal officials.

____ **Response to Conflicts/Emergencies** – If conflict occurs, remain calm. Call for assistance immediately if you feel threatened. Consider mediation or a third party to help resolve the situation if there is no immediate resolution.

____ **Treat all people with dignity and respect.** Follow the golden rule and treat people the way you would like to be treated.

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**Section 2 - All Program Managers Responsible for Client Services Must:**

____ **Conduct Outreach** - to ensure that potential eligible persons and households are aware of the program and have information on how to apply. Provide suggestions about how to make more people aware of the program and how to receive benefits. Agencies must also give recipients information on what constitutes discrimination and how to file discrimination complaints at the time they apply for services.

____ **Make sure people with disabilities are accommodated.** Sites should be accessible to people with all types of disabilities. (e.g. mobility, sight, hearing, etc.) or alternate means of service delivery should be advertised and provided.

____ **Provide other language assistance** - to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) who could not gain meaningful access to the program without other language assistance. Assistance must always be provided to LEP households, but the level or type of assistance can vary based on circumstances.

____ **Display the USDA “And Justice for All” non-discrimination poster** - in a place where it can be seen by all who visit the premises.
___ Include the USDA non-discrimination statement - on all materials that mention USDA funded programs and make sure the statement is also on web sites that mention USDA funded programs.

___ Make sure that all civil rights and nondiscrimination complaints - are properly documented and reported. Your agency must inform WSDA’s Food Assistance Program Manager of any complaints and violations.

___ Collect racial/ethnic data - in CSFP and use it to target outreach and to assess participation.

___ Make sure individual data is kept confidential and secure.

___ Additional information can be found in FNS Instruction113-1 - regarding Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement.

I have read and understood the content of this civil rights training. I agree to follow the civil rights instructions as listed above.

__________________________  ________________________
Name  Date
Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement and Code of Conduct

By signing below, you agree to the following:

- I have received a copy of the Volunteer Handbook and will adhere to the volunteer policies.

- I have been informed of who my volunteer supervisor is and know I can go to them with questions or concerns.

- I understand the definition of harassment. I agree to not engage in such behavior, and to report any observations of harassment.

- I will conduct myself in a professional manner, and treat consumers, volunteers, and staff with courtesy and respect.

- I understand that I do not receive special privileges or special food service in exchange for volunteering. If I need food, I will go through the front counter to receive service.

- I will maintain the confidentiality of consumers, volunteers, and staff.

- I understand that this is a volunteer position and may be terminated at any time at either my discretion or that of the program supervisor.

Name (print): _____________________________

Signature: ________________________________  Date: ____________