



Volunteer Handbook

Version: October 14, 2024

Section 1: Volunteer Application Process

Prior to acceptance as a Network volunteer, a candidate must:

- Complete a volunteer application.
 - For organization sponsored group volunteering, please contact the Volunteer Program Manager to register and schedule your group.
- Sign the Confidentiality and Liability waivers.
- Sign the Volunteer Handbook and Civil Rights Acknowledgement.
- Complete a criminal background check (unless part of an organization sponsored group or under 17 years of age).
 - If a volunteer has lived in the U.S. for five years or less, they may be asked to cover the cost of an international background check as part of the screening process.
 - Disqualifying offenses include violent crimes and crimes of moral turpitude. Please contact the Volunteer Program Manager to discuss any questions/concerns relating to background check qualifications.

Age Restrictions

Network volunteers must be at least *14 years of age or older*. Volunteers under the age of 17 must have a parent or legal guardian present with them while volunteering. This policy is at the discretion of the Volunteer Program Manager.

Special Volunteer Considerations

For volunteers interested in receiving hours for court-ordered community service, service learning, or other specific programs, please contact the Volunteer Program Manager prior to completing a volunteer application to ensure qualifications to volunteer and proper documentation are completed.

Neighbors who receive services from Network who are also interested in volunteering are required to meet with the Volunteer Program Manager prior to their first volunteer shift. Please reach out to the Volunteer Program Manager for additional questions and information.

Section 2: Volunteer Rights

Volunteers have a right to:

- Be assigned a task that is worthwhile, suitable for life experience, with consideration of personal preference and background.
- Be treated as true team members – not just “free help”.

- Receive useful feedback and evaluation on the volunteer work performed.
- Be made aware of the volunteer total effort and the importance of their support.
- Expect that time will be used efficiently and effectively.
- Ask any questions to clarify a task or assignment.
- Receive training and proper supervision needed for the job.
- Be heard; feel free to make suggestions and have respect shown for an opinion.

Volunteer Expectations

- Follow guidelines provided by Volunteer Handbook, Liability Waiver, and Confidentiality Waiver.
- Handle with care any confidential information necessary to carry out the volunteer assignment.
- Treat Neighbors, fellow Volunteers, Staff, and Donors with respect and honor their privacy.
- Give notice of absence on a volunteer shift as soon as possible to the Volunteer Program Manager.
- Comply with operational direction given by staff.

Equal Opportunity

Network provides an equal volunteering opportunity for everyone regardless of age, sex, color, race, creed, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, political beliefs, weight, or disability that does not prohibit performance of the essential position.

Volunteer Meetings / Training

Trainings are provided for volunteers related to their tasks and assigned areas. Network provides training documents in an email upon registering for a volunteer shift. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to review these resources in preparation for a volunteer shift. While other volunteers and staff are available at Network, reviewing these documents is vital in preparing to volunteer.

Section 3: Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Safety and Health

Network complies with all federal and state workplace safety requirements. Should there be an issue of safety or health that needs attention please immediately notify a staff member. In the event of an accident or injury while volunteering at Network, please notify a staff member IMMEDIATELY so that an incident report can be completed.

Harassment and Workplace Violence

Network strives to provide an environment that is free from intimidation and hostility. Harassment of any sort – verbal, physical or visual – should be reported immediately to the Volunteer Program Manager or a staff member.

Building Security

Network employs an emergency plan for volunteers, neighbors, and staff. In case of an emergency, please find a staff member immediately. In the event of a building emergency, Fire and Emergency Plan documents are posted throughout the building.

Weather and Emergency-Related Closings

In the event of emergencies such as severe weather, fires, or power failures, Network's staff will decide whether to close the building. Network normally adheres to the Richardson Independent School District's weather and emergency related closings. In emergency closings, every effort is made to contact all affected volunteers via phone/email.

Nametags and Personal Information

Volunteer nametags have your first name only and are to be worn all times you are volunteering. Neighbors should not be given the last name or personal information of any Network volunteer, staff member, or board member.

Personnel Records

Network's Volunteer Program Manager maintains confidential personnel files on all volunteers. Any change in personal information needs to be reported to the Volunteer Program Manager or changed on the volunteer's profile at volunteer.thenetwork.org.

Personal Property

While lockers are available at the Network facility, please leave money and other valuable personal items at home or locked in your vehicle. Network assumes no risk for loss or damage to personal property.

Dress Code Policy

Volunteers are expected to present an appropriate and modest appearance while representing Network. Closed-toed shoes are required in the Food Market and are recommended in other program areas. Unacceptable attire includes but are not limited to at the discretion of Network Staff:

- Short-shorts.
- Halter tops, tops with spaghetti straps, or crop tops.
- Shirts with artwork or messages that are discriminatory, explicit, and/or conflict with the interest of Network's mission.
- Flip-flops.
- Excessive jewelry, makeup, or perfumes.

Grievance Procedure

Job-related issues or questions should be discussed with the Program Manager. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, the Volunteer Program Manager will become involved and file an incident report. If the problem remains unresolved, the CEO and/or Board of Directors may become involved regarding further resolution and/or action.

Documentation of Time Worked

Volunteer statistics and hours contributed each year are used for insurance purposes, grant awards, and are included in our Annual Report. Volunteer hours are recorded in a database maintained by the Volunteer Program Manager. Volunteers are to sign in and out from the designated volunteer check-in each time they work or attend training on Network's behalf.

Solicitations and Financial Gifts

Advance approval from management is required before a volunteer may solicit a gift of any kind from other volunteers, staff, or organizations. Volunteers who receive materials or monetary gifts intended to benefit Network should give the items to a Network staff member.

Equipment and Software

Network property and equipment are intended for business use on behalf of the organization. Misuse of the Internet involving inappropriate material or purpose is cause for immediate dismissal from the volunteer program. Network adheres to the copyright law regarding illegal duplication of software. The copyright holder is given certain exclusive rights, including the right to make and distribute copies. Title 17 of the U.S. Code states that “it is illegal to make or distribute copies of copyrighted material without authorization” (Section 106). The only exception is the user’s right to make a backup copy for archival purposes (Section 117).

Smoking, Alcohol, and Substance Abuse

Smoking is permitted only at a minimum of 25 feet from the building. Network's policy is that the workplace be free of illicit drugs and alcoholic beverages. Volunteers found in possession of alcohol or illegal drugs or are inebriated on Network property will be asked to leave and may be removed from the volunteer program.

Driving Record Policy

Volunteers whose work requires operation of a motor vehicle must present and maintain a valid Texas Driver's license, appropriate motor vehicle insurance, and a signed Network Driver Pledge. Any changes in your driving record must be reported immediately to the Volunteer Program Manager.

Purchases and Expenses

Pre-approved purchase order forms are needed from division directors before volunteers make any purchase on behalf of Network. Network is not obligated for any purchase a volunteer makes without a pre-approved purchase order. Network does not reimburse mileage to volunteers for activities performed on the organization’s behalf. Volunteers should seek tax advice for mileage reimbursement guidelines on volunteerism service for income tax filings.

Section 4: Volunteer Code of Ethics

Integrity and Accountability

- Promote a working environment where honesty, open communication, and minority opinions are valued.
- Exhibit respect and fairness toward all those with whom we come into contact.
- Use volunteer time efficiently and effectively. It is expected that while you are onsite to do your volunteer assignment that time is not used for personal tasks.
- Promote good stewardship of all Network resources, including time, talent, and treasure. This includes contributions, fees, grants, and pass-through money, as well as physical resources and the gift of time that is given to Network.
- Refrain from using organizational resources for non-Network purposes.
- Alert the Volunteer Program Manager if you will be late or will not be able to arrive for your volunteer assignment.

Conflicts of Interest

To avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest, which could tarnish the reputation of Network, as well as undermine the public trust in the organization, volunteers and other representatives will:

- Refrain from activities that might be constructed as a direct conflict of interest to Network.
- Network volunteers should not knowingly take any action, or make any statement, intended to influence the conduct of Network in such a way to confer any financial benefit on themselves, their immediate family members or any

organization in which they or their immediate family members have a significant interest as stakeholders, directors, or officers.

- Refrain from political or religious discussions while volunteering at Network to ensure a welcoming, nondiscriminatory environment for all staff, neighbors, and volunteers.

Confidentiality and Privacy

By signing a Confidentiality Statement, volunteers agree to not disclose any confidential information while with the organization or following their departure. This includes, but is not limited to, confidential information regarding other Volunteers, Staff, Neighbors, or Donors. To do this, we:

- Ensure that all information, which is confidential, privileged, or nonpublic, regarding Volunteers, Staff, Neighbors, and Donors is not disclosed inappropriately. If there is a question about what constitutes confidential information, please ask a staff member.
- Respect the privacy rights of all individuals in the performance of their Network duties.

Political Contributions

As a charitable organization, Network may not make contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee and may not intervene in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. We therefore:

- Refrain from making any contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee on behalf of Network.
- Refrain from making any contributions to any candidate for public office or political committee in any manner that may create the appearance that the contribution is on behalf of Network.
- Refrain from using any organizational financial resources, facilities or personnel to endorse or oppose a candidate for public office.
- Clearly communicate that we are not acting on behalf of the organization, if identified as an official of Network, while engaging in political activities in an individual capacity.
- Refrain from engaging in political activities in a manner that may create the appearance that such activity is by or on behalf of Network.

Guidance and Disclosure

- Any known or possible breaches of the Code of Ethics should be disclosed to the Volunteer Program Manager, then the CEO if necessary.
- All reports of possible breaches will be treated in confidence as much as the organization's duty to investigate and the law allow. If confidentiality cannot be maintained, the individual disclosing the possible breach will be notified.
- All reports of breaches will be investigated and, if needed, appropriate action taken based upon the policies of the organization.
- Retaliation against a person who suspects and reports a breach in good faith will be treated as an independent breach of the code.
- Network affirms prompt and fair resolution of all reported breaches.

Dismissal

Any violation of the Volunteer Code of Ethics, Confidentiality Statement, or Volunteer Handbook may be grounds for dismissal from a volunteer assignment. This includes, but is not limited to, the sharing of confidential information about a Neighbor, taking items from the Food Market or Clothing Closet without first registering to be a Neighbor, or speaking with

or about Neighbors in a derogatory or disrespectful manner.

Volunteers may be dismissed at the discretion of the Volunteer Program Manager. If a volunteer would like to appeal the decision of the Volunteer Program Manager, dismissal is then at the discretion of Network's Senior Leadership Team.

Section 5: Volunteer and Neighbor Affairs

"I'd rather be robbed a can of corn than rob a man of his dignity." – Larry James

Neighbor/Volunteer Relations

Network is committed to treating Neighbors with respect and care. It is expected that volunteers not only respect a Neighbor's privacy but consider a Neighbor and their situation with grace and empathy.

While the Food Market and Clothing Closet have rules in place to distribute items to all Neighbor families, we acknowledge that realistically there may be some gray areas. When confronted with an opportunity to enforce a rule or provide some leniency, volunteers should feel empowered to make a decision that best benefits Network Neighbors. If a volunteer is ever uncomfortable deciding, a staff member can always be called over to assist.

Nametags and Personal Information

Volunteer nametags have your first name only and are to be worn all times you are volunteering. Neighbors should not be given the last name or personal information of any Network volunteer, staff member, or board member.

Authorized Services

Network offers many different services and the final decision regarding resources given to a Neighbor is at the sole discretion of a Network staff member. Volunteers should not make any promises to clients or offer anything not already approved by a staff member.

Unauthorized Services

For the safety and integrity of the organization and its workers, volunteers may not offer personal money, transportation, or any other type of personal help to a Neighbor, beyond the approved assistance received from Network.

Neighbor Home Visits

Several situations require volunteers to visit Neighbors' homes. These visits may be to deliver food to home-bound senior citizens or to provide "handyman" services for various home repairs. For the safety of both volunteers and neighbors, volunteers making home food deliveries should not enter a Neighbor's home. Handymen volunteers will be required to enter a Neighbor's home under some circumstances. The Volunteer Program Manager and/or Seniors' Net Coordinator must approve all home visits and provide clear instructions to volunteers about the goods and/or services they are to deliver.

Neighbor / Volunteer Conflict

All volunteers should use good judgment when talking with Neighbors in avoiding remarks or advice that may be perceived as insulting to their circumstances. When complaints are made by a Neighbor regarding a volunteer, an incident report will be completed. Any threatening behavior from a Neighbor toward you should result in your immediately leaving the Neighbor and alerting your supervisor, staff member, and/or the police if appropriate. Never remain in a situation in which you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Volunteers

Know your client's civil rights

Thank you for your partnership in the fight against hunger. You are making a difference in the lives of seniors in our community who need assistance to keep nourishing food on the table.

The North Texas Food Bank is grateful that our volunteers serve each client with the dignity they deserve. We are required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to ensure that **all clients are informed and aware of their civil rights** while they are being served.

You can be our eyes and ears by helping us identify any instances in which a client is subject to harassment or discrimination. **The North Texas Food Bank will not tolerate harassment or discrimination by any individual.**

What is discrimination? Discrimination is the practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people.

USDA prohibits discrimination based on these things:

- Race
- Color
- National origin
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Age
- Reprisal or retaliation for civil rights activity

Information on filing a complaint of discrimination can be found at this website:

http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html

Here is the complete USDA nondiscrimination statement:

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20PCComplaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling, (866) 632-9992, or by writing a

letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
- (2) fax: (833) 256-1665 or
(202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I agree that I have read and will abide by the Network Volunteer Handbook:

Date _____

Print Full Name _____

Signature _____

Parent/Guardian Signature (if applicable) _____

CIVIL RIGHTS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have read and understand the Civil Rights document that describes our neighbors' rights.

Date _____

Signature _____

Parent/Guardian Signature (if applicable) _____