



**Community Center of Northern Westchester**

# **Volunteer Handbook**

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to the Community Center of Northern Westchester, Inc. (“CCNW” or the “Center”). We appreciate and value your contribution of time, talent, energy and enthusiasm to help us help our neighbors in need. We have developed this Community Center of Northern Westchester Volunteer Policy and Procedure Handbook (“Volunteer Handbook” or “Handbook”) to give each volunteer a solid foundation in CCNW’s mission, policies, procedures, and program responsibilities, and to provide general guidance regarding the volunteer experience. The purpose of this handbook is to guide you in your volunteer experience with us. While the content is intended to inform you of your responsibilities as a volunteer, it is also intended as a reference to be utilized at your convenience should you have any questions during your volunteer service with CCNW. The content and materials in this guide may be modified at anytime, in order to provide you with the most updated information available. We appreciate you offering your time and services to help us meet our mission to improve the well-being of the Center’s neighbors in need. Your volunteer commitment is greatly appreciated.

To assist new volunteers in learning about the Center and about specific volunteer responsibilities, we ask that all volunteers become familiar with and follow the information, guidelines and requirements presented in this Handbook. Please read this Handbook carefully and keep it for future reference.

We hope the Center provides you with a rewarding volunteer environment and experience. If questions arise, don’t hesitate to speak with the Assistant Director for Operations who is CCNW’s Volunteer Coordinator, who can be reached at 914 232-6572, x 105.

### **Volunteer At-Will/ Handbook Not a Contract**

This Handbook is not an employment or volunteer contract. Nothing contained in this Handbook, or any written or oral statement contradicting, modifying, interpreting, explaining or clarifying any provision of the Handbook, is intended to create, or shall create, any express or implied contractual obligations that are binding upon either CCNW or you.

This Handbook is intended to provide you with information about CCNW policies and practices that are currently in force. These policies and practices are subject to change by CCNW unilaterally at any time, without prior notice to you.

Neither you nor CCNW is bound to continue the volunteer relationship if either you or CCNW chooses to end the relationship at any time. You may terminate your volunteer service with CCNW at any time, with or without cause or notice, and CCNW retains the same right.

### **CCNW and Volunteer Program overview**

The objectives of CCNW’s Program are two-fold: to provide a reliable and skilled network of volunteer resources to support the delivery of CCNW’s services to the Northern Westchester community, and to provide people of all ages with the opportunity to contribute in assisting people in need within the community.

The Center’s mission is to seek to improve the wellbeing and self-sufficiency of neighbors in need in Northern Westchester by providing food, clothing, programs and other resources. We are committed to treating all with dignity and respect. We encourage broad involvement and participation by residents and organizations in the communities we serve. The Center provides supplemental food in our Food Pantry,

and gently used clothing, shoes and linens in our Clothing Boutique. We assist our clients in gaining access to other resources, including health care, education, and social services. We offer a variety of classes, including English language and computer skills. We provide clients with assistance in job searches, resume writing, and interview skills, and we make our clients aware of potential employment opportunities. Our services are available to anyone in need in Northern Westchester, free of charge to all who need help – new arrivals, as well as residents with deep roots in our community. We are supported by 30 religious, civic, and educational organizations, and sustained by the generosity of the greater Northern Westchester community. CCNW is a non-profit corporation with Section 501(c)(3) status under the Internal Revenue Code.

The Center is managed by its Executive Director and staff and is overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors. CCNW's Volunteer Coordinator reviews all volunteer applications, conducts interviews, trains and schedules volunteers, and is your contact at the Center.

## **Volunteer Responsibilities and Standards of Conduct**

It is understood that 'volunteer' means that one has agreed to provide skills, knowledge, and services without compensation in money.

CCNW volunteers have certain responsibilities and standards of conduct that will be reviewed with the volunteer at the onset of his/her volunteer assignment(s). The Volunteer Coordinator is available to review and remind all volunteers of the expectations and responsibilities for volunteers throughout the year.

All volunteers are expected to meet the following responsibilities in addition to any others advised by the Volunteer Coordinator:

- Comply with all CCNW rules, policies, procedures, regulations and applicable laws.
- Keep volunteer service commitment(s).
- Be willing to accept training and participate in other volunteer development activities.
- Adhere to all confidentiality requirements in the course of carrying out duties and responsibilities.
- Not use volunteer knowledge or contacts either directly or indirectly for personal gain.
- Treat clients and CCNW staff and volunteers with respect.
- Be cooperative by accepting instructions, guidance, and suggestions from CCNW staff and the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Report to volunteer assignments in a condition fit to perform the assignment's tasks and be unimpaired by alcohol or drugs of any kind.
- Not display inappropriate conduct/behavior which brings discredit to CCNW's mission and/or goals.

Furthermore, to assure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, the Center expects volunteers to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all persons and the interests of the Center.

The following are examples of some, but not all, of the types of conduct that will not be tolerated:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of Center property.
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials such as explosives, firearms, or weapons.

- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of illegal drugs on CCNW premises or while performing volunteer services for CCNW.
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs in violation of the Center's Drug and Drug Free Environment policy.
- Obscene, abusive or threatening conduct, including but not limited to fighting or threatening violence or while conducting Center business.
- Negligent or improper conduct leading to damage of CCNW property.
- Disrespectful conduct.
- Violation of the Center's policies, including but not limited to the Anti-Harassment policies.
- Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system, computer, email, or other CCNW-owned equipment.
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information.
- Using shift time for non-volunteer purposes.

### **Volunteer Rights**

Each volunteer with CCNW is viewed as an important part of the organization's ability to meet its goals. Below are some of the rights volunteers may expect **while serving at** CCNW:

- Volunteers are to be treated with respect and courtesy.
- Volunteers will receive proper training for the volunteer assignment(s) to be done.
- Volunteers are not to be discriminated against because of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, handicap, marital status, family, or sexual orientation.

### **CCNW and Volunteer Program Policies and Procedures**

#### **Recruiting our volunteers**

Volunteers shall be recruited by CCNW on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding volunteer involvement of the community. Volunteers shall be recruited without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual preference, and/or disability and may be recruited either through an interest in a specific function or through a general interest in volunteering.

#### **Application and Selection**

In order to volunteer at CCNW, each volunteer applicant must first complete the CCNW Volunteer Application and Emergency Contact form. Upon submitting this form, the applicant will be interviewed with regard to his or her strengths and limitations, background and suitability for various volunteer roles. We are always looking for the best fit for both the volunteer and CCNW.

Please note that volunteer services at CCNW may include work that may be hazardous, such as, but not limited to, lifting and carrying heavy items. It is the individual volunteer's responsibility to know his or her limitations, to make them clear to the Volunteer Coordinator, and to refrain from volunteer activity that is beyond his or her abilities.

CCNW does not conduct comprehensive background checks on volunteers.

## **Age Requirements**

Volunteers of all ages can become involved in CCNW services to the community. However, a minimum age of 13 years for volunteers is set, with some exceptions.

## **Orientation and Training**

All volunteers will receive an on-site orientation to the CCNW Volunteer Program. Volunteers are asked to read this Volunteer Handbook, sign that they have received it, and refer to it as needed regarding CCNW's Volunteer Program policies and procedures.

Volunteers in CCNW's Donation Room, Food Pantry, Clothing Boutique, and Classes & Workshops are expected to follow posted Volunteer Service Descriptions (see next section) as well as posted daily updates. As needed, volunteers may be provided additional training specific to the volunteer services to be performed. Any ongoing volunteers may be scheduled for a group session or 1:1 training as needed.

## **Volunteer Services Description**

As mentioned in the previous section, Volunteer Service Descriptions are posted in CCNW's Donation Room, Food Pantry, Clothing Boutique, and Classes & Workshops. Volunteers working in these areas should familiarize themselves with these descriptions. The Federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 does not completely protect volunteers from lawsuits but "immunizes" certain volunteers from liability under certain circumstances if that volunteer is performing responsibilities under a description of their volunteer services. To help protect its volunteers, CCNW posts these Volunteer Services Descriptions in CCNW's Donation Room, Food Pantry, Clothing Boutique, and Classes & Workshops. Volunteers working off-site will receive a copy of the Volunteer Service Description pertinent to their specific volunteer work.

## **Supervision of Volunteers**

The Assistant Director for Operations is the volunteer supervisor (as well as the volunteer coordinator) who is responsible for direct management of each volunteer. She/he is responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

## **Volunteer Schedules and Attendance**

The Center is open Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Regular volunteer shifts are from 10-1 in the morning or 1-4 in the afternoon. If a volunteer works both shifts, a 30 minute lunch period will be scheduled. Some volunteers have varied schedules accord to the role they are filling, for example tutors. If, for any reason, a volunteer needs to leave the premises of the Center during their scheduled shift, they must inform the volunteer coordinator.

If a volunteer cannot make it to their assignment on a scheduled day, or will be late, the volunteer must notify the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible prior to their scheduled reporting time. Volunteers are expected to always be prompt and being absent or late may inconvenience those who are counting on the volunteer's presence. Failure to appear for a shift, or consistent tardiness without notification, shall be deemed a voluntary termination of the volunteer relationship between CCNW and the volunteer by the volunteer.

## **Time Reporting and Volunteer Time Sheet**

At the Center there is a volunteer sign-in sheet where all volunteers record the hours of their shift. The total number of volunteer hours is recorded each day and tracked, but individual volunteer hours are not. [If a volunteer needs or would like their hours recorded, they should advise the Volunteer Coordinator and individual hours can be tracked.]

## **Confidentiality**

Volunteers are expected to respect the confidentiality of all material as it relates to CCNW and/or the clients that CCNW serves. Volunteers are also requested to honor the privacy of staff and other volunteers.

While volunteering with the Center, volunteers may learn, work with and be entrusted with confidential and/or privileged information about the Center, its staff, volunteers and clients. Because this information may be sensitive or may have substantial value to the Center, volunteers must exercise the highest degree of care not to disclose any such information, even inadvertently (for example, through conversations in elevators or restaurants), to any unauthorized person in or outside of the Center. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Center/Business-related financial information
- Computer programs, codes, processes and passwords
- Personal information regarding donors and clients
- Clients lists

Sometimes even the most innocent acts or requests can result in the disclosure of confidential information. Volunteers should always think before discussing information with a third party. If a volunteer believes confidential information must be disclosed to a third party, they should consult with the Volunteer Coordinator. There is no excuse for disclosure of CCNW confidential information. If a volunteer improperly uses or discloses confidential information, they may be subject to dismissal as a volunteer [and legal action,] even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information. Volunteers' obligations under this Policy continue after the end of their volunteer status.

## **Personal Property and Parking**

CCNW does not assume responsibility for loss or damage to a volunteer's personal property and CCNW does not reimburse for any losses or damage to personal property resulting from theft, fire, automobile accidents, or any other condition. Keep your valuables on you or secure them in a safe location when you are at the Center. Please make sure that items that belong to you, such as sweaters, sweatshirts, or outerwear, are not confused with the over 160,000 lbs. of donated clothing CCNW receives each year.

The Center assumes no responsibility for theft of or from, or damage to any vehicle whilst the volunteer is at the Community Center.

## **Dress and Appearance**

Each volunteer represents CCNW to the community. A volunteer's appearance contributes to the overall impression that CCNW portrays. Clothing appropriate to perform the assigned task safely is required as all volunteers are expected to present an image that is both professional and appropriate to conditions of their volunteer assignments. Your attention and cooperation regarding this matter is greatly appreciated.

## **Change of Information**

A volunteer should advise the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible, if during the course of volunteer service a change in volunteer status, emergency contact information, a change in name, address, e-mail address or phone number occurs, in order to update the volunteer's records on file with CCNW.

## **Safety**

Establishing and maintaining a safe environment is the shared responsibility of the Center, the CCNW staff, and volunteers from all levels of the organization. The Center will attempt to do everything within its control to assure a safe environment in compliance with federal, state, and local safety regulations. Volunteers must immediately report any unsafe conditions to their supervisor.

As mentioned earlier in this handbook, volunteer services at CCNW may involve work that may be hazardous, including, but not limited to, lifting and carrying heavy items. Volunteers are expected to exercise caution in all their work activities. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to refrain from activities that may be hazardous to him or her.

All accidents that result in injury must be immediately reported to the Volunteer Coordinator immediately, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear. Any injury to the volunteer or losses to any third party which involved a volunteer must be reported and processed in accordance with existing CCNW policies on matters of this nature.

## **Drug Free Environment**

The Center is committed to maintaining a safe and productive environment free of drug and alcohol abuse. The Center will therefore not tolerate the possession, consumption, use or sale of, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages or any illegal drugs on the Center's premises at any time, or at or during a Center event or activity, whether or not the volunteer is at the Center, the prohibited act occurs during volunteer shift hours, or whether the volunteer is engaging in their volunteer services on or off the Center's premises (excluding permitted use of alcohol for authorized ceremonies, celebrations, and events).

[The Center reserves the right to conduct alcohol or drug tests in accordance with applicable laws.] Violation of this policy may result in immediate dismissal. Such violations may also have other legal consequences.

## **Anti- Sexual Harassment Policy**

The Center will not tolerate the sexual harassment of its volunteers. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that volunteers are free from sexual harassment at the Center or at any location where Center sponsored activities may occur, since such conduct may be unlawful and negatively affect our volunteers. If a volunteer believes that he or she, or that another person, is being sexually harassed by a supervisor, staff, volunteer, client, customer, vendor or any other third party with whom they interact as part of providing volunteer services, the volunteer should bring the matter to the Center's attention immediately in the manner set forth below.

Sexual harassment is not easily defined. Examples of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, obscene gestures, displaying sexually graphic magazines, calendars, posters, or Internet sites, sending sexually explicit e-mail, voice-mail or other electronic transmissions, or other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as

uninvited or non-consensual touching or sexually-related comments that: (1) have the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; or (2) have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or (3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's volunteerism.

In addition to the above, sexual harassment also encompasses any disrespectful behavior through insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct, and threats, demands, or suggestions that a volunteer's volunteerism is based upon an individual's acceptance or rejection of such conduct.

All volunteers have a duty to report any instances of sexual harassment, whether the harassment is directed toward him or herself, another volunteer, or another person at the Center, and whether committed by a supervisor, fellow volunteer, non-volunteer, or client. If a volunteer feels that they have been subjected to harassment, or, if volunteer witnesses conduct that is believed to be sexual harassment, they should report the matter [in writing] immediately to [the Volunteer Coordinator]. If [the Volunteer Coordinator] is a party to the claims of sexual harassment, such claims should be submitted [in writing] to [Executive Director]. Each report of sexual harassment will be fully investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate. Information resulting from complaints filed under this procedure will be kept confidential by the Center's management to the extent possible.

Any volunteer who engages in inappropriate conduct deemed to be sexual harassment, or who otherwise violates this policy, will be subject to dismissal.

### **Anti-Harassment Policy**

CCNW does not tolerate harassment in the workplace or at any other location where Center sponsored activities occur, whether the harassment is based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, ancestry, ethnicity, disability, citizenship, marital status, familial status, military or veteran status, genetic information, predisposing genetic characteristic, status as a victim of domestic violence, stalking and sex offenses, or any other status protected by law. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that our volunteers are free from all forms of harassment in providing volunteer services to the Center, since such behavior has a negative impact on both the volunteer and the Center, and may be unlawful. If a volunteer believes that or she, or that another person, is being harassed by a supervisor, staff, customer, vendor, volunteer, client or other third parties with whom the volunteer interacts as a part of providing volunteer services, the volunteer should bring the matter to the Center's attention immediately in the manner set for the below.

Harassment is any conduct that: (1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; or (2) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or (3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment and/or employment opportunities. Examples include vulgar or offensive conversation or jokes; unwelcome comments about an volunteer's physical characteristics, religious beliefs, ethnic background, medical condition, or disability; teasing, slurs, threats, derogatory comments, or other similar verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct directed toward a person, which is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create an unprofessional and hostile working environment.

All volunteers have a duty to report any instances of harassment, whether the harassment is directed toward him or herself, another volunteer, or another person at the Center, and whether committed by a supervisor, fellow volunteer, non-volunteer, or client. If a volunteer feels that they have been subjected to harassment, or if volunteer witnesses conduct that is believed to be harassment, they should report the matter [in writing] immediately to [the Volunteer Coordinator]. If the Volunteer Coordinator is a party to the claims of harassment, such claims should be submitted [in writing] to the Executive Director. Each

report of harassment will be fully investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate. Information resulting from complaints filed under this procedure will be kept confidential by the Center's management to the extent possible.

Any volunteer who engages in inappropriate conduct, or who otherwise violated this policy, will be subject to dismissal.

[It is [unlawful and] against the Center's policies to retaliate against a volunteer for making a harassment complaint or for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint. If a volunteer feels he or she has been subjected to retaliation, they should report the matter immediately [in writing] to the Volunteer Coordinator or if the Volunteer Coordinator is a party to the claim, the matter should be reported [in writing] to the Executive Director. Every report of perceived retaliation will be investigated fully and corrective action will be taken where appropriate.

Information resulting from complaints filed under this procedure will be kept confidential by the Center's management to the extent possible.

### **Internet Services Access and Electronic Mail (E-Mail) Usage Policy**

CCNW's Internet and e-mail systems exist solely for the purpose of conducting CCNW business, volunteers may not use Center computers for personal use.

All electronic data placed on CCNW's information system is the property of CCNW. Accordingly, volunteers should have no expectations of privacy regarding Internet or e-mail messages (or any other data files residing on CCNW-owned hardware), whether sent or received. This includes any files that may be designated as "private," or "confidential" on CCNW's application software.

The Center may access its e-mail systems and obtain the communications within the systems, including past e-mail messages, without notice to users of the system, in the ordinary course of business when the Center deems it appropriate to do so. The reasons for which the Center may obtain such access include, but are not limited to: maintaining the system, preventing or investigating allegations of system abuse or misuse, assuring compliance with software copyright laws, complying with legal and regulatory requests for information, and ensuring that the Center's operations continue appropriately.

Further, the Center may review Internet usage to ensure that such use with the Center's property, or communications sent via the Internet with the Center's property, are for business purposes only. The reasons for which the Center may review volunteers' use of the Internet with the Center's property include, but are not limited to: maintaining the system, preventing or investigating allegations of system abuse or misuse, assuring compliance with software copyright laws, complying with legal and regulatory requests for information, and ensuring that the Center's operations continue appropriately.

The Center may store electronic communications for a period of time after the communication is created. From time to time, copies of communications may be deleted.

The Center's policies prohibiting harassment, in their entirety, apply to the use of the Center's communication and computer systems. No one may use any communication or computer system in a manner that may be construed by others as harassing or offensive based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, ancestry, ethnicity, disability, citizenship, marital status, familial status, military or veteran status, genetic information, predisposing genetic characteristic, status

as a victim of domestic violence, stalking and sex offenses, or any other status protected by federal, state or local law.

Since the Center's communication and computer systems are intended for business use, these systems may not be used to solicit for religious or political causes, outside organizations or other personal matters unrelated to the Center's business. Further, since the Center's communication and computer systems are intended for business use, all volunteers, upon request, must inform management of any private access codes or passwords.

Unauthorized duplication of copyrighted computer software violates the law and is strictly prohibited. No volunteer may access, or attempt to obtain access to, another volunteer's or staff member's computer systems without appropriate authorization.

Violators of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

### **Telephone and Cell Phone Usage Policy**

Telephones are for the Center's business. However, from time-to-time, volunteers may find it necessary to use a Center telephone for personal use. Such use is permitted provided personal calls are kept to a minimum in duration and frequency and do not interfere with business operations. Any violation of this policy may result in dismissal. Volunteers are asked not to use their personal cellphones whilst on duty, except for calls of importance.

### **Media Relations**

Volunteers shall refer all persons working for the press and requesting information to the Volunteer Coordinator. Only the Executive Director and the President(s) of the Board of Directors may speak to the media on behalf of the Center. Others may be authorized as appropriate. Any volunteers who attend public programs as representatives of the Center must inform the Volunteer Coordinator of their appearance and receive clearance from same.

### **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted in any of the Center's facilities. Volunteers who wish to smoke may do so outside the building in designated areas. Volunteers are expected to follow all smoking laws. To avoid inconvenience to individuals seeking access to the Center's facilities, volunteers who leave the building to smoke should move or circulate a distance away from such entry areas. Violators will be subject to dismissal.

### **Gifts**

It is against CCNW policy for volunteers to accept any personal gift or gratuity from any firm, contractor, consultant, individual or others that may relate to CCNW business or services provided. Items of value such as food, alcoholic beverages, tickets to events and similar items should not be accepted.

### **Donations**

Donations, gifts, and gratuities given to the Center are absolutely not available for the personal use of volunteers, staff, or their friends and relatives.

### **Performance Evaluations**

While the Center does not provide formal performance evaluations of volunteers, performance is always monitored and feedback given on a regular basis in order to improve performance when necessary and to praise efforts and heighten the level of job satisfaction as appropriate. Volunteers are encouraged to discuss their volunteer experience on an informal basis.

### **Volunteer References**

As mentioned earlier under the section “Time Reporting and Volunteer Time Sheet,” a volunteer who would like their hours recorded for community service or any other purpose should advise the Volunteer Coordinator at the onset and the individual’s hours can be tracked and documented in a letter. Volunteers seeking a reference to a third party must sign a written authorization with the specifics of the request.

### **Conflict Resolution/Problem Solving**

If a problem should arise concerning any condition of the volunteer's assignment with CCNW, the volunteer should attempt to reconcile the matter with the Volunteer Coordinator, who will work to resolve the issue or reach a satisfactory solution.

### **Dismissal**

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules, policies and regulations of CCNW are subject to dismissal. A volunteer may be dismissed at any time. CCNW reserves the right to request that a volunteer leave immediately, if circumstances warrant such action.

## **A FEW CLOSING WORDS**

This Handbook is intended to give you a brief overview of the Center and its policies. From time to time, we may modify the terms and procedures in it. If you have any questions at any time, ask the Volunteer Coordinator. We welcome you with the sincere hope that our association will be a successful and rewarding one.

To electronically acknowledge your receipt of this handbook,  
please return to our website and click on the link:

[Click here to acknowledge that you have received the volunteer handbook](#)