

The heart of our community

Volunteer Handbook



Waunakee

**Neighborhood
Connection**

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VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK
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Welcome!

Since its humble beginnings in 2003, Waunakee Neighborhood Connection has been powered by volunteers! The individuals who give of their time, energy, and talents are a valuable resource for clients and staff, as well as for the community. You are essential to our ability to deliver quality services. By volunteering, you are not only helping your fellow neighbors who reside within the boundaries of the Waunakee Community School and the Town of Dane, you are also strengthening the organization and promoting community involvement.

This handbook will help you have the best possible experience as a volunteer. It answers frequently asked questions and gives information about Neighborhood Connection, the clients, and your role. Our team members, both paid staff and experienced volunteers, are also here to answer your questions and ensure that your time here is valuable and rewarding. Please feel free to contact us any time.

Thank you for choosing to volunteer at Neighborhood Connection and for choosing to make a positive difference in your community!

Sincerely,



Lisa Humenik
Executive Director



Stacey Dudley
Client & Volunteer Services Manager

Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy.
You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.

About this Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to help everyone who volunteers at Neighborhood Connection understand the expectations and procedures that guide our work, as well as learn about the various volunteer opportunities available. Many volunteer opportunities exist, but if you have a skill or idea that is not represented in this handbook, talk to our client and volunteer services manager. We want to ensure that your volunteer time is rewarding for you, so we'd love to hear about the ways in which you want to give. We are always open to new ideas!

This handbook is not meant to be an instruction manual for the various volunteer roles. Training and procedures specific to each role are provided separately.

Waunakee Neighborhood Connection

Started in 2003 in the garage of Genna Eaton, our founder, Waunakee Neighborhood Connection has grown from helping 11 families that first year into a community-centric nonprofit organization that has provided support to hundreds of Waunakee area residents. The organization incorporated as a charitable organization in 2007, receiving its nonprofit status on February 14th of that year, and continues to provide individuals and families who are going through hard times with everyday necessities such as clothing, diapers, toiletries, bedding, and even vehicles for transportation.

We know that the needs of families extend beyond what Neighborhood Connection can provide, so we collaborate with many other community, county, and statewide organizations to assist and empower families with housing, healthcare, food, financial, educational, transportation, and employment assistance.

In addition, we provide numerous ways in which community residents can connect with each other through volunteerism and service. Neighborhood Connection offers valuable opportunities for individuals, businesses, school groups, faith communities, and civic organizations to contribute to the strength of the community.

The heart of our community

Our Vision, Mission, Values, and Impact Focus

Vision: A thriving community where all are valued

Mission: Waunakee Neighborhood Connection provides programs and resources that engage neighbors to support and empower one another

Values:

- Trust
- Empowerment
- Respect
- Compassion
- Community engagement
- Equity

Impact Focus

- Economic security
- Community engagement/volunteerism

Mutual Expectations and Commitment

Waunakee Neighborhood Connection relies on an amazing team of paid and volunteer staff members to run its many programs and maintain the store, all with the goal of providing the best possible experience to our neighbors in need. When team members do work that they love, and gain satisfaction from helping others, our programs and services thrive.

It is our goal to provide those who volunteer with Neighborhood Connection a positive work environment as well as the training, supervision, and recognition you need in order to be successful. In return, we ask that you perform your duties to the best of your ability.

What you can expect from us:

- Support in finding a volunteer role best suited to your skills and goals
- Training and guidance to fulfill your volunteer role
- An inclusive, welcoming culture
- A safe and clean working environment
- The chance to give feedback
- The ability to grow and develop through your role with Neighborhood Connection
- The right to say no to projects or tasks that make you uncomfortable

- Appreciation for the hard work and dedication you provide to Neighborhood Connection and our clients

What we expect from you:

- Honor your commitment to our programs and services
- Be prompt and reliable, and report your hours
- Maintain confidentiality
- Provide your best effort and complete each task in a quality manner
- Be courteous to all stakeholders
- Ask for help when you need it
- Provide notification if you are unable to fulfill a shift or complete a project, as expected
- Be accountable for your actions

Getting Started

Waunakee Neighborhood Connection has developed a process for orienting, interviewing, screening, accepting, placing, and training volunteers that helps you find an opportunity that best fits your skills and interests.

Volunteer Interest Session & Client Services Training

Community members interested in volunteering at Neighborhood Connection begin by attending one of our monthly volunteer interest sessions. During this workshop, participants learn about the organization's history, programs and services, volunteer opportunities, and procedures. If they wish to continue the process of becoming a volunteer team member, they stay for the second half of the workshop, which covers important information about working with our clients, including important information about ethics and boundaries in social services.

Application, Interview, Screening, and Placement

The next step in the process for prospective volunteers is to complete an Application to Volunteer and have an interview with our client and volunteer services manager. During this time, we'll learn about your skills, interests, and availability so that we can place you in an opportunity that will be interesting and rewarding. Based on the selected opportunity, some additional screening may be necessary and may include a background check, driving record check, and/or verification of drivers' license and automobile insurance.

Occasionally, we'll find that an individual may not be a good fit for volunteering at Neighborhood Connection. When this happens, we work with that individual to try to find another volunteer opportunity in the community that would best fit their interests and skills.

Training

Once you have been accepted and placed into a specific role, our client and volunteer services manager will coordinate specific training so that you gain the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful. Opportunities for ongoing training, some of which may be mandatory for specific roles, are also available.

Policies, Procedures, and Participation Guidelines

Absences and punctuality

Volunteer team members are critical to Neighborhood Connection's mission. If you cannot make your volunteer shift for any reason, please notify our staff as soon as possible.

Stacey Dudley, client and volunteer services manager
(608)849-5740
sdudley@waunakeenc.com

Attendance

We track your volunteer hours using a timecard. Please be sure to record all of your hours, whether they are completed here, at home, or at an event. At Neighborhood Connection, timecards are located in a file box on the podium in the lobby.

Background/criminal records check

Volunteers who will be working with children in an unsupervised setting are required to get a criminal history background check prior to volunteering. If a criminal history is present, offenses will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as works best for the agency.

There may, at times, be other specific volunteer assignments for which a background check is necessary.

Building hours and access

In general, volunteers can be in the building during our regular office hours. If your volunteer role necessitates that you be in the building outside of those hours, please make arrangements with our client and volunteer services manager or executive director to let you in. In some cases, lead volunteers may be assigned a building key or entry card.

Client volunteering

We strongly believe that clients come to us with gifts to be shared, as well as their current needs, and are encouraged to volunteer with Neighborhood Connection. In gratitude for their

service and to save them a trip to our office at another time during the week, clients may shop at the conclusion of their volunteer shift.

Confidentiality

We have an obligation to our clients to maintain their confidentiality and respect their privacy. Every client served by Neighborhood Connection has the right to confidentiality. That being said, however, every volunteer must use his or her best judgment regarding information to share with a paid staff member. If you are aware of a client issue that requires immediate help, please inform the client and volunteer services manager.

As you work with the staff and clients, information of a confidential matter may be shared with you. You must not share this information with anyone who does not have a professional right or need to know it. This applies to making copies of any Neighborhood Connection records, reports, or documents without prior approval. Release or verbal sharing of any confidential information to unauthorized persons can result in dismissal from your service.

You will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement when you begin volunteering with Neighborhood Connection.

Contact information

We ask that you notify the client and volunteer services manager of any changes to your name, address, phone number, and email address.

Corrective action

In certain situations, corrective action may be taken following an incident or evaluation. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, re-assignment of a volunteer to a new position, suspension of the volunteer, or dismissal from volunteer service.

Dress code

Neighborhood Connection has a casual dress code, but we ask that your attire be neat and conservative as well as appropriate for the conditions and performance of your duties. As a volunteer, you are responsible for presenting a positive image to the community as a representative of Neighborhood Connection. We ask that you refrain from wearing any clothing items that feature vulgar language or images related to violence or illegal drugs or alcohol. If a supervisor feels your attire is out of place, you may be asked to change into proper attire.

Driving

Volunteers whose role requires operation of a motor vehicle must present and maintain a valid driver's license and insurance. You will be asked to submit a copy of your driving record and automotive insurance to Neighborhood Connection from time to time.

Volunteers should not transport clients in their personal vehicle at any time.

Equal volunteering opportunity

Neighborhood Connection provides equal volunteering opportunity for everyone regardless of age, sex, color, race, creed, national origin, religious persuasion, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, or disability that does not prohibit performance of essential job functions. All matters relating to volunteering are based upon ability to perform the job, as well as dependability and reliability.

Emergency or weather closures

In the case of inclement weather or emergency situations, Neighborhood Connection will announce any closure on its Facebook page. In general, we follow the Waunakee Community Schools' lead in determining closures, so if the schools are closed due to bad weather, we will also be closed.

Exit interviews

In instances where a volunteer voluntarily leaves, Neighborhood Connection's paid staff would like to discuss your reasons for leaving and any other impressions you may have about the organization. If you decide to leave, you will be asked to grant us the privilege of an exit interview. We hope that the interview will provide insight into possible improvements. All information will be kept strictly confidential and will in no way affect any references that Neighborhood Connection will provide on your behalf.

Expense reimbursement

You may be reimbursed for purchases that you make on behalf of Neighborhood Connection. Please secure written (or email) approval from the client and volunteer services manager or executive director prior to incurring any expense on behalf of Neighborhood Connection. To be reimbursed for all authorized expenses, you must submit an expense report accompanied by receipts.

Feedback and grievances

An efficient, successful operation and satisfied volunteers go hand in hand. Thus, feedback and grievances from volunteers are of concern to us.

Under this process, a grievance is defined as any event, condition, rule, or practice which the volunteer believes violates his or her civil rights, treats them unfairly, or causes them any degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness on the job. A grievance may also deal with an attitude, a statement, or an opinion held by a paid staff member or volunteer.

The sole purpose of this feedback procedure is to give each volunteer and Neighborhood Connection's paid staff a chance to clear up any problem, complaint, friction, or grievance,

regardless of whether the problems are large or small. In order to provide for prompt and efficient evaluation of, and response to, grievances, Neighborhood Connection has established a feedback procedure for all volunteers. It will always be Neighborhood Connection's policy to give full consideration to every volunteer's opinion. There will be no discrimination against or toward anyone for their part in presenting grievances.

The feedback procedure is as follows:

- 1. Meet with the client and volunteer services manager**
If you feel that any volunteering condition, policy, practice, or action by Neighborhood Connection is unjust or creates a concern for you, you should tell the client and volunteer services manager about it and discuss the matter confidentially and in private with them. In most cases, the matter will usually be resolved at this stage. If, for some reason, the client and volunteer services manager fails to offer you the opportunity to discuss the matter, if the discussion does not lead to a satisfactory conclusion, or if the concern is related to the client and volunteer services manager, then proceed to the next step.
- 2. Meet with the executive director**
Neighborhood Connection's executive director will review the grievance and set up a time to meet with you. At this meeting, you should feel free to openly discuss your complaint and substantiate your reasons for feeling the way you do.
- 3. Meet with the board**
Following the meeting with our executive director, if you are still displeased with the decision rendered, you should bring the problem directly to our board of directors. The problem will be discussed with all concerned and a final decision rendered. The board's decision will be binding on all.

Firearms, weapons, and explosives

Firearms, weapons, and explosives are not allowed in the building or on the grounds of Neighborhood Connection.

Gifts, tips, promotion, and soliciting

Occasionally, volunteers will receive gifts from clients. In general, it is okay to accept cards and other gifts that are under \$5. Be sure to use your best judgment when determining whether or not it is appropriate to accept any gift. Any questions regarding gifts should be directed to the client and volunteer services manager.

Volunteers should not give gifts to clients directly. Volunteers may participate, on a confidential basis, in Neighborhood Connection programs that facilitate gift-giving to client families (e.g., Adopt-a-Family).

If, in your volunteer role, you receive a monetary tip or donation from a client or donor, please give it to the executive director to be deposited and acknowledged. Such funds go into the general operating account to support Neighborhood Connection's programs.

When volunteering your time with Neighborhood Connection, we ask that you refrain from forcing any political and religious beliefs on others. While some of our clients are very religious or politically active, we ask that you maintain a personal yet professional relationship with them throughout your time as a volunteer. We ask that you do not promote your own business enterprise or any other private charities.

If you plan to or would like to make any solicitations for goods, services, or other donations on behalf of Neighborhood Connection, please coordinate these efforts with the executive director before doing so.

Harassment

Neighborhood Connection is committed to a work environment that is professional and harassment-free for all employees and volunteers. Harassment includes, without limitations, verbal, physical, visual, and innuendo. It also includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually-motivated physical contact and other verbal or physical conduct, or visual forms of harassment of sexual nature when submission to such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment or volunteerism or is used as the basis for unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment for employees and volunteers.

Volunteers should immediately report any issues to their supervisor.

Identification

While volunteering with Neighborhood Connection, either in the office/store or at an event, we ask that you wear a name badge to identify yourself as a volunteer. Name badges are kept at the Welcome Desk. If you need a new nametag, please notify the client and volunteer services manager.

Leave of absence

If you need to take some time away from volunteering, but do plan to return, please discuss it with our client and volunteer services manager.

Liability and insurance

In May of 1997, Congress approved legislation that shields volunteers for nonprofit organizations from liability lawsuits. The Volunteer Protection Act limits the occasions when volunteers, as well as directors, officers, and trustees, may be sued in connection with their actions on behalf of a nonprofit. While the legislation removes a volunteer (but not the nonprofit) from liability if an individual commits negligent acts or omissions *while acting within the scope of his or her responsibility*, it does not protect the person if such acts were caused by willful or criminal misconduct or gross negligence.

To limit liability, act within the scope of your duties as described in your Volunteer Assignment Charter.

All volunteers will be required to sign a Release and Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk, and Indemnity Agreement prior to volunteering.

Neighborhood Connection maintains general liability, property, and directors and officers (D&O) insurance policies.

Minors as volunteers

Volunteers under the age of 18 who wish to participate in an ongoing volunteer opportunity must have written permission of a parent or guardian before they may begin service. The volunteer tasks assigned to a minor shall be performed in a non-hazardous environment and shall comply with all appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

Some volunteer roles may have a specific minimum age requirement and/or require that a minor volunteer alongside their parent.

Parking

Volunteers can utilize the parking lot at our office, as well as any unrestricted street parking in the adjacent neighborhoods. There is also a bicycle rack available next to the building. Bikes should be locked to the rack for security. Neighborhood Connection is not responsible for any theft from the parking area or bicycle rack.

Personal involvement with clients

If your volunteer position involves working directly with clients, it is important to maintain boundaries with them and to keep your relationship professional, not personal. Information about maintaining healthy and appropriate boundaries is provided during our Client Services Training. Please discuss any concerns or questions you may have about involvement with clients with our client and volunteer services manager.

Phone usage

We ask that, while you are volunteering, you keep personal phone calls to a minimum. Phone calls pertaining to your volunteer service are always allowed and may be made using the office phone.

Recognition

As a volunteer, you are an essential part of our program operations. Therefore, we believe it is very important to recognize the time and effort that you put into your service. Recognition activities are varied, formal as well as informal, focused on individuals or groups, and will take place throughout the year.

Resignation

While we hope both you and Neighborhood Connection will mutually benefit from your continued volunteering, we realize that it may become necessary for you to leave your role with us. If you anticipate having to resign your position, please notify the client and volunteer services manager, in writing or via email, as far in advance as possible and make arrangements for an exit interview.

Safety and security

Neighborhood Connection is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for staff and volunteers as well as clients we serve. We will provide you with information on facility safety plans and safety protocols related to your assigned volunteer position.

Maintaining the security of Neighborhood Connection's office is every team member's responsibility. Develop habits that ensure security as a matter of course. For example:

- Always keep cash properly stored. If you are aware that cash is insecurely stored, immediately inform the person responsible.
- Know the location of all alarms and fire extinguishers, and familiarize yourself with the proper procedure for using them.
- Be cautious and aware of who is in our building. Notify a staff member if you have concern over an individual in the building or on the grounds.

Smoking and vaping

Smoking and vaping are not allowed on our building or grounds.

Standards of conduct

By agreeing to volunteer with us, you have a responsibility to Neighborhood Connection and to your fellow volunteers to adhere to certain guidelines for conduct. We try to keep rules to a minimum. The purpose of the rules is not to restrict your rights, but rather to be certain that

you understand what conduct is expected and necessary. When each person is aware that he or she can fully depend upon fellow team members to follow the rules of conduct, then our organization will be a better place to volunteer for everyone.

Substance abuse

Neighborhood Connection paid staff members have no desire to intrude into our volunteers' personal lives. However, both on-the-job and off-the-job involvement with any mood-altering substances can have an impact on our agency and on our ability to achieve our objectives of safety and security, as well as our positive reputation in the community. Therefore, all volunteers are expected to report to the agency free of the effects of any mood-altering substances.

The possession, sale, or usage of mood-altering substances while volunteering is a violation of safe volunteer practices and will be subject to dismissal. Volunteers who show signs or evidence of having consumed alcohol and/or drugs will not be permitted entrance to Neighborhood Connection. Violators will be dismissed from all volunteer programs.

Supervision

As a volunteer, you will have a clearly identified supervisor who will directly oversee your role within the organization. Your supervisor may be a paid staff member or a lead volunteer. This supervisor will be available to you for consultation and assistance. One-time volunteers will also be informed of their supervisor in case questions or problems arise.

Our client and volunteer services manager is also a point of contact for you throughout the application and orientation process and to support you throughout your service.

Termination

Neighborhood Connection has the right to terminate a volunteer without cause, but will always take care in determining the need for termination. In general, failure to adhere to the policies, procedures, and participation guidelines of Neighborhood Connection is cause of immediate release.

Unacceptable activities

Generally speaking, we expect each person to act in a mature and responsible way at all times. However, to avoid any possible confusion, some of the more obvious unacceptable activities are noted below. Your avoidance of these activities will be to your benefit as well as the benefit of Neighborhood Connection. If you have questions concerning any volunteer or safety rule, or any of the unacceptable activities listed, please see the client and volunteer services manager for an explanation.

If a volunteer violates any rules or procedures established by Neighborhood Connection, including those defined in this handbook and/or the following rules, that person may be subject to discipline up to, and including, immediate discharge. Additional unacceptable activities include:

- Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence, or making threats of violence towards anyone on agency premises or when representing Neighborhood Connection; fighting, or horseplay, or provoking a fight on agency property, or negligent damage of property
- Insubordination or refusing to obey instructions properly issued by your supervisor.
- Participating in illegal, violent, or unsafe acts
- Threatening, intimidating, abusing, mistreating, or coercing fellow volunteers, clients, or staff members, on or off the premises - at any time, for any purpose
- Theft of agency property or the property of fellow volunteers, clients, or staff; unauthorized possession or removal of any agency property, including documents, from the premises without prior permission from management; unauthorized use of agency equipment or property for personal reasons; using agency equipment for profit
- Dishonest, willful falsification or misrepresentation of your application for volunteering or other volunteer records; alteration of agency records or other agency documents
- Malicious gossip and/or spreading rumors; engaging in behavior designed to create discord and lack of harmony; interfering with another volunteer or staff member on the job; willfully restricting volunteer output or engaging others to do the same
- Participating in immoral conduct or indecency on agency property
- Releasing or verbally sharing confidential information
- Unwillingness to support and further the mission of the organization

Use of facility, property, and equipment

Neighborhood Connection's meeting rooms and building are available to outside groups for meetings and events. On occasion, we will also lend out property and equipment. Please see our executive director if you would like to make arrangements to use the building or equipment.

Volunteer Assignment Charter

As a volunteer, you will be given a Volunteer Assignment Charter outlining the specific responsibilities of your role(s). It is your responsibility to read about your position, gain an understanding of the requirements, and seek any necessary clarification from your supervisor. Signing the Volunteer Assignment Charter demonstrates that you are aware of the duties your assignment entails and agree to perform them to the best of your abilities.



Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement and Receipt

I certify that I have received and reviewed the Waunakee Neighborhood Connection Volunteer Handbook.

I further understand that, by signing this statement as required, I am indicating that I have read the Volunteer Handbook and understand its contents and have discussed questions that I have with staff. I also realize that this statement will become a permanent part of my volunteer record.

Volunteer's Name (please print)

Signature

Date