



WARM

**Volunteer Standards
& Guidelines**

Volunteer Standards & Guidelines

In an effort to make your service here as fruitful and enjoyable as possible, we have developed these *Volunteer Standards & Guidelines*. These are designed to answer many of your questions about the practices and policies of Waller Assistance & Restoration Ministries, Inc., (WARM) such as what you can expect from WARM and what WARM expects from you. While volunteering at WARM, we ask that you carefully observe these standards and guidelines.

Standards of Conduct

Whenever people gather together to achieve goals, some rules of conduct are needed to help everyone volunteer together efficiently, effectively and harmoniously. By accepting a volunteer position with WARM, you have a responsibility to WARM, our clients and your fellow volunteers to adhere to certain rules of behavior and conduct. The purpose of these 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 volunteers to follow the rules of conduct, then our organization will be a better place for everyone to volunteer.

Revisions

WARM reserves the right to amend, revise or delete any of the *Volunteer Standards & Guidelines* referred to in this manual at any time without notice. Changes may be communicated to volunteers in meetings, electronically or incorporated into revised manuals. If you have any questions about the *Volunteer Standards & Guidelines*, please ask your supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.

Equal Volunteering Opportunity

WARM provides equal volunteering opportunities for every person regardless of age, gender, creed, national origin, religious persuasion, marital status, political belief or a 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, once placed.

The Volunteer Relationship

The placement of a volunteer shall not be considered as creating a contractual relationship between the volunteer and WARM. Volunteer placement shall be “at will,” so that either party may terminate the volunteer relationship at any time for any or no reason.

WARM has the right to and may verify work history, education, licenses, registrations, certifications, and degrees that are represented on the volunteer applicant’s application, resume or in interviews, including criminal background information. False or misleading statements are grounds for termination of the volunteer placement at any time.

Clients of WARM will not be considered for volunteer placement until one year after the successful conclusion of their client status.

Your Commitment

Volunteers contribute to the overall mission of WARM by providing another layer of compassion, caring, talent and skill to our team. We are proud to work with many different types of volunteers:

- **Ongoing individual volunteers** – These volunteers assist week after week and become valued team members. New ongoing individual volunteers are asked to make an initial commitment to one year of service, and at minimum, volunteer once a week. Our hope is that volunteers will want to continue their service long past the initial year commitment.
- **Short-term individual volunteers** – These volunteers assist in areas that require very little training and only volunteer for a short amount of time or to obtain a specified number of volunteer hours. (Due to time constraints, the number of these opportunities at a given time is extremely limited)
- **Volunteer groups** – Regardless of size, volunteer groups are an organized collection of people who have a designated leader. WARM offers one-time, short-term and ongoing opportunities for group volunteer service.
- **Internships** – WARM is delighted when we can partner with outstanding academic institutions and top-notch students to provide internships. Internships are individually tailored to meet the specific needs of the area and the student.
- **Court-mandated Community Service Volunteers** – As need arises, WARM utilizes community service volunteers. Community service volunteers must not have been convicted of any violent crime or theft. All community service volunteers must be age 18 or older.

Be consistent and faithful in fulfilling your commitment. If you cannot make a scheduled time, please contact your staff supervisor or the Volunteer Services Department.

Volunteers are expected to be punctual for their assigned times. Please let your supervisor know if you will be late.

If a volunteer is unable to meet his/her commitment to WARM for a long period of time, it may be necessary to replace that volunteer. The volunteer may take a leave of absence and return where needed by WARM. We cannot guarantee that your "spot" will remain the same.

Age Requirement for Individual Volunteer

The minimum age for an individual volunteer is 18.

Age Requirement for Group Volunteers

The minimum age for volunteer groups is junior high school (or middle school) age.

- Junior high school age volunteers must be accompanied by 1 sponsor over the age of 18 for every 5 – 7 volunteers.
- High school age volunteer groups must be accompanied by 1 sponsor for every 10 volunteers.

Procedure for Volunteering – Individuals and Internships

- Submit written or electronic *Volunteer Agreement Form*.
- Interview with the Volunteer Coordinator. Occasionally, a volunteer placement or internship will require either the initial interview be with the prospective supervisor or require an additional interview with the prospective supervisor.
- Submit a letter of reference.
- After a placement is agreed upon, volunteer applicants must attend new volunteer orientation prior to beginning the placement.
- Schedule time for volunteer to meet with supervisor and/or begin placement.

Procedure for Volunteering – Groups

- It is best to schedule early - usually at least two weeks in advance.
- When calling to schedule a group, it is helpful for the group leader to have a couple of dates in mind that will work for the group, the number of volunteers who will participate in the project, and the type of project the group would like to do.
- Groups are scheduled on a first-come basis.
- Once a group is scheduled, a confirmation e-mail will be sent to the group leader. (If we are able to schedule a group at the last minute, there may be an agreement with the group leader that he/she will not receive a confirmation letter.) **If a group has not received a confirmation, the group is not on our schedule.**
- It is expected that the group leader will discuss our general guidelines prior to the group's arrival.
- Time permitting, a brief orientation and tour will be given upon the group's arrival.
- Each member of the Group must complete a *Volunteer Agreement Form* and those under 18 must have parent or guardian signature.

Signing In and Out

Volunteers **must always** sign-in at the front desk before beginning your volunteer work each time, and then sign-out before leaving. This information is important so that we may recognize outstanding volunteer service and provide statistical information required for grant proposals and agencies.

Interactions with Clients, Staff Members and Other Volunteers

Be wise! We want volunteers to get to know our staff and other volunteers in the programs. However, be aware of being taken advantage of by some clients who may employ manipulative tactics to achieve personal and, in some cases, unprofitable agendas.

Here are a few specifics:

- Do not give rides to any client.
- Do not give money to any client.

- Practice active listening and empathy. Do not make decisions for the clients. Always refer clients to staff members for questions and assistance.
- Report inappropriate behavior or anything that causes you to feel uncomfortable to your staff supervisor or to the Volunteer Coordinator immediately.
- Always remain calm when speaking with clients. Remember that our clients are going through difficult times and their stress level may be high. Never take any negative comment made by a client personally and never allow yourself to be drawn into an argument.
- Profanity is never acceptable when working with staff, clients or other volunteers.

Fraternization

This policy is to provide guidelines concerning activities, actions, conduct, involvement and relationships between clients and volunteers.

In general, activities, actions, conduct, involvement, and relationships in which volunteers are authorized to engage with clients are those, which are listed in the volunteer's job description.

For the purpose of this policy, clients include any person being served by one of our facilities and any person who has received services (including follow-up contacts) within the last six months.

Examples of unauthorized, inappropriate, and unprofessional behavior include:

- Interacting with clients when a volunteer is off duty.
- Transporting clients in personal vehicles.
- Engaging in any monetary transactions including borrowing, lending, giving/receiving money, buying and selling.
- Hiring any client.
- Accepting any personal favors from clients.
- Showing favoritism between clients.
- Any physical or romantic relationship between a volunteer and client.
- Conduct that demeans or humiliates a client.
- Inappropriate physical contact with a client.

It is inappropriate and unauthorized for volunteers to engage in activities that can be interpreted as socializing with clients. Any violation of this policy constitutes misconduct and may lead to immediate discharge.

Client Neglect & Abuse

It is the policy of WARM to provide a positive and encouraging environment for our clients in which they feel reasonably safe and where appropriate consideration is given to their privacy, dignity and individual needs. You are required to embody this policy in clients' interactions and avoid conduct considered client neglect or abuse. Examples of neglect or abuse include but are not limited to:

- Intentional physical or emotional abuse of a client. Abuse is defined as intentional or reckless action or omission that causes injury or emotional trauma to a client.

- Any sexual relationships or attempted relationships with a client or with anyone who has been a client (including clients on follow-up status) within the last six months.
- Moral or social behavior, which could have serious detrimental influence on clients.
- Procuring alcohol, illegal drugs or unauthorized prescription drugs from or for clients or staff members.

Working With Children

Volunteers should observe the following guidelines when working with children:

- Volunteers should not discipline the clients' children. Volunteers should report children's disciplinary matters to the staff member on duty.
- Volunteers should never be alone with a child.
- Volunteers should never touch or hug a child in a way that might be misinterpreted. Please remember that many of our children have come from abusive backgrounds. However, you will not know which children have been abused and which have not. It is best to let each individual child initiate contact.

Harassment/Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of this Organization to provide a working environment free of harassment. Every form of harassment is expressly prohibited. Allegations of harassment will be investigated and, if warranted, appropriate disciplinary action, including termination, will be taken. Volunteers who believe they have been subjected to harassment should report the incident(s) to their Volunteer Coordinator.

Harassment can include "jokes," comments or other personally offensive or unwelcome behavior based on a person's age, ancestry, color, creed, sex, marital status, medical condition, national origin, physical handicap, race or religion.

Sexual harassment is defined as sexual suggestions, language, physical advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

If you believe you have experienced or observed an incident of harassment of any kind you are expected to report the incident immediately. Since harassment incidents may represent embarrassing or difficult to discuss circumstances, you should select the reporting option above with which you are most comfortable. Each charge of sexual harassment will be investigated with consideration given to confidentiality. Results of the investigation will be communicated to those who have a legitimate need to know and appropriate action will be taken as required.

Dress Code

We ask volunteers to observe the following dress code:

- Volunteers may wear jeans or walking shorts during warm weather.
- Please avoid wearing ripped jeans, short-shorts, short skirts and short dresses.
- Please avoid wearing tank tops, sleeveless or strap-type tops.

- Please avoid wearing flip-flops, sandals or open-toed shoes.
- As a general rule – dress conservatively.

Reporting Incidents

An incident refers to any event or situation where someone could suffer injury. All incidents must be immediately reported to your staff supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator. This reporting policy is important for the safety and wellbeing of everyone in order to ensure a continued safe and successful workplace.

Safety

It is the policy of the Organization to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all volunteers. Volunteers must comply with all safety and health requirements by management, federal, state and local law.

Personal Property

The Organization does not assume responsibility for the loss, damage or theft of personal belongings, and volunteers are strongly advised not to carry unnecessary amounts of cash or other valuables with them when they come to volunteer.

Do not leave your belongings unattended. If you must bring valuables with you, be sure to ask your supervisor where to store them. Never leave your purse or other valuables on the front seat of your car – even if the car is locked.

WARM Property

Desks, storage areas, work areas, file cabinets, credenzas, computer systems, office telephones, modems, facsimile machines, and copiers are WARM's property and must be regarded and maintained according to this policy. Handle all equipment with care, ensuring its safe and proper operation and storage.

Parking and Entry

Volunteers must park behind the building, on the north side, to leave space for our Assistance Ministry clients and Thrift Store customers. All volunteers should enter and leave through the back entrance of the building, the other entrances are reserved for clients and customers.

Shopping the Thrift Store

We encourage you to shop in our Thrift Store as this helps our ministry, however, we need make clear delineation between your role as volunteer and customer. When shopping you should not be "Signed In" as a volunteer. Once you have paid for your items, you need to use Thrift Store entrance with the goods you have purchased. This will help eliminate any questions that could arise from merchandise leaving through the back door.

Additionally, for our volunteers with at least 15 hours of volunteer time in the previous month, you will receive a discount of 50% off of the normal price (not the sale price).

Smoking/Tobacco Use on WARM Property or Business

It is the policy of WARM to protect the health and safety of employees, volunteers, clients and visitors. Consequently, smoking or other tobacco use is not allowed on WARM property.

Introductory Period

Your first 60 days of volunteering at WARM are considered an introductory period. This introductory period will be a time for getting to know your fellow volunteers, WARM staff, and the tasks involved in your job position, as well as becoming familiar with WARM services. Your supervisor will work closely with you to help you understand the needs and processes of your job.

This introductory period is a tryout time for both you, as a volunteer, and WARM as an agency. During this introductory period, WARM will evaluate your suitability for volunteering and you can evaluate WARM as well.

At the end of the introductory period, the Volunteer Coordinator will discuss your volunteer position with you. At this time you, as a volunteer, and WARM as an agency decide whether to continue to work together.

Orientation and Training

The Volunteer Coordinator will give new volunteers an overview of WARM's operations and policies. New volunteers will receive on-the-job orientation, including explanation of duties, from the program or department manager or designee.

Grievances

An effective, successful operation and satisfied volunteers go hand in hand. Volunteer grievances are of concern to WARM, regardless of whether problems are large or small.

In order to provide for prompt and efficient evaluation of and response to grievances, WARM has established a formal Grievance Procedure of all volunteers. It will always be WARM's policy to give full consideration to every volunteer's opinion. There will be no discrimination against or toward anyone for his or her part in presenting grievances.

Under this policy, a grievance is defined as any event, condition, rule or practice which the volunteer believes violates his or her civil rights, treats him or her unfairly, or causes him or her 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 supervisor or a fellow volunteer.

It is WARM's policy that grievance meetings will be held with at least one witness.

1. **See the Volunteer Coordinator first.** If you feel that any volunteering condition, policy, practice or action by WARM is unjust, you should request a meeting with the Volunteer

Coordinator. If for some reason the Volunteer Coordinator fails to offer you the opportunity to discuss the matter, or if the discussion does not lead to a satisfactory conclusion, then proceed to the next step. The Volunteer Coordinator will submit a written grievance report to the Executive Director.

2. **Grievance Conference.** The Executive Director, will review the written grievance report and ask to meet with you. At this conference, you should feel free to openly discuss your complaint and facts related to the situation. The Executive Director will consider your input and render a decision.

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. This, however, in no way implies that the following list contains all unacceptable activities which may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of the volunteer placement. Your avoidance of these activities will be to your benefit as well as the benefit of WARM. If you have any questions regarding any of the unacceptable activities listed, please see the Volunteer Coordinator for an explanation.

Occurrences of any of the following violations, because of their seriousness, may result in immediate dismissal without warning:

- Willful violation of any agency rule.
- Any deliberate action that is extreme in nature and is obviously detrimental to WARM
- Inappropriate dress, language or behavior.
- Any type of harassment directed toward another person.
- Client abuse or neglect.
- Negligence or any careless action that endangers the life or safety of another person.
- Being intoxicated or under the influence of controlled substance drugs while volunteering.
- Engaging in criminal conduct.
- Acts of violence, making threats of violence toward anyone on WARM premises or while representing WARM.
- Fighting, horse-playing or provoking a fight on WARM premises or while representing WARM.
- Negligent damage of property.
- Insubordination or refusing to obey instructions properly issued by your supervisor.
- Threatening, intimidating or coercing clients, staff or fellow volunteers on or off the premises – at any time, for any purpose.
- Theft of WARM property or the personal property of clients, staff or fellow volunteers, unauthorized possession or removal of any WARM property, including donated items or documents, from the premises.
- Unauthorized use of WARM equipment or property for personal reasons; using WARM equipment for profit.
- Dishonesty, willful falsification or misrepresentation on your volunteer application or other volunteer records, or alteration of WARM records or other WARM documents.

- Breach of confidentiality of personnel information.
- Malicious gossip and/or spreading rumors, engaging in behavior designed to create discord and lack of harmony.
- Interfering with another person's ability to perform their job or willfully restricting another person's output or encouraging others to do the same.
- Immoral conduct or indecency.
- Unwillingness or inability to support and further the mission of WARM and/or the objectives of our programs.

Disciplinary Actions

Unacceptable behavior, which does not lead to immediate dismissal, may be dealt with in the following manner:

- Verbal reprimand
- Written warning
- Dismissal

Conflict of Interest

All volunteers should avoid any circumstances that might in any way be interpreted as a conflict of interest between the volunteer and WARM

General Health

If you have any health condition that might be aggravated by or that adversely affects your volunteer assignment in any way, please speak with the Volunteer Coordinator. We will work with you to adjust your volunteer assignment or determine that you are not able to volunteer until the condition is resolved. Volunteers who have an infectious disease will not be permitted to work for the duration of communicability.