



Voluntary Action Center Volunteer Handbook

Voluntary Action Center
343 South Wall Street
Calhoun, GA 30701
706-629-7283

For more information visit our website:

www.voluntaryactioncenter.org

Follow us on social media:

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Effective as of
July 1, 2019



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Mission Statement

Serving as the heart of service in Gordon County, we strive to provide volunteer opportunities that offer a wide variety of emergency resources to our neighbors in need.

Our Commitment

To provide programs which address the needs of hunger and homelessness in Gordon County. To provide emergency services to individuals and families without discrimination. To provide annual programs which bring joy to the lives of children and seniors. To collaborate, support, and partner with other local agencies through the works of Family Connection and United Way. To be the Heart of a Caring Community.

OVERVIEW OF HANDBOOK

This volunteer handbook is provided as a resource for Voluntary Action Center (VAC) volunteers. This handbook provides policies, procedures, and guidelines which all volunteers are expected to follow while serving on Voluntary Action Center premises. Volunteers with additional questions should consult Karen Poole, the Program and Facilities Coordinator.

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

This volunteer handbook is not a contract of employment. Volunteers may voluntarily leave at any time without notice. Volunteers may be asked to leave the Voluntary Action Center at any time. Any oral or written statements or promises to the contrary are hereby expressly disavowed and should not be relied upon by prospective or existing volunteers. The contents of this handbooks are subject to change at any time at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Why We Need Volunteers

The Voluntary Action Center was founded in 1971 by a group of volunteers and has continued to thrive because of our volunteers. Volunteers are an integral part of our organization and help make it possible for our staff to provide vital services. Our volunteers provide more than 12,000 hours of service annually.



ON-SITE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Community Kitchen

Our Community Kitchen serves hot meals Monday-Friday from 11:00AM-12:30PM. Volunteers can serve from 8:30AM-1:30PM and assist with meal preparation, meal service, and facilities clean-up. We schedule Meal Preparation from 8:30AM-11:00AM, Meal Service from 11:00AM-12:30PM, and Clean-Up from 12:30PM-1:30PM.

Food Pantry

Our Food Pantry provides nutritional assistance to individuals and families Monday-Friday from 9:00AM-2:00PM. Volunteers can work in our food pantry from 9:00AM-2:00PM.

Donation Area

Our Donation Area is open Monday-Saturday from 9:00AM-5:00PM and accepts donations for our Thrift Store. Volunteers may work in our donation area to assist with donation processing Monday-Friday from 9:00AM-2:00PM.

Thrift Store

Our Thrift Store is open Monday-Saturday from 9:00AM-5:00PM. Volunteers may work from Monday-Friday from 9:00AM-5:00PM.

How Do I Volunteer?

The first step to volunteer is to complete the Volunteer Application located at the back of this Volunteer Handbook. Second contact the coordinator to setup your first volunteer date.

Community Kitchen:

Lisa Smith, Kitchen Manager

PH/TXT: 706-879-8788

Email: VACKitchen@voluntaryactioncenter.org

Food Pantry, Donation Area or Thrift Store:

Stacy Long, Executive Director

PH: 706-629-7283

Email: Stacy.Long@voluntaryactioncenter.org

How Old Do I have to be to Volunteer?

Individuals who are sixteen (16) and older may volunteer. Minors under the age of eighteen (18) must have the written consent or a parent or guardian. Age requirements for volunteers may vary by department.

Young teenagers between the age of thirteen (13) and fifteen (15) may volunteer in a limited capacity, on a scheduled basis unless accompanied by a parent/guardian or individual appointed by the parent/guardian. Young teenagers must be self-motivated and well behaved to volunteer without an accompanying parent/guardian or parent/guardian representative.

Children between the ages of six (6) and thirteen (13) may volunteer with an accompanying parent/guardian or individual appointed by the parent/guardian.



VOLUNTEER GENERAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Personal Belonging

Please avoid bringing valuables and large purses or bags when volunteering. You will be provided a designated area to store small purses and coats. If you drive, we recommend placing all valuables in an area not visible through auto windows. Voluntary Action Center is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged items.

Cell Phones

To ensure our clients receive the best service possible we ask that you avoid using your cell phone during your time of service. Individuals performing court mandated volunteer service are prohibited from having cellphones in their possession during service hours. A designated locker will be provided for storage of cell phones during service hours.

Dress Code

We encourage you to wear what is comfortable and respectful to others. We encourage comfortable footwear and closed toe shoes. The following clothing is prohibited: crop tops, tank tops, spaghetti strap tops, short-shorts, short skirts, low-rider pants, offensive shirts, and shirts that advertise alcohol, drugs, violence, or competitors. Sleeveless shirts are permitted only in the donation processing area and must extend to the shoulder. Management reserves the right to deem clothing inappropriate and require volunteers to change or leave.

Volunteer Hours

All volunteers must maintain a log of hours worked via our electronic volunteer tracking program. Volunteers should check-in and check-out each day in the lobby or community kitchen. If you need assistance with electronic check-in the receptionist will provide assistance.

If the receptionist is assisting others, your must be respectful and wait your turn. Volunteers should not jump in front of clients or demand attention ahead of others needing to be served.

Orientation and Training

All volunteers will be given training specific to the area of their service. Volunteers will be expected to attend a general volunteer training annually to review the Volunteer Handbook.

Conflicts of Interest

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner without compromising the Voluntary Action Center's standard of ethics. Volunteers should understand that it is inappropriate to utilize the Voluntary Action Center's time, resources, materials, or reputation for one's own gain or the enhancement of another organization. Volunteers may not solicit or fundraise for another entity or organization on Voluntary Action Center premises. Volunteers may not distribute information for another entity or organization unless approved by the Executive Director.



Sexual Harassment Policy

The Voluntary Action Center will not tolerate harassment of its volunteers, clients, or visitors by the Director, employees, other volunteers, or anyone associated with its operation. Under Federal EEOC Regulations, Voluntary Action Center is responsible for ensuring a harassment free workplace. Harassment by patrons or clients is not acceptable. For harassment from patrons or clients please notify your volunteer supervisor. If you feel you are a victim of harassment from another volunteer, staff member, or your supervisor please contact the Executive Director.

Confidentiality

The privacy of our clients, donors, patrons, and volunteers is of the utmost importance to the Voluntary Action Center. Volunteer applications and information are kept completely confidential. All office volunteers must pass a background check and interview. Information about client's or donor's needs, concerns, personal problems, financial status, or actions are not to be discussed with anyone other than appropriate staff members. Volunteers are not to provide case management for clients. Anyone seeking assistance should be referred to the office for help with their needs.

Volunteers should not share personal information with clients or others visiting the Voluntary Action Center campus. Volunteers should not discuss information about clients when speaking with individuals outside the organization. Information about the Voluntary Action Center's business operations, donations, financials, documents, clients, donors, patrons, or staff may not be shared without written permission from the Executive Director.

Should you feel that confidentiality has been compromised please report any concerns to the Executive Director.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Voluntary Action Center does not discriminate against any individual or group on the grounds of race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, or financial status. Paid staff and volunteers are expected to treat others with respect and dignity.

Voluntary Action Center Representation

Volunteers are not authorized to speak on behalf of the organization unless given written consent by the Executive Director. Volunteers should not provide statements to the press, speak to clients on behalf of the organization, should not sign contracts, speak with vendors on behalf of the organization, or assume financial obligations.

Donations

Volunteers acting in an official capacity shall not benefit financially from their service with the Voluntary Action Center. Volunteers will not ask for or receive donations of cash or non-cash items for themselves, family members, household members, or anyone while working as a Voluntary Action Center Volunteer or serving on Voluntary Action Center premises. Any donations received on Voluntary Action Center premises are property of the Voluntary Action Center.

Volunteers will not give cash or non-cash items to clients under any circumstance. Clients requesting cash or other non-cash items should be referred to the office and reported to their immediate supervisor.



Alcohol and Drug Use

Volunteers will be dismissed immediately for consumption or intoxication from drugs or alcohol on Voluntary Action Center premises. Volunteers may not bring alcohol or drugs onto Voluntary Action Center property. Volunteers are also prohibited from selling or purchasing alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes on Voluntary Action Center property.

Smoking

Is not permitted on Voluntary Action Center property.

Weapons

All weapons are prohibited on Voluntary Action Center premises. Prohibited weapons include firearms, explosive devices, and knives. Volunteers with a concealed carry license must have authorization from the Executive Director to carry on Voluntary Action Center premises. A log of authorized individuals will be maintained by the Executive Director.

References

We are happy to provide verbal and written references to volunteers upon request. To obtain a reference or statement of hours worked volunteers must utilize our electronic volunteer hour tracking system. Requests for written reference letters and total hours worked should be made in advance and may not be immediately available on request.

Dismissal

Before a volunteer is dismissed a meeting will be held with the volunteer and either the volunteer supervisor or Executive Director, to reach a resolution. Dismissal of a volunteer may take place if the volunteer is unreliable, irresponsible, disruptive, acting inappropriately, or failing to adhere to the policies outlined in the Voluntary Action Center Volunteer Handbook.

Additional Policies and Procedures

There may be additional policies and procedures for specific programs not contained in this handbook. Volunteer supervisors will provide specific information as needed.



Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement

I have received a copy of the Voluntary Action Center Volunteer Handbook. I have been given an orientation and opportunity to read this handbook and ask questions to ensure understanding of the information contained in this handbook. I understand that I must comply with the policies as outlined in this Volunteer Handbook and that failure to comply with these policies may result in my dismissal from volunteer services with the Voluntary Action Center.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parents/Guardian must acknowledge agreement to ensure any minor under the age of eighteen (18) remains in compliance with the policies as outlined in this Volunteer Handbook.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____



Community Kitchen

Volunteer Goals

Our goal is for volunteers to enjoy their time volunteering in the Community Kitchen. We encourage volunteers to be friendly and welcoming to clients who eat in the kitchen. We do discourage sharing personal information with clients. The vision is for our clients to receive not only a hot meal but to feel welcome and cared about during their mealtime.

Necessary Skills and Abilities:

- Ability to stand for long periods of time while serving food (more than one hour)
- Ability to lift and move a minimum of ten pounds
- Ability to work well with others
- Ability to work and take direction in a fast-paced environment
- Ability to interact well with others

Conditions of Community Kitchen Volunteers:

- Food Preparation Area volunteers must be 16 years of age.
- Dining Area volunteers may volunteer between the ages of 6-15 with an accompanying parent/guardian or individual appointed by the parent/guardian.
- If you are sick, please stay at home and provide notice in advance.
- If you cannot make your scheduled shift, please provide 24 hours' notice.
- Volunteers are expected to maintain a clean and well-groomed appearance.

Dress Code: *Health Code Requirements*

- CLOSED TOE SHOES REQUIRED
- Shoulders must be fully covered
- Hair should be well groomed and long hair should be pulled back

Work Opportunities: All volunteers are scheduled in advance by the Kitchen Supervisor.

- Meal Preparation 8:30AM-11:00AM
- Meal Service 11:00AM-12:30PM
- Meal Clean-Up 12:30PM-1:30PM

Kitchen Supervisor: Lisa Smith, Kitchen Manager



General Kitchen Tasks and Rules:

- Be Sure to Keep the Line Moving
- Adhere to Food Safety Basics as posted in the Community Kitchen.
- Assist in completing the Daily Community Kitchen Checklist for your assigned time.
- All individuals eating in the Kitchen must present their ID Card for scanning or sign-in to receive a meal. This includes volunteers, employees, and clients.
- Serving Sizes: The Kitchen Manager will show you the appropriate portion size to serve. It is important to serve each client with the same portion size.
- Replenishment: You should notify the Kitchen Manager or other designated individual before food or drink containers are emptied.
- Second Helpings: Each individual is only provided one plate and one helping. This ensures all individuals wishing to eat have adequate food. If the Kitchen Manager has an excess of food remaining notification will be given to provide second helpings at the end of the meal period.
- Individuals must be present to receive a meal. The Community Kitchen does not provide TOGO plates. There are several entities which partner with the VAC's Community Kitchen to receive TOGO plates. These groups have prior authorization from the Executive Director.
- All food must be consumed inside the dining area. This prevents food waste and trash from being strewn outside trash cans.
- Cleanliness: Volunteers are expected to keep their workstation as clean as possible. If food spills or falls out of the pan it must be thrown away. Food is never to be placed back into the pan or serving platter.
- Workstations: Each workstation has specific responsibilities to accomplish. Volunteers are expected to complete the assigned tasks for their station assignment.
- Work Expectation: All volunteers are expected to help complete any and all tasks required to ensure meals are prepared and served within the meal service timeframe. All volunteers are also expected to help complete cleaning tasks and clean-up tasks required to close the kitchen at the end of each meal service.
- Comfort Level: If you are not comfortable with the task you've been given please let the Kitchen Manager know. The manager will reassign you to a task more suited to your comfort level.



Food Pantry Volunteers

Volunteer Goals

Food Pantry volunteers will primarily assist with ensuring food items are organized and placed on appropriate storage shelves. Volunteers may interact with clients to provide food distribution.

Necessary Skills and Abilities:

- Ability to stand for long periods of time (more than one hour)
- Ability to lift food items weighing up to twenty (20) pounds
- Good Organizational Skills
- Ability to work well with others
- Ability to follow directions
- Ability to interact well with others

Conditions of Food Pantry Volunteers:

- Volunteers must be 14 to volunteer in the food pantry without an accompanying adult.
- If you are sick, please stay at home.
- Volunteers are expected to maintain a clean and well-groomed appearance.

Work Opportunities:

- Monday-Friday from 9:00AM-2:00PM



General Food Pantry Tasks and Rules:

- Wash hands frequently when handling fresh or perishable food items.
- Clean up any food drops or spills to maintain a sanitary food storage area.
- Prepared bags should not weigh more than fifteen (15) to twenty (20) pounds to ensure client's ability to lift and carry to their car.
- One bag is provided to each household, no exception.
- If clients need assistance you may carry their food items to their automobile.
- Wipe cans and strike bar codes before placing food items on shelves.
- Keep fresh and perishable foods stored in the appropriate container in the refrigerator until time to distribute.
- Keep frozen foods stored in the freezer until time to distribute.
- Utilize one paper bag per family for food distribution. Can also use cardboard boxes for larger items.
- Do not allow clients to take carts from the facilities. This damages the door and carts. Carts are for inside use only.
- Floors should be swept at the end of the day.
- Trash should be emptied at the end of the day and new bags placed in cans.



Donation Area Volunteers

Volunteer Goals

Donation area volunteers will assist in processing donations for sale in the thrift store. This includes sorting donations by type, hanging clothes, processing donations for recycling, processing donations for waste removal, and moving donations from the donation area to the thrift store.

Necessary Skills and Abilities:

- Ability to stand for long periods of time (more than one hour).
- Ability to lift heavy items weighing up to forty (40) pounds.
- Ability to carry heavy items up one flight of stairs.
- Ability to work well with others.
- Ability to work and take direction in a fast-paced environment.
- Ability to interact well with others.

Conditions of Donation Area Volunteers:

- Volunteers must be 15 to volunteer in the donation area, no exceptions.
- If you are sick, please stay at home and provide notice in advance.
- Volunteers are expected to maintain a clean and well-groomed appearance.

Dress-Code:

- You will get dirty so wear old clothing that is comfortable but appropriate.
- Shorts may be worn but should not be too revealing.
- Sleeveless shirts may be worn but must reach shoulders.

Work Opportunities:

- Monday-Friday 9:00AM-2:00PM
- No schedule required. You may volunteer any Monday-Friday from 9:00AM-2:00PM.



General Donation Area Tasks and Rules:

- Make sure donated items are not blocking the exterior door or walkways leading from the exterior door. Any donated items blocking walkways or doors should be moved to tables located in the donation area.
- Non-Clothing items which are not broken or damaged should be placed in red tubs. Broken and damaged non-clothing items should be thrown away. Items should be in good condition to be sent to the thrift store. Some items which are old and worn may be recycled. Ask for direction from your supervisor regarding recycling.
- Children's items and toys should be thoroughly inspected to ensure they are fully functioning without damage, breaks or tears. Car seats and booster seats should have the expiration date inspected. Expired car seats and booster seats should be thrown away. Toys with small parts which create a choking hazard should be thrown away. Any damaged or broken items should be thrown away. Ask for direction from your supervisor regarding recycling of children's items and toys.
- Clothing accessories such as purses, bags, belts, scarves, and shoes should be inspected for condition. Items in good condition should be placed in red tubs. Items which are stained or damaged should be thrown away. Items in ok condition can be recycled. Seek direction from your supervisor regarding recycling requirements.
- Shoes should be sorted by season. Current season shoes go to the thrift store. Off season shoes are stored in the basement in tubs.
- Make sure red tubs are not filled so full that they are too heavy to carry.
- Clothing items should be inspected for smells, wear, stains, and tears. Clothing items in good condition without stains and tears should be placed on the wooden tables for hanging. Clothing items which smell, have stains and tears should be thrown away. Clothing which is older and worn should be placed in a black trash bag for recycling.
- Clothing items should be placed on appropriate hangers based on size and clothing type. Current season clothing should be taken to the thrift store. Off season clothing should be placed in the designated area in the basement.
- Hangers should be kept neat and hung on hanger racks.
- Once all donations are processed the floors should be swept.
- You may not have or take any items which are donated, even if these items are being thrown away.
- You may purchase items once they have been priced and placed in the thrift store for two (2) full business days.



Thrift Store Volunteers

Volunteer Goals

Thrift Store volunteers will assist Thrift Store Associates with merchandise placement, pricing, cleaning, and other items as needed. Because volunteers in our Thrift Store also represent our organization to shoppers these volunteers are screened prior to volunteering.

Necessary Skills and Abilities:

- Ability to stand for long periods of time while (more than one hour).
- Ability to work well with others.
- Ability to work and take direction in a fast-paced environment.
- Ability to interact well with others.

Conditions of Community Kitchen Volunteers:

- Volunteers must be at least 13 to work in the thrift store and may work unaccompanied.
- If you are sick, please stay at home and provide notice in advance.
- Volunteers are expected to maintain a clean and well-groomed appearance.

Dress Code:

- Hair should be well groomed
- Shorts may be worn but should not be too revealing.
- Tank tops are not allowed in the thrift store. Shoulders must be fully covered.
- T-Shirts may be worn but cannot contain inappropriate words or pictures.

Work Opportunities:

- Monday-Friday from 9:00AM-5:00PM
- Volunteer spaces are limited but under most circumstances you may volunteer almost any Monday-Friday from 9:00AM-5:00PM. It's best to inquire in advance.



General Thrift Store Tasks and Rules:

- When working in the store greet shoppers and SMILE.
- If you need to work around a shopper make sure to say excuse me, please.
- All clothing should be placed in the appropriate location according to size. Clothing racks should be checked to ensure all clothing is in the correct location.
- Shoes should be placed on shoe racks with both shoes together. Shoe racks should be checked a couple of times each day to place matching shoes together and ensure no shoes are strewn across the floor.
- All non-clothing items should be placed in appropriate location in a neat fashion.
- All tables, shelves and racks should be dusted.
- Books, music, and movies should be placed neatly on bookshelves.
- Empty hangers should be removed from racks and placed in tubs under the register.
- Walkways should be kept free from obstacles and trip hazards.
- Any small items or choke hazards found in the store or on floors should be thrown away.
- Any items without price tags should be returned to the thrift store associate for pricing.
- You may not have or take any items which are donated, even if these items are being thrown away.
- You may purchase items once they have been priced and placed in the thrift store for two (2) full business days.



VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

**Voluntary Action Center
VOLUNTEER RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY FORM**

Name: _____
(First) (Last)

Birthdate: _____
(Month/Day/Year)

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Emergency Contact: _____
(Name) (Telephone)

Insurance Provider Name: _____

Physician Name/Telephone: _____

Employer/School: _____

This **RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY** (the "Release") executed on the ____ day of _____, 20____ by _____ ("Volunteer") releases the **Voluntary Action Center**, a nonprofit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Georgia and each of its directors, officers, employees, and agents. The Volunteer desires to provide volunteer services for Nonprofit and engage in activities related to serving as a volunteer.

Volunteer understands that the scope of Volunteer's relationship with Nonprofit is limited to a volunteer position and that no compensation is expected in return for services provided by Volunteer; that Nonprofit will not provide any benefits traditionally associated with employment to Volunteer and that Volunteer is responsible for his/her own insurance coverage in the event of personal injury or illness as a result of Volunteer's services to Nonprofit.

1. **Waiver and Release:** I, the Volunteer, release and forever discharge and hold harmless Nonprofit and its successors and assigns from any and all liability, claims, and demands of whatever kind or nature, either in law or in equity, which arise or may hereafter arise from the services I provide to Nonprofit. I understand and acknowledge that this Release discharges nonprofit from any liability or claim that I may have against Nonprofit with respect to bodily injury, personal injury, "including but not limited to damage to reputation", illness, death, or property damage that may result from the services I provide to Nonprofit or occurring while I am providing volunteer services.
2. **Insurance:** Further, I understand that Nonprofit does not assume any responsibility for or obligation to provide me with financial or other assistance, including but not limited to medical, health or disability benefits or insurance of any nature in the event of my injury, illness, death or damage to my property. I expressly waive any such claim for compensation or liability on the part of Nonprofit beyond what may be offered freely by Nonprofit in the event of such injury of medical expenses incurred by me.



**Voluntary Action Center
VOLUNTEER RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY FORM**

3. Medical Treatment: I hereby Release and forever discharge Nonprofit from any claim whatsoever which arises or may hereafter arise on account of any first-aid treatment or other medical services rendered in connection with an emergency during my tenure as a volunteer with Nonprofit.
4. Assumption of Risk: I understand that the services I provide to Nonprofit may include activities that may be hazardous to me. As a volunteer, I hereby expressly assume the risk of injury or harm from these activities and Release Nonprofit from all liability for injury, illness, death or property damage resulting from the services I provide as a volunteer or occurring while I am providing volunteer services.
5. Photographic Release: I grant and convey to Nonprofit all right, title, and interests in any and all photographs, images, video, or audio recordings of me or my likeness or voice made by Nonprofit in connection with my providing volunteer services to Nonprofit.
6. Other: As a volunteer, I expressly agree that this Release is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the laws of the State of Georgia and that this Release shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia. I agree that in the event that any clause or provision of this Release shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia. I agree that in the event that any clause or provision of this Release is deemed invalid, the enforceability of the remaining provisions of this Release shall not be affected.

By signing below, I express my understanding and intent to enter into this Release and Waiver of Liability willingly and voluntarily.

- I am 18 years of age or older.
- I am under 18 years of age. *If Volunteer is under the age of 18, a parent / legal guardian must sign below.*

Volunteer Signature

(Month/Day/Year)

Children under the age of thirteen (13) may only volunteer if a parent or legal guardian is also volunteering. Children between the ages of thirteen (13) and fifteen (15) may volunteer without a parent or legal guardian, but must be signed in and out, by their parent or legal guardian.

I, _____ hereby agree and consent to the foregoing terms and sign this release on behalf of my child/ward, _____.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

(Month/Day/Year)