

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc.
Choices for a life-long journey

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for your willingness to share your time and talent with Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc (ESMV). Our mission is to help older adults and adults with disabilities remain independent and living in their homes for as long as possible. Without our volunteers we would not be able to do this.

This handbook is designed to help you become acquainted with our rules, regulations, policies and procedures that relate to your volunteer service. We expect you to use it as a guide in your day-to-day duties, always striving to meet ESMV's values in everything that you do.

The commitment that you are making to our Agency is invaluable and I am thrilled that you are joining our team! Once again thank you for becoming an ESMV volunteer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan Hatem-Roy".

Joan Hatem-Roy
Executive Director

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This version of the Volunteer Handbook has been designed to supersede (replace) all prior volunteer handbooks, policies, practices, and any verbal or written policy statements that are inconsistent with what is in this Volunteer Handbook.

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Volunteer Handbook

The policies and procedures contained in this Volunteer Handbook or any other ESMV policy are guidelines only. They do not represent a volunteering contract, so volunteers should not treat them as such. This Handbook is not intended to be a contract of volunteering and does not constitute one. Volunteers of ESMV are considered to be volunteering on an "at-will" basis. Just as a volunteer has the right to terminate their volunteer service at any time without advance notice to ESMV, the Agency also reserves the right to terminate a volunteer at-will, at any time, with or without advanced notice to the volunteer.

Please read through this Volunteer Handbook and retain it for future reference. If you have any questions regarding this you can ask the Volunteer Programs Staff (VPS).

Beginning Volunteer Service

All individuals interested in participating in any of our Volunteer Programs (VP) must:

- Complete a Volunteer Application;
- Provide two (2) references;
- Participate in an interview and meet with appropriate VPS;
- Have a CORI conducted (more information provided in CORI section below); and
- Complete the Volunteer Orientation Training.

Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI)

ESMV is required under state law M.G.L. C.6, S172 to conduct CORI checks on all volunteers who may have direct contact with elders, handicapped persons and/or their records. This information is obtained from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety, Criminal History Board, and will be considered, along with other qualifications in making decisions related to volunteer service. The law requires that CORI checks be completed before the first day that an individual begins volunteering. Individuals will need to provide the VPS with the following information: name (former, present, alias), birth date, and a government issued photographic identification. The agency does not require the signature of the applicant to process the CORI.

Volunteer Training

Each of the VP has their own specific trainings that volunteers are required to complete before they can begin their volunteer service. Each of the VP also has their own specific ongoing trainings that volunteers are required to complete in order to maintain their volunteer position within the Agency.

II. EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

Boundaries

In many of our Programs, volunteers are encouraged to develop positive, healthy relationships with consumers, representatives from organizations, and other members of the community. However, it is very important that volunteers understand what boundaries are and why it is important to set boundaries around volunteer positions and relationships. If a volunteer ever encounters an issue related to relationships and/or boundaries, he/she must contact the Manager/Director for their VP immediately to report the situation.

Ethics

All volunteers are expected to adhere to the following ethical principles:

- Respect for the privacy and confidentiality of ESMV's consumers;
- Acceptance that the primary obligation of volunteer service is the welfare of ESMV's consumers;
- Acknowledgment of the priority of professional responsibility over personal interests;
- Acceptance of responsibility for the quality and extent of the service(s) performed;
- Recognition of a clear distinction, in public, between statements and actions as an individual and as a representative of ESMV;
- Agreement to practice non-discrimination in the delivery of services to all persons involved with and served by the corporation with respect to age, race, sex, color, religion, national origin, disability, veteran's status, and/or sexual preference; and
- Recognition of the impropriety in accepting cash, gifts, services from consumers and/or providers.

Standards of Conduct

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner that respects individuals and complies with the ethics outlined above. These standards have been established to protect volunteers and others from injury and to promote harmonious, efficient, and professional practices. When performance, attitude or behavior becomes problematic, the agency's goal is to assist the volunteer in correcting the problem. If a volunteer acts in a manner that is determined to be unprofessional, he/she may be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension and/or termination. These issues will be discussed with the volunteer and he/she will be expected to assume the responsibility for correcting the problem.

Cultural Awareness

Fundamental differences among people arise from nationality, ethnicity, culture, family background and individual experiences. These differences can affect people's beliefs, practices, and behaviors as well as expectations of others. At ESMV, we provide services to a diverse population of consumers so our expectation is that volunteers will always be sensitive and respectful to any cultural differences they may encounter while volunteering. If volunteers would like more information on understanding and working with different cultures, please visit the esmv.org website where helpful tools can be accessed, or contact the Volunteer Programs Staff.

Incidents

If volunteers encounter certain types of incidents (Medical Emergencies, Non-Medical Emergencies, Injuries, and/or Threats and Violence) during their volunteer service they must follow this Standard Procedure:

1. Contact the Manager/Director for their VP to make them aware of the incident. If they cannot be reached call the VPS. If they cannot be reached call Age Info and ask for the Consumers' Care Manager.
2. Complete and submit a Volunteer Programs Incident Report to the Manager/Director for their VP within 48 hours after the incident has occurred.
3. The Nutrition Program Volunteers have additional program procedures to follow. Please See the Nutrition Program Staff for more details.

Listed below are additional steps that volunteers need to follow for each specific type of incident (Medical Emergencies, Non-Medical Emergencies, Injuries, and/or Threats and Violence):

- **Medical Emergencies-** If a volunteer encounters a medical emergency that concerns a consumer or themselves they must:
 1. Call 911 immediately to get medical help;
 2. Once help has arrived and/or the volunteer is able to follow the Standard Procedure.

Example of a Medical Emergency with a Consumer: Volunteer Jane goes to visit her consumer Susan and finds that Susan fell trying to get out of the shower and she cannot get up.

Example of a Medical Emergency with a Volunteer: Volunteer Sheila has delivered a meal to her consumer Robert and as she walks out of his house she slips on a patch of ice, which causes her to fall and get a deep cut on her head requiring medical attention.

- **Non-Medical Emergencies-** If a volunteer encounters a non-medical emergency that concerns a consumer or themselves they should:
 1. Assess the situation to determine whether 911 is needed, and if it is call to get help. Once help has arrived and/or the volunteer is able to follow the Standard Procedure.

If 911 is not needed they should call the Manager/Director for their Program.

Example of Non-Medical Emergency with a Consumer: Volunteer Michael goes to his weekly appointment with his consumer John on Wednesdays at 3 p.m. but John does not answer his door or his phone.

Example of a Non-Medical Emergency with a Volunteer: Volunteer Pati is driving to a health fair and gets into a minor accident causing some damage to her car.

- **Injuries -** If a volunteer or a consumer is injured but it is not an emergency the volunteer should:
 1. Consider seeking medical attention; and
 2. Follow the Standard Procedure.
- **Threats and Violence -** If a volunteer witnesses or receives any threats or violence, or a consumer shares with a volunteer that they have witnessed or received any threats or violence the volunteer should:

1. Call the Manager/Director for their VP.

Precautionary Infection Control

Proper ongoing infection control measures should always be taken by volunteers wherever they are completing their volunteer duties. There are many preventative measures that can be taken to eliminate germs (i.e. bacteria, viruses) and minimize the spread of infection. The most important measure is for volunteers to maintain a high standard of personal hygiene. A simple task such as thorough hand-washing can be an essential part of cleanliness and will maximize infection control. Please visit the esmv.com website where helpful tools can be accessed, or contact the Volunteer Program Staff.

Evacuation

If volunteer duties are performed in-house at ESMV these evacuation procedures must be followed:

- When the fire alarm sounds, quickly and calmly proceed to the designated exits;
- DO NOT take the elevator;
- DO NOT wait to be told to leave the building;
- Every second counts – DO NOT return to retrieve personal belongings; and
- Go to the reserved parking area at the back entrance of Building 280 and check in with the VPS.

Driving

Some of our VP's ask volunteers to use their own personal vehicles to drive during their volunteer service. In these instances, the safety of the volunteer is always our utmost concern. The VPS will ensure that volunteers are comfortable with any driving arrangements before they occur. If there are concerns with a volunteer's ability to drive, this will be addressed with the individual at the discretion of the Manager/Director for their VP and/or the VPS.

All volunteers who will use their personal vehicles to conduct volunteer duties must have a valid driver's license. Drivers must have three (3) years of driving experience. If there is any question

about a volunteer's driving record, the Agency can request that the volunteer provide a history of their driving record.

Insurance Coverage

ESMV includes General Liability Insurance for volunteers in the event that they are brought into a lawsuit while volunteering within the scope of their volunteer duties. All volunteers that use their own vehicles during volunteer service must maintain adequate insurance coverage. If volunteers have questions about what adequate insurance coverage means they should ask the VPS. All matters related to volunteers and insurance coverage are outlined in more detail in the Volunteer Insurance Coverage Fact Sheet. Volunteers will receive this document and need to sign the Volunteer Insurance Coverage Fact Sheet Acknowledgement Form.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

The HIPAA is a federal law. Part of the law sets standards to protect the privacy of your Personal Health Information (PHI). It also addresses the security protocols for information and how electronic PHI is transmitted. Any volunteers who work with consumers and have access to their PHI, or who work with consumer records or health insurance information have confidentiality obligations. Other items that will fall under HIPAA and PHI are: medicine bottles, medical bills, discharge papers and similar medical related information. This information should not be shared with anyone outside the clients' medical professionals, Case Managers, and the consumer's immediate family with the consumer's permission. All matters related to volunteers and HIPAA are outlined in more detail in the Volunteer HIPAA Fact Sheet. Volunteers will receive this document and will need to sign the Volunteer HIPAA Fact Sheet Acknowledgement Form.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs when a volunteer uses his/her volunteer service for financial or personal gain. In addition, involvement in organizations, associations or causes outside of the Agency that are not in keeping with the ethics and goals of ESVM may be construed as a conflict of interest.

Volunteers are expected to report any potential conflict of interest to the VPS at the time he/she begins volunteering with the Agency, and as they occur during the course of volunteering. If questions arise regarding potential conflict during volunteer service, they must be brought to the attention of the VPS as soon as possible to determine if such a conflict might occur.

Consumer Funds

Volunteers may not handle cash, checks or other valuables for consumers, unless cash handling is a specific task associated with their volunteer responsibilities. Any payments due to ESMV must be made directly to the Agency. Where appropriate, consumers can be referred to ESMV's Financial Resources Program for assistance with their finances. Under unusual circumstances, it may be in the best interest of the consumer for the volunteer to temporarily handle items of value when visiting, shopping for, or transporting a consumer.

Donations

Volunteers are not allowed to receive or accept donations (money, gift, etc.) from consumers. If consumers express to volunteers that they want to show their appreciation for the services they have received, volunteers can suggest to consumers that they make a donation to the VP.

Solicitation and Distribution

Solicitation and distribution by volunteers is prohibited at ESMV. Solicitation for charitable or commercial purposes (including fundraising, sale of cookies, candles, baskets, cosmetics, etc.) is prohibited at all times without prior approval from the Director of Human Resources. Even if permission is granted, such activities should only be conducted during non-volunteer service hours.

Political Activities

Campaigning for oneself or others in a bid for public office during volunteer service is not allowed. Political activities (with the exception of advocacy as outlined next) in support of an issue or referendum during volunteer service hours are not allowed. Political activities may include but are not limited to picketing and distribution of literature.

Advocacy

The mission of ESMV is consistent with advocacy on those issues that are in the best interests of ESMV's consumers. Volunteers who are designated to advocate on behalf of our consumers may conduct related activities with the approval of the VPS.

Equal Employment Opportunity

ESMV provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all volunteers, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, genetics, age, disability, pregnancy, status as a Vietnam-era or special disabled veteran, sexual preference (GLBTQ), or other legally protected status, in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. In addition, pursuant to Chapter 58 of the Massachusetts Acts of 2006 (An Act Providing Access to Affordable, Quality, Accountable Health Care), ESMV will not discriminate against a volunteer on the basis of: (1) the volunteer's receipt of free health care from the state; (2) the volunteer's reporting or disclosure of an employer's identity and other information about the employer; (3) the volunteer's completion of a Health Insurance Responsibility Disclosure form; or (4) any facts or circumstances relating to "free rider" surcharges assessed against the employer in relation to the volunteer. ESMV complies with applicable state and local laws governing non-discrimination in employment. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of volunteering including, but not limited to, recruitment, hiring, placement, leaves of absence, and training.

Affirmative Action

To further the principle of equal employment opportunity for all, ESMV has developed an Affirmative Action (AA) plan for minorities, women, the Vietnam-era and special disabled veterans. ESMV recognizes that when the effects of employment practices, regardless of their intent, discriminate against people in protected classes, specific affirmative action must be taken to ensure equal opportunity and to provide equitable remedies for the consequences of present and past discriminatory practices. A full copy of the Affirmative Action Policy is posted on the Human Resources Board and is available in the Human Resources Office.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

As an equal opportunity employer, ESMV will not tolerate any form of harassment or discrimination on the basis of physical or mental disability. Any concerns regarding harassment or discrimination on the basis of disability must be reported to the VPS.

ESMV will not tolerate retaliation against any volunteer for reporting concerns under this procedure, or for participating in good faith in investigations of harassment or discrimination.

The Agency provides equal volunteering opportunities to otherwise qualified individuals with physical or mental disabilities, and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. We will make reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities and qualified volunteers to ensure equal opportunity in the application process, to enable volunteers to perform essential volunteer duties, and to enable volunteers with disabilities to enjoy the same benefits and privileges of volunteering that are enjoyed by other volunteers. In accordance with the law, we reserve the right to decline to provide an accommodation: if the individual does not qualify for accommodation under the ADA, if the accommodation would cause an undue hardship to the Agency or its volunteers, or if the volunteer would cause a direct threat to his/her own health or safety or the health or safety of others, even with the benefit of reasonable accommodation. If a volunteer requires an accommodation, please discuss this request with the VPS.

Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc. is committed to providing an environment for volunteers that is free from discrimination and harassment. Unwelcome actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, national origin, color, ancestry, sexual preference (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender), age, religion, genetic information, disability, pregnancy, veteran status, or other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. If a volunteer ever feels that they have been discriminated against or harassed they should notify the VPS immediately.

Drugs and Alcohol

ESMV strictly prohibits the use of alcohol and the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of an illegal drug, or legal drug used for illegal purposes while conducting volunteer duties. This includes when volunteering on ESMV premises and when volunteering off ESMV premises.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Demeanor and Personal Appearance

A professional work environment serves the best interests of our consumers. Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Respect for consumers, members of the community, supervisors, and colleagues, is required. The Agency standard for appearance is that volunteers dress in a professional manner: neat, clean and well-groomed. Casual dress is appropriate. Provocative or suggestive clothing is considered unprofessional. ESMV will try to reasonably accommodate a volunteer's special dress or grooming needs that are the result of religion, ethnicity, race, or disability. Please be aware, and dress for potential shifts in temperature inside the building.

Identification Badges

All ESMV volunteers are required to wear picture identification badges while they are participating in any type of volunteer activity. These badges prove identity as a member of the ESMV team to our consumers and the community. The VPS will arrange a time for volunteers to get their pictures taken and identification badges will be provided to volunteers when they are ready. If a volunteer ends service with the agency they must turn in their ID badge to VPS.

Time Sheets

All volunteers must keep track of the time that they participate in any type of volunteer service. Each of the Volunteer Programs have their own reporting requirements which volunteers will be informed of when they complete the specific training for the Volunteer Program they will be participating in.

Mileage Reimbursement

Each of the Volunteer Programs has their own mileage reimbursement forms, as well as time frames for completion and submission. Volunteers will be informed of this when they complete the specific training for the Volunteer Program they will be participating in. Reporting mileage on a monthly basis is required of all volunteers, even if volunteers are not requesting reimbursement. The current rate for mileage reimbursement is .50 per mile. Volunteers who deliver Home Delivered Meals do not receive mileage reimbursement. Instead, a daily stipend is paid based on the requirements of each route. If you are a Nutrition Program Volunteer, please see the Nutrition Program Staff for more details on reimbursement.

Information Technology

The internet usage that volunteers are given access to while volunteering in house at ESMV is to complete duties associated with their volunteer position and it is not intended for personal use. If volunteers use the internet in a way that violates this policy and/or the law they will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of their volunteer service. Depending on the severity of the violation of this policy volunteers may also be held personally liable.

When using the internet at ESMV volunteers may NOT:

- Create or exchange messages that are offensive, harassing, obscene or threatening;
- Visit websites containing objectionable (including pornographic) or criminal material;
- Exchange proprietary information, trade secrets, or any other confidential or sensitive information about the company (unless in the authorized course of their duties);
- Create, store or exchange information in violation of copyright laws (including the uploading or downloading of commercial software, games, music videos or movies);
- Use Internet enabled activities such as gambling, excessive gaming, conducting a business or conducting illegal activities;
- Create or exchange advertisements, solicitations, chain letters and other unsolicited or bulk email; and
- Download or use their personal software.

Holidays

The Agency recognizes the holidays listed below annually. On these days the office is closed so any type of volunteer activity is prohibited.

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Patriots' Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans' Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

Inclement Weather and Virtual Office Days

ESMV has a responsibility to keep the office open during inclement weather to provide information and services to consumers. Employees are generally expected to report to ESMV during inclement weather, but volunteers are not expected to do so. In the case that the office is closed or operating as a virtual office due to the weather, most volunteers are not allowed to conduct any type of services that involve leaving their home and/or driving. If volunteers have things that they can work on from home this is allowed. Volunteers will be informed of virtual office days as soon as possible and if any questions arise, volunteers are expected to communicate with the VPS. For updates, volunteers can utilize our website and/or our Age Info Dept. Please note, if you are a Nutrition Program Volunteer, you will be provide a separate Inclement Weather Policy.

Volunteer Records

ESMV maintains records on each volunteer. These files contain documentation regarding all aspects of the volunteer's tenure with the Agency. You may inspect your own file during regular office hours, upon written request to the VPS. You may read your file, but you may not remove any portion of the file. Upon request, you will be provided with a copy of all or part of your file. It is important that the information in your file be accurate. Please notify the VPS whenever any of the following changes:

- Your name;
- Your mailing address/personal email address;
- Your home and/or cell phone number;
- Your emergency contacts information; and/or
- Restrictions on your driver's license.

Taking a Leave of Absence

The Agency understands that sometimes volunteers need to take a leave of absence from their volunteer service, but we ask that volunteers give the Volunteer Programs Staff as much notice of this as possible. Each of the Volunteer Programs within ESMV has their own regulations regarding the length of time that volunteers can take a leave of absence, and what the process is if volunteers wish to return to their volunteer service after taking a leave of absence.

Resigning

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with ESMV at any time. We request that volunteer's give the Volunteer Programs Staff at least two weeks' notice prior to their departure and that they complete an Exit Interview. Volunteers must turn in your Identification Badges and any other agency materials that they have in their possession before ending their volunteer service.

Participating in an Exit Interview

Regardless of a volunteer's reason for leaving, we encourage all volunteers to participate in an Exit Interview with the VPS. You may also request a letter of reference or referral at this time from the VPS.