

## **Welcome to Homeless Solutions, Inc.**

Dear Friend,

Welcome! Thank you so much for including HSI in your volunteer activities. Your generosity helps us provide our shelter and Transitional Housing Program guests with the highest quality service as they work to re-build their lives.

This handbook describes our organization and volunteer policies. We ask that you read it and discuss any questions you may have with our Volunteer Coordinator. At HSI, our goal is help our volunteers have the rewarding experience you so richly deserve in return for your gifts of time and talent.

The Board of Trustees, staff and guests of HSI thank you again for sharing your energy with us and our community's most needy. Your help makes all the difference!

Sincerely,

Tamala Reynolds  
Volunteer Manager

## Volunteer Policies

**Security-** Homeless Solutions, Inc. is a secure facility. Staff is required to wear ID tags and guests and volunteers are required to sign in and out. The staff is responsible for letting people into the building. Under no circumstances should a volunteer open the door to anyone. When returning from an outside activity, always re-enter the building through the front door.

**Confidentiality and Privacy-** The protection of confidential information about the individuals we serve, as well as our staff, is vital to the interests and the success of HSI.

The essence of Homeless Solutions' relationship with our guests is the assurance that all the information we obtain during their stay will be kept in complete confidence. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that you take all possible precautions to avoid any violations of the confidentiality or any appearance that such confidentiality has been violated.

Volunteers are expected, to the best of their ability, to ensure confidentiality and privacy in regard to history, records and discussions about the people we serve. The very fact that an individual is served by this agency must be kept confidential. The principle of confidentiality must be maintained in all programs, departments, functions and activities.

Guests' affairs should not be discussed in public places such as restaurants, planes, busses, trains, elevators, etc. where others may overhear the discussion.

Volunteers may learn sensitive information about guests, staff or co-volunteers. Such information must also be maintained in confidence. Staff/volunteers may only divulge confidential information with consent of the employees/volunteers involved, or on a limited basis when the employees/volunteers' supervisor or senior management has a need to know.

Volunteers may also be exposed to confidential information about the agency's business practices. Prospect lists, names and addresses of donors, and similar information related to fund raising is confidential as are other business records of the agency and should not be disclosed without explicit authorization from the Executive Director.

Volunteers who improperly use or disclose confidential information will be dismissed.

**Boundaries-** Please remember that your role as a volunteer is to provide a positive experience for our guests. Because everyone's situation is unique, volunteers are asked not to counsel the guests in anyway. Staff cannot discuss anything about a guest's situation with volunteers and we ask that you refrain from sharing any personal information about yourself with the guests. Volunteers are not permitted to enter the guests' living area or Transitional Housing apartments.

**Age Requirements-** While Homeless Solutions, Inc. encourages volunteerism; we must set an age limit of 9 years of age and above for anyone working in our kitchen. There are no age limits set for those working with the children unless it is a baby-sitting project; then volunteers must be at least 16 years of age.

**Dress Code-** Volunteers may not work at HSI wearing halters, half tops, mini-skirts, short-shorts, low-cut jeans or muscle shirts. Covered shoes must be worn at all times, **NO flip flops or sandals in the kitchen.**

**Fraternization-** Volunteers are not permitted to carry on any type of relationship with the guests other than a professional one. Please guard against singling out a guest for special attention. This includes touching or invading personal space.

**Policy Against Sexual Harassment-** It is Homeless Solutions, Inc.'s policy to prohibit harassment of any volunteer by any trustee, supervisor, employee, client or visitor on the basis of sex or gender. While it is not easy to define precisely what sexual harassment is, examples of prohibited behavior include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other conduct of a sexual nature, such as uninvited touching of a sexual nature or sexually-related comments, pictures or communications. Depending upon the circumstances, harassment can also include unwelcome joking, teasing or other conduct directed toward a person because of his or her gender that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create an unprofessional and hostile working environment.

All reports of harassment will be thoroughly and discreetly investigated by members of management who are not involved in the alleged harassment.

**Drug-Free Environment-** Volunteer involvement with drugs and alcohol use can adversely affect job performance and morale and jeopardize the safety of our guests, employees and other volunteers.

The use, consumption, sale, transportation, possession or distribution of alcohol or drugs, other than in accordance with a doctor's prescription, is prohibited in the workplace.

**No Smoking-** HSI is a "smoke-free" facility. All guests, staff and volunteers must smoke outside in designated areas only. Smoking on the front steps is not permitted.

**Cancellations-** HSI is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, regardless of the weather, holidays, etc. Volunteers are asked to please honor their time slot or find someone to fill it, as guests and staff are depending on them. If an emergency arises or if the weather does not permit, volunteers are asked to contact the shelter and inform staff that they will be late or absent. Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator with any advance cancellations.

**Parking-** This facility provides plenty of parking in both the front and back of the building. Please note that you must enter the building through the front door.

**Safety and Liability-** There shall be no horseplay in the kitchen or any of the common areas of HSI. There shall be no children under the age of 9 years in the kitchen at any time. Unless certified in First Aid, volunteers shall not perform any type of first aid while at HSI. Volunteers shall not attempt to handle or discipline an unruly child. Please seek staff assistance if a problem arises. In case of a fire alarm or emergency, please follow designated signs. Volunteers are never to enter the bathroom with children; seek staff assistance if child needs help.

**Training-** HSI requires volunteers working with children to complete a mandatory training prior to their participation. Training will be provided as needed for non-child related activities.

## **Volunteer Code of Conduct**

- **“I will not discriminate against or refuse volunteer services to anyone on the basis of race, color, creed, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, national origin, military status or marital status.**
- **I will not use my volunteer relationship to further my own interests.**
- **I will evidence a genuine interest in all persons served, and do hereby dedicate myself to their best interests, helping them help themselves.**
- **I will respect the privacy of persons served and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of volunteer service, including keeping in confidence any information I learn about clients.”**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Important Disclaimer**

This policy handbook is intended to provide information regarding policies and practices of Homeless Solutions, Inc. as they relate to volunteers. This handbook is provided as a reference only.

Homeless Solutions, Inc. reserves the right to make changes at any time by adding to, deleting, or amending any existing policy. The descriptions of Homeless Solutions’ volunteer policies contained in this handbook are as comprehensive as we can make them at this time. However, the policies are not necessarily all-inclusive, because circumstances may arise which we have not anticipated. Consequently, the underlying policies are subject to change at the discretion of Homeless Solutions, Inc.

Volunteers will be asked to sign an acknowledgement form to acknowledge that they received the handbook.

If you have any question about the interpretation of the policies contained in this handbook, please see the Volunteer Manager.