



Volunteer Handbook

Welcome!

Welcome! We are delighted to have you as a volunteer with Valley Village. Volunteering is an exciting commitment, and you will gain as much as you give from the experience. We have developed this volunteer handbook to provide you with information, resources, and helpful hints as you begin your journey as a volunteer. You will find important information about Valley Village's policies, procedures, and volunteer expectations.

Your Development and Volunteer Coordinator is the person who will guide you through your journey as a volunteer. They will send out monthly newsletters, answer any questions or concerns you may have, and inform you of events. Your Development and Volunteer Coordinator loves to hear from you and success stories are always welcome!

As a volunteer at Valley Village, you are very important. Your contribution cannot be overstated. Our goal is to improve the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities by providing the finest quality services in the most effective and efficient manner. By satisfying our clients' needs, we ensure the community will continue to benefit from our services. You are an important part of this process because your work directly influences Valley Village's reputation.

We are glad you have joined us, and we hope you will find your volunteer service both challenging and rewarding.

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VALLEY VILLAGE: OUR MISSION AND OUR STORY

Our Mission

Valley Village's mission is to protect, foster, develop and advance the rights and interests of people with developmental disabilities.

Our Story

Valley Village was founded in 1971 by a small group of parents who were concerned about the opportunities and life-long care for their adult children with developmental disabilities. They wanted their children to live in accepting and caring environments when they could no longer care for them. Valley Village was created to fulfill their dreams for their children.

During the 70s and 80s, the original founders' dreams began to come true as Valley Village acquired homes for adults with developmental disabilities throughout the San Fernando Valley. By the mid 90s, Valley Village opened the Adult Development Center and a 12-bed nursing facility to provide the extra care needed by clients with health conditions.

At the start of the new millennium, Valley Village saw another period of growth with the opening of Astoria House, a continuous-care nursing home, the Sunland Adult Development Center and Adult Day Health Care Center, and the expansion to the Winnetka administration building which was converted to expand the day program and the after-school program.

Today, we serve over 400 men and women with developmental challenges through semi-independent condos, family-style homes, three caring nursing homes, an adult development center, and two adult day health care centers.

INTRODUCTORY POLICIES

Introduction

In any organization, it is necessary to have written policies, procedures, and general rules of behavior to serve as guidelines for all. It is also essential to know what Valley Village does for you. You will find that this handbook explains what you may expect from Valley Village and what will be expected of you. This handbook replaces any and all earlier personnel handbooks, policies and procedures, benefit statements, and memoranda, whether written, oral or established by practice.

This handbook is designed to familiarize you with the Agency's major policies and to answer common questions posed by volunteers. It cannot, however, anticipate every

situation or answer every question about your volunteer experience. It is a summary of the Agency's personnel policies, benefits and work rules. If you have any questions about the Agency's policies and practices that are not answered by this handbook, you should ask the Development and Volunteer Coordinator.

Circumstances will obviously require that the policies, practices and benefits described in the handbook change from time to time. The Agency has the right to amend, modify, rescind, delete, supplement or add to the provisions of this handbook as it deems appropriate from time to time in its sole and absolute discretion. Any such changes can be made only by way of official updates to this handbook and/or by a writing signed by the Executive Director. This handbook supersedes all prior oral and/or written policies, procedures, rules, regulations, commitments, and practices by the Agency.

STARTING THE VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIP

Volunteer Applications

Valley Village relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the volunteer application, as well as the accuracy of other data presented and gathered during the application process.

Eligibility Requirements

As a volunteer with Valley Village, you must be 18 years of age or older and are expected to complete the following prior to beginning your volunteer service:

- **Volunteer Orientation** – All volunteers must participate in a scheduled orientation as part of their volunteer service with Valley Village. The orientation is designed to provide a framework for volunteering.

If helping working with clients in any capacity, there are additional criteria to be met:

- **Live Scan Background Check** – Administered by Valley Village's Human Resource department at no cost to volunteers. A Live Scan background check is a digital fingerprinting process that replaces traditional fingerprinting. An applicant's fingerprints are securely transmitted to a government agency, which performs a criminal history background check using an automated fingerprint identification system.
- ***Nursing Student Volunteers Only* Tuberculosis Test** – Administered at a physician's office designated by Valley Village at no cost to volunteers or a private physician at your own expense. A Tuberculosis test is an intradermal skin test to see if you have ever been exposed to Tuberculosis. Valley Village will also accept documented proof of a prior Tuberculosis test if it was administered within the last 12 months prior to your volunteer service with Valley Village.

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

What You Can Expect Valley Village to Provide For You

- Orientation and training to help you perform your volunteer duties.
- The opportunity to work as part of a team, to contribute to the welfare of the community and the organization, and to be recognized for your contribution.
- The support you need to fulfill your volunteer duties.
- The opportunity to give feedback about your volunteer experience.
- The chance to grow and develop as a volunteer through participation in other Valley Village activities and special events.
- Regular communications from the Development and Volunteer Coordinator.

What Valley Village Expects From Volunteers

As a volunteer you have the responsibility to:

- Be reliable.
- Be patient with our clients, as many have varied abilities and histories.
- Keep sensitive organizational or client information confidential.
- Be accountable for your actions.
- Be courteous to clients, staff and other volunteers.
- Ask for support when you need it.
- Let the Development and Volunteer Coordinator know as early as possible if you are unable to attend an event or activity.
- Raise any issues you may have with the organization and not denigrate the organization to clients, staff, and other volunteers.
- Comply with all Valley Village volunteer policies and procedures.

Our volunteer services include:

- **Field Trip Participants:** the heart of our volunteer program; field trip participants are volunteers from the community that provide a supportive presence for our clients by visiting various venues and events across the region with our care providers and clients during Super Saturdays and Community At Large events.
- **Administrative:** Volunteers in the administrative role help with the day-to-day operations of the Agency during the Agency's normal business hours.
- **Special Events:** Throughout the year, Valley Village holds various special events that wouldn't be possible without the help of volunteers. By helping with setup, drawings, auctions, prizes, and clean up, volunteers ensure the success of events that benefit all of our clients.
- **Nursing:** Nursing students currently enrolled in a nursing program that has an agreement in place with Valley Village may choose to hone their skills in our facilities under the supervision of an instructor from their institution. Nursing students fulfill their clinical hours at Valley Village while making a big impact in

the lives of our most medically fragile clients.

What Our Clients Expect

The best thing you can do for our clients is to be a consistent and positive source of stability in their lives. Just being there when you say you're going to be there does a lot to raise the self-esteem and confidence of our clients.

Our clients benefit when they have opportunities to get to know you and when you get to know them. It is rewarding when our clients are happy to see you and when you see the positive changes in their lives. Simply by being a positive, consistent role model in their life, you will see improved self-esteem, increased self-confidence, and an appreciation for your time and friendship. The more you get to know our clients and the more consistent you are the more positive changes you will see.

You Also Have to Understand What Your Role Is Not. A Volunteer Is Not A:

- **Substitute Parent/care provider:** Volunteers are not expected to play the role of a parent, staff member, or care provider. Show that you genuinely care and provide ongoing support without overstepping your boundaries as a volunteer. You are not spending time with clients because other adults or care providers need a break or are not available. You are there to help them improve, and provide support and encouragement.
- **Disciplinarian:** Setting limits and using positive reinforcement can have a beneficial impact, but volunteers should not become involved in the punitive discipline of any type. It is important to let staff know of any possible issues as soon as possible.

Here Are Some Tips on How to Be a Great Volunteer

- Practice open communication and active listening. Be someone who truly listens to them. By listening, you can help foster their self-esteem, confidence, and pride in themselves.
- Encourage and praise any effort or improvement. Individuals with disabilities are often stigmatized, ignored, or given up as hopeless. By focusing on and recognizing their skills, talents, and strengths, you can turn that around.
- Believe in our client's ability to succeed. Our clients need people in their life who believe in them. You can support and encourage them to believe in themselves and their abilities.
- Stay committed and be reliable. Keep your word and commitment to volunteering, and treat our clients how you want to be treated.

Things to Avoid

- Passing judgment, criticizing, or comparing your client to others.
- Labeling, diagnosing or analyzing their behaviors.
- Probing into their lives.
- Dismissing using silent treatment or using other punishments.
- Lecturing your client.
- Demanding changes or ultimatums.

VOLUNTEER CONDUCT

Volunteer Conduct and Agency Rules

Whenever people are required to work together for any purpose, they need certain guidelines to govern their personal conduct and relationships. Valley Village considers work rules to be an important responsibility. They are a necessary part of managing the business so that employees and volunteers can be treated fairly and work safely and effectively. These rules apply to all employees and volunteers.

The following list, therefore, contains some examples of conduct that may lead to ending the volunteer relationship.

- Theft, stealing, destruction, damage, or unauthorized removal of property belonging to the Agency, another employee, a client, or a visitor, regardless of the value of the item;
- Unauthorized use of agency equipment, time, materials, or facilities;
- Use, possession, or sale of unlawful drugs or alcohol while on agency premises, while in an agency vehicle, or while on duty, or reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or any unlawful drugs;
- Bringing or possessing firearms, weapons, or other hazardous or dangerous devices or substances onto agency property or into agency vehicles;
- Failure to observe safety regulations;
- Unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees, volunteers, clients or visitors;
- Threatening, intimidating or coercing other employees, volunteers, clients, or visitors;

- Fighting or provoking a fight on agency time or property;
- Refusal to perform volunteer duties in the manner described by the Agency;
- Disrespect or discourtesy to agency employees, volunteers, or clients;
- Failure to immediately report a job-related injury, no matter how minor, to your Development and Volunteer Coordinator;
- Failure to follow agency procedures for maintaining confidentiality;
- Bringing, distributing, electronic forwarding, or possessing inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive or pornographic materials on agency premises
- Using the Agency's communication system to view, distribute, download, or convey inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive, or pornographic information;
- Using the Agency's computer system to send (upload) or receive (download) copyrighted materials, trade secrets, proprietary information, or similar matter without prior authorization from the Agency.

It is essential that the volunteer relationship is based on mutual consent of the volunteer and the Agency. Accordingly, either you or the Agency can terminate the volunteer relationship at will at any time, for any or no reason.

Dress Code

Volunteers are representatives of Valley Village and are responsible for presenting a positive image to the community. Volunteers will dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Rather than dictate a list of what is considered appropriate attire, we feel that our volunteers have the maturity and common sense to volunteer in clothing which is clean, neat, and in good taste. Individual volunteers will be informed of the dress standard for their duties during their volunteer orientation for specific events and activities.

Note: Request for exceptions to Valley Village's dress code standards for medical or religious accommodation shall be considered on an individual basis. It is the responsibility of all volunteers to comply with dress code standards.

Personal Phone Calls

Valley Village requests that while volunteering, you limit the number of personal phone calls.

Tracking Volunteer Hours

Valley Village tracks volunteer hours of service. Each volunteer is responsible for signing in, signing out, and calculating their total service hours in the provided volunteer sign-in sheet.

Attendance

Valley Village and its clients depend on volunteers being reliable. Our clients look forward to connecting with individuals outside the organization; last-minute cancellations can create obstacles for our staff and events.

You must contact the Development and Volunteer Coordinator on any day on which you expect to be late or absent for any reason. The call must be made as early as possible before your scheduled volunteer shift starts, but in no case less than thirty (30) minutes before your start time to provide the Agency with time to make necessary arrangements.

Confidentiality and Disclosure

Each volunteer is required to sign a confidentiality agreement. The policy falls under HIPAA guidelines, which work to ensure that client information is only shared when absolutely necessary. The **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)** is federal legislation that created national standards to protect the privacy of patients' medical records and other personal health information. If Valley Village discloses information about a client or a client discloses information about their case, by virtue of a volunteer signing our confidentiality agreement, you are agreeing to comply with federal and state laws that govern confidential records like those of our clients. Any private information given to a hospital, doctor, employees, and volunteer members must be kept in strict confidence.

Confidential information includes:

- Details about the client's illnesses or conditions.
- Information about a client's treatments.
- Picture(s) or video(s) of a client.
- Conversations between a client and their care provider, physician, social worker, etc.

The unauthorized release of any such information is a violation of federal law which will result in immediate termination from Valley Village and the possibility of being held liable in a court of law.

Smoking

Valley Village intends to provide a safe and healthy environment. Smoking inside our facilities, including lunchrooms, restrooms, private offices, and residential homes, is

prohibited. Smoking next to or near clients is also prohibited at all times. This prohibition applies to cigarettes, e-cigs, and any other form of smoking products and devices.

Alcohol and Drug use

Valley Village maintains a workplace that is free from the effects of alcohol and substance abuse. While on Valley Village premises and during volunteer activities off Valley Village premises, a volunteer may not use, possess, distribute, sell or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Violation of this policy will result in immediate termination.

Searches

Searches of volunteers and their personal property for illegal drugs, including but not limited to desks, packages, purses, and backpacks, may be conducted when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the volunteer or volunteers are in violation of this policy.

A volunteer's consent to a search is required as a condition of volunteering. A volunteer's refusal to consent shall result in ending the volunteer relationship with Valley Village.

Non-Solicitation / Distribution of Literature

Approaching fellow volunteers or employees in the workplace regarding personal activities, organizations, or causes, regardless of how worthwhile, meaningful, or benevolent, can create unnecessary apprehension and pressure for colleagues. In the interest of maintaining a proper business environment and preventing interference with work and inconvenience to others, volunteers may not distribute literature or printed materials of any kind, sell merchandise, solicit financial contributions, or solicit for any other cause in the workplace during Valley Village's normal hours of operation.

Pets on Valley Village Premises

No pets are allowed to reside on or visit Valley Village premises unless approved by the Program Director as part of the "Pet Therapy Program."

This policy does not prohibit service animals for disabled persons visiting or volunteering on Valley Village premises.

Safe Operation of Vehicles

Volunteers may have to operate their own vehicles as part of their volunteer duties for the Agency. In the course of such operation, volunteers are expected to exercise sound judgment and safe driving practices at all times, including avoiding any activity which may distract their attention from the road or violate any law.

Volunteers must possess a state-issued driver's license and the legally required levels of automobile coverage. Volunteers are responsible for obtaining and maintaining their own automobile insurance, adhering to the coverage levels required by law. Volunteers

are responsible for any accidents, fines, moving or parking violations incurred. The Volunteer's insurance will be used in the event of an accident, injury, fire, damage, theft, etc.

Social Media

Valley Village has in place policies that govern the use of its electronic communication systems, equipment, and resources which volunteers must follow. Inappropriate communications may be grounds for immediate termination, even if made on your own time using your own resources. We encourage you to use good judgment when communicating via blogs, online chat rooms, networking sites, social media platforms, and other electronic and non-electronic forums (collectively "social media"). The following is a general and non-exhaustive list of guidelines you should keep in mind:

- 1.** Make it clear that the views expressed on social media are yours alone. Do not purport to represent the views of Valley Village in any fashion.
- 2.** Do not disclose confidential or proprietary information regarding the Agency. Use of copyrighted or trademarked agency information, trade secrets, or other sensitive information may subject you to legal action. If you have any doubt about whether it is proper to disclose information, please discuss it with the Development and Volunteer Coordinator.
- 3.** Do not disclose information that could subject the Agency to legal liability. Data about certain financial transactions, information about medical and health records, and other disclosures may be restricted by state or federal laws. If the Agency is subjected to government investigation or financial liability based on your disclosures, the Agency may seek to hold you personally responsible.
- 4.** Do not use agency logos, trademarks, or other symbols on social media. You may not use the Valley Village name to endorse, promote, denigrate or otherwise comment on any product, opinion, cause, or person.
- 5.** Be respectful of the privacy and dignity of others. Do not use or post photos of others without their express consent.
- 6.** Avoid making or using harassing, obscene, defamatory, threatening, or other offensive content. Harassing or discriminatory comments, particularly if made based on gender, race, religion, age, national origin, or other protected characteristics, may be deemed inappropriate even if the agency name is not mentioned. If social media communications in any way may adversely affect your relationships at work or violate agency policy, you may be subject to discipline up to and including immediate termination under various agency policies.

7. Ensure that engaging in social media does not interfere with your volunteer commitments.

8. Social media and similar communications have the potential to reflect on both you and the Agency. We hope that you will show respect for our employees, volunteers, clients, and families.

Injuries While Volunteering

All volunteers are expected to follow appropriate safety guidelines while volunteering. However, even under the best circumstances, an accident may occur. If a volunteer is injured, even slightly, the volunteer is expected to immediately stop the activity that caused the injury and seek first aid or medical attention if necessary. The volunteer must inform present Valley Village staff about the incident and complete an incident report form. If the volunteer is unable to reach a present staff member, then the volunteer must contact the Development and Volunteer Coordinator. The volunteer should not resume the activity until treatment has been provided and/or he or she has been given approval from a staff member to continue the activity.

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Equal Employment Policy

Valley Village is an equal opportunity employer and makes employment decisions on the basis of merit. We want to have the best available people in every job. Therefore, the Agency does not discriminate against its employees, volunteers, or applicants because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, national origin, citizenship, veteran status, ancestry, age, gender (including gender identity and gender expression); physical or mental disability (an impairment that limits a major life activity), medical condition (cancer-related), genetic information, or any other consideration made unlawful by applicable laws. Equal employment opportunity will be extended to all persons in all aspects of the employer-employee relationship, including recruitment, hiring, upgrading, training, promotion, transfer, discipline, layoff, recall and termination.

If you believe that you have been subjected to any form of unlawful discrimination, promptly report the facts of the incident or incidents, names of the individuals involved, and the names of any witnesses to the Development and Volunteer Coordinator, the Human Resources Manager, or the Executive Director.

Non-Harassment Policy

Harassment in employment, including sexual, racial, and ethnic harassment, as well as any other harassment forbidden by law, is strictly prohibited by Valley Village. Employees or volunteers who violate this policy are subject to discipline, including possible termination.

Racial, ethnic, and other forms of prohibited harassment include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Visual conduct, including displaying of derogatory objects or pictures, cartoons, or posters;
- (2) Verbal conduct, including making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, and jokes;

In addition, sexual harassment is defined by the regulations of the Fair Employment and Housing Commission as unwanted sexual advances or visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment includes gender harassment and harassment on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, and also includes sexual harassment of an employee of the same gender as the harasser. This includes, but is not limited to, the following types of offensive behavior:

- (1) Unwanted sexual advances;
- (2) Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors;
- (3) Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances;
- (4) Visual conduct, including leering, making sexual gestures, displaying of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, or posters;
- (5) Verbal conduct, including making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, and jokes;
- (6) Verbal sexual advances or propositions;
- (7) Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations;
- (8) Physical conduct, including touching, assault, impeding, or blocking movements.

Valley Village will take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment from occurring and will take immediate and appropriate action when the Agency knows that unlawful harassment has occurred.

All employees and volunteers have the right to be free from unlawful harassment while in the employ of the Agency. If you have been harassed by an employee, volunteer, supervisor, agent, vendor, or customer, you should promptly report the facts of the incident or incidents and the names of the individuals involved to your Development and Volunteer Coordinator, Supervisor, Human Resources, or the Executive Director.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

Personnel Records

The Agency keeps a personnel file on each volunteer. The personnel file contains volunteer-related information about the volunteer.

Unless you have previously been given a copy, you may request copies of anything in your file that has been signed by you and HR will have them copied for you. Contact the Community Engagement Coordinator if you wish to review your personnel file.

The Agency will keep your personnel records confidential. However, there are certain times when information may be given to persons outside of the Agency. These include:

- (1) Responses to subpoenas, court orders, or orders of administrative agencies;
- (2) In a lawsuit in which you and/or the Agency are parties

Personnel Data Changes

It is your responsibility to promptly notify Valley Village of any changes in your personnel data. Your personal mailing address, telephone number, number and names of dependents, emergency contact, and educational information should be kept accurate and current. If any personnel data has changed, immediately notify the Development and Volunteer Coordinator and proceed to update relevant data.

SEPARATION FROM VOLUNTEERING

If you are unable to continue with the volunteer relationship, kindly notify the Development and Volunteer Coordinator through email.

ELDER AND DEPENDENT ADULT ABUSE

Reporting Abuse

California state law **REQUIRES** care custodians, health practitioners, and employees of a county adult protective services agencies and local law enforcement agencies to report physical abuse of elders and dependent adults. The report must be made immediately or as soon as possible. If you suspect or witness any sort of abuse, please notify the Development and Volunteer Coordinator, the Human Resource Manager, the Executive Director, or any present staff member immediately.

Definition of “Abuse of an Elder or Dependent Adult”

Welfare and Institutions Code Section 15610.07: “Abuse of an elder or a dependent adult” means physical abuse, neglect, fiduciary abuse, abandonment, isolation, or other treatment with resulting physical harm or pain or mental suffering, or the deprivation by a care custodian of goods or services that are necessary to avoid physical or mental suffering.

RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Valley Village Volunteer Handbook. This handbook sets forth the terms and conditions of my volunteer service as well as the rights, duties, responsibilities, and obligations of my volunteer duties with the Agency. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with all of the provisions of the handbook. I further understand and agree that I am bound by the provisions of the handbook.

I understand that Valley Village has the right to amend, modify, rescind, delete, supplement or add to the provisions of this handbook as it deems appropriate from time to time in its sole and absolute discretion.

My signature below certifies that I understand that the foregoing agreement on at-will status is the sole and entire agreement between the Agency and me concerning the duration of volunteering and the circumstances under which my volunteering may be terminated. It supersedes all prior volunteer handbooks, agreements, understandings, and representations concerning my volunteer service with Valley Village.

Volunteer Name: _____

Volunteer Signature: _____

Date: _____