

# **Volunteer Standards & Guidelines**

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

## **REVISIONS**

Open Door Mission reserves the right to amend, revise or delete any policy or procedure referred to in these Volunteer Standards & Guidelines at any time without notice. Changes may be communicated to volunteers in meetings, counseling sessions, by memo or incorporated into revised manuals. If you have any questions about Volunteers Standards & Guidelines, please ask your supervisor or Open Door Mission's Volunteer and Partner Director.

## **EQUAL VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITY**

Open Door Mission provides equal volunteering opportunities for every person regardless of age, gender, creed, national origin, religious persuasion, marital status, political belief or a disability that does not prohibit performance of essential job functions. Where appropriate, Open Door Mission will select volunteers with particular religious beliefs that support our mission statement. All matters relating to volunteering are based upon ability to perform the job, as well as dependability and reliability, once placed.

## **YOUR COMMITMENT**

Volunteers contribute to the overall mission of Open Door Mission by providing another layer of compassion, caring, talent and skill to our team. We offer many different types of volunteer opportunities:

- High Impact Volunteers – These volunteers are faithful long-term partners who become valued team members and an extension of the staff. High Impact Volunteers work no less than once each month and are expected to diligently honor this commitment. Failure to honor the commitment may result in reassignment or termination.
- Hand – in – Hand Volunteers – These volunteers assist in areas that require very little training, such as in the kitchen, Timberlake Outreach Center or Special Projects, and only volunteer for a short amount of time or to obtain a specified number of volunteer hours.
- Volunteer groups – Regardless of size, volunteer groups are an organized collection of people who have a designated leader. Open Door Mission offers High Impact placements, one-time projects and special event projects for group volunteer service. However, all projects are not suitable for all groups.
- Internships – Open Door Mission is delighted when we can partner with outstanding academic institutions and top-notch students to provide internships. Internships are individually tailored to meet the specific needs of the area and the student.
- Court-mandated / Disciplinary Community Service / Employment First / General Assistance – Open Door Mission does work with this type of volunteer service. Community Service Policy must be reviewed and agreed to prior to placement.

Open Door Mission expects all volunteers to work their assigned schedule. All volunteers are expected to be consistent and faithful in fulfilling the agreed upon commitment. If you cannot make a scheduled time, please contact your staff supervisor or the Volunteer Services Department with as much notice as possible.

Volunteers are expected to be punctual for their assigned times. Please let your supervisor know if you will be late. If a volunteer is unable to meet his/her commitment to Open Door Mission, it may be necessary to replace that volunteer. The volunteer may take a leave of absence and return where needed by Open Door Mission. We cannot guarantee that your "spot" will remain open until your return.

### **AGE REQUIREMENT FOR INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS**

- The minimum age for an independent individual volunteer is 16.
  - Independent Volunteer = Has transportation that is available to them during volunteer opportunity
    - Knowledge & means of Public Transportation
    - Legally drive themselves to the volunteer opportunity – vehicle MUST remain on site
- Volunteers under 18 must be accompanied by an adult UNLESS they are 16 or older and MUST be an independent volunteer.

### **AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEER GROUPS**

- To volunteer with a parent or chaperoned group, all volunteers must be accompanied by 1 adult sponsor for every 15 students.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH OUR LYDIA HOUSE CHILDREN'S PROGRAM ON AN ONGOING BASIS**

- Submit volunteer application. Complete Volunteer Orientation and tour.
- The minimum age for childcare volunteers is 16.
- Volunteers must have a high school diploma or GED.
- Volunteers must pass criminal history background check.

### **PROCEDURE FOR HIGH IMPACT VOLUNTEERS, PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNSHIPS**

- Submit volunteer application. Complete Volunteer Orientation and tour
- Interview with Volunteer Services representative. Occasionally, a volunteer placement or internship will require either the initial interview be with the prospective supervisor or require an additional interview with the prospective supervisor.
- Pass reference and criminal history background check.

### **PROCEDURE FOR HAND IN HAND VOLUNTEERS**

- It is best to schedule early - usually at least one month in advance.
- When calling to schedule a group, it is helpful for the group leader to have a couple of dates in mind that will work for the group, the number of volunteers who will participate in the project, and the type of project the group would like to do.

- Groups are scheduled on a first-come basis.
- Once a group is scheduled, a confirmation letter will be mailed, via U.S. mail, email or faxed to the group leader. (If we are able to schedule a group at the last minute, there may be an agreement with the group leader that he/she will not receive a confirmation letter.) **IF A GROUP HAS NOT RECEIVED A CONFIRMATION LETTER, THE GROUP IS NOT ON OUR SCHEDULE.**
- Our general guidelines will be discussed with group leader prior to the group's arrival.
- A brief orientation and tour will be given upon the group's arrival.

## **SIGNING-IN AND OUT**

Volunteers must **always** sign-in and out at the building where they volunteer on Open Door Mission's Campus. This information is important so that we may recognize outstanding volunteer service, provide statistical data required for grant proposals and agencies such as United Way, and maintain a safe and secure environment.

## **INTERACTIONS WITH GUESTS, STAFF MEMBERS & OTHER VOLUNTEERS**

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

Here are a few specifics:

- Do not give rides to any guest.
- Do not give money to any guest.
- Do not leave your belongings unattended. If you must bring valuables with you, be sure to ask your supervisor where to store them. Never leave your purse or other valuables on the front seat of your car – even if the car is locked. The trunk is a safer place. Open Door Mission does not assume any responsibility for loss, damage or theft of any personal property.
- Practice active listening and empathy. Do not make decisions for the guests. Always refer our guests to staff members for questions and assistance.
- Report inappropriate behavior or anything that causes you to feel uncomfortable to your staff supervisor or to the Open Door Mission's Volunteer and Partner Director **immediately**.
- Always remain calm when speaking with guests. Remember that our guests are going through difficult times and their stress level may be high. Never take any negative comment made by a guest personally and never allow yourself to be drawn into an argument.
- Profanity is never acceptable when working with staff, guests or other volunteers.

## **FRATERNIZATION**

This policy is to provide guidelines concerning activities, actions, conduct, involvement and relationships between guests/students and volunteers. As a Christian human services organization, this is a critical policy and merits strong commitment by every volunteer. In general, activities, actions, conduct, involvement, and relationships in which volunteers are authorized to engage with guests/students are those which are listed in the volunteer's job description. The welfare of our guests is a primary consideration in the programs of Open Door Mission and this objective is basic to all volunteer-staff-guest interactions.

For the purpose of this policy, guests/students include any person residing at or being served by one of our facilities and any person who has resided or received services (including follow-up contacts) within the last two years.

Examples of unauthorized, inappropriate, and unprofessional behavior include:

- Interacting for personal reasons or socializing with guests when a volunteer is off duty.
- Interacting with guests if that interaction is not necessary with respect to your job or authorized by appropriate supervisor.
- Transporting or allowing guests in your personal vehicles.
- Transporting guests in Open Door Mission vehicles without proper authorization.
- Engaging in unauthorized transaction with guests including borrowing, lending, giving/receiving money or anything of value, buying and selling or acting as a guest's agent in any of the above.
- Employing or giving any inducement designed to obtain any personal service from any guests.
- Accepting any personal favors from guests.
- Showing favoritism between guests or doing a personal favor for guests without appropriate authorization.
- Any romantic or sexual relationships or attempted relationships between a volunteer and guests.
- Conduct that demeans or humiliates or embarrasses a guest(s).
- Inappropriate physical contact with a guests.

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

### **GUEST NEGLIGENCE AND ABUSE**

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

- Intentional physical or emotional abuse of a guest. Abuse is defined as intentional or reckless action or omission that causes injury or emotional trauma to a guest.
- Any sexual relationships or attempted relationships with a guest or with anyone who has been a guest (including guests on follow-up status) within the last six months.
- Moral or social behavior which could have serious detrimental influence on guests.
- Procuring alcohol, illegal drugs or unauthorized prescription drugs from or for guests or staff members.
- Exploiting a guest for personal gain, including borrowing from or loaning money or any other item of value to a guest or hiring a guest for personal work.

Any violation of this policy constitutes misconduct and may lead to immediate discharge.

## **WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

Volunteers should observe the following guidelines when working with children:

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

## **HARASSMENT / SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

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

Harassment can include "jokes", comments or other personally offensive or unwelcome behavior based on a person's age, ancestry, color, creed, sex, marital status, medical condition, national origin, physical handicap, race or religion. Sexual harassment is defined as sexual suggestions, language, physical advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

If you believe you have experienced or observed an incident of harassment of any kind you are expected to report the incident immediately. Since harassment incidents may be embarrassing or difficult to discuss circumstances, you should talk directly with Open Door Mission's Volunteer and Partner Director or President/CEO. Each charge of sexual harassment will be investigated with consideration given to confidentiality. Results of the investigation will be communicated to those who have a legitimate need to know and appropriate action will be taken as required.

## **WEAPON-FREE WORKPLACE**

To ensure that Open Door Mission maintains a workplace safe and free of violence, the Mission prohibits the possession or use of dangerous weapons on Mission property. A license to carry the weapon on Mission property does not supersede Mission policy. Any volunteer in violation of this policy will be subject to prompt disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination. All Mission workers are subject to this provision, including contract and temporary workers, customers, vendors, volunteers and visitors on Mission property. Open Door Mission also prohibits the carrying of a weapon or concealed handgun on your person or property while rendering any services or attending any event or function or conducting any business on the Mission's behalf. This prohibition includes carrying or maintaining a concealed weapon or handgun in any vehicle used in conjunction with your volunteer placement or brought onto Open Door Mission property.

"Dangerous weapons" include, but are not limited to, firearms, explosives, knives and other weapons that might be considered dangerous or that could cause harm. Volunteers are responsible for making sure that any item possessed by the volunteer is not prohibited by this policy.

## **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY**

Open Door Mission is committed to protecting the safety, health and well being of all employees, volunteers and other individuals in our workplace. We recognize that alcohol abuse and drug use pose a significant threat to our goals. We have established a drug-free workplace program that balances our respect for individuals with the need to maintain an alcohol and drug-free environment. Open Door Mission encourages volunteers to voluntarily seek help with drug and alcohol problems. In addition, Open Door Mission receives funds from several grants that require compliance with this policy. Violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. Any individual who conducts business for the Mission, is applying for a position or is conducting business on the Mission's property is covered by our drug-free workplace policy. Our policy includes, but is not limited to, employees, volunteers, interns and applicants. It is a violation of our drug-free workplace policy to use, possess, sell, trade and/or offer for sale alcohol, illegal drugs or intoxicants. Prescription and over-the-counter drugs are not prohibited when taken in standard dosage and/or according to a physician's prescription. If the use of a medication could compromise the safety of the volunteer or any other individual in the Mission, the volunteer should not report for his/her shift.

## **METAL DETECTORS**

To ensure a safe environment, Open Door Mission asks that all visitors, including volunteers pass through the metal detectors located at the Lydia House, Garland Thompson Men's Center and Rebuilding Lives Center.

## **ETHICS**

Open Door Mission conducts its business fairly, impartially, in an ethical and proper manner, and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Open Door Mission is committed to conducting its business with excellence and integrity underlying all relationships, including those with guests, donors, volunteers, customers, suppliers and communities, and among employees. The highest standards of ethical business conduct are required of Open Door Mission volunteers in performance of their responsibilities. Volunteers will serve with respect, concern, courtesy and responsiveness in carrying out the organization's mission. Volunteers will not engage in conduct or activity that may raise questions as to the Mission's honesty, impartiality or reputation or otherwise cause embarrassment to the Mission. Volunteers shall, during both volunteering and non-volunteering hours, act in a manner which will inspire public trust in their integrity, impartiality and devotion to the best interests of the Mission, its guests and customers. Violation of this policy shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

## **DONATIONS**

All donations (money, food, clothing or any other in-kind donation) are to be used for the benefit of Open Door Mission and guests. Volunteers are not authorized to use these donations for a personal benefit or to distribute them to guests without specific authorization from the appropriate supervisor. Only employees who have attended donations training are authorized to handle cash donations. Violation of this policy (unauthorized possession, use or distribution of donations) will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

## **DRESS CODE**

Volunteers must dress appropriately for your work, the season and in accordance with program requirements. Generally, business or business casual dress is acceptable for most professional or administrative positions. The following are not acceptable: ripped jeans, short-shorts, mini-skirts, short dresses, tank tops, sleeveless shirts, strap-type tops and tight-fitting, sleeveless or low-cut clothing. Shoes should be appropriate for your work. For your safety, do not wear "flip flop or sandals"

– **NO** open-toed shoes or similar shoes that do not adequately protect your feet. **NO** shirts with drug/alcohol references.

- Open Door Mission T-shirts, jeans and athletic shoes are appropriate for many volunteer activities
- Volunteers may wear jeans or walking shorts if working outdoors during warm weather. Walking shorts cannot be more than 2” above the knee.
- Volunteers assisting in the kitchen must wear long pants below the knee to protect the legs from splatters; a shirt with sleeves; closed-in shoes in both heels and toes; and a hairnet or cap. When possible, we ask volunteers to bring their own baseball caps and aprons. **Due to City of Omaha Health Department regulations, we will strictly enforce the dress code. Inappropriately dressed volunteers may not be able to participate in the project.** If even one volunteer is not in compliance with the dress code, Open Door Mission is in violation of the City ordinances and can be cited.
- As a general rule – dress conservatively.

## **REPORTING INCIDENTS**

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

## **SAFETY**

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

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Open Door Mission does not assume responsibility for the loss, damage or theft of personal belongings, and volunteers are strongly advised not to carry unnecessary amounts of cash or other valuables with them when they come to volunteer. Please, under no circumstances leave your purse, wallet or other valuables on the seat of your car – even if the doors are locked.

## **OPEN DOOR MISSION PROPERTY**

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

## **INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

The use of Open Door Mission’s internal and external electronic communication systems, including computers, e-mail access, voice mail, telephone systems, fax machines and all forms of Internet/Intranet access, is for Mission business and for authorized purposes only. Open Door Mission owns the rights to all data and files in any computer, network, or other information system used by the Mission. Open Door Mission also reserves the right to monitor voice mail, telephone systems, e-mail messages (including person/private/instant messaging systems) and their content, as well as any and all use of the Internet and of computer equipment used to create, view, or access e-mail and Internet content. Volunteers who use any part of the Mission’s internal or external electronic

communication systems as part of their volunteer placement are responsible for adherence to the complete internal and external electronic communications policy. Violation of the internal and external electronic communications policy can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **SMOKING / TOBACCO USE ON OPEN DOOR MISSION PROPERTY OR BUSINESS**

It is the policy of Open Door Mission to protect the health and safety of employees, volunteers, guests and visitors. Consequently, smoking or other tobacco use is not allowed inside the buildings or in vehicles owned or controlled by Open Door Mission. Please smoke where there are designated tobacco use areas.

## **GRIEVANCES**

An effective, successful operation goes hand in hand with satisfied volunteers. Volunteer grievances are of concern to Open Door Mission, regardless of whether problems are large or small. In order to provide for prompt and efficient evaluation of and response to grievances, Open Door Mission has established a formal Grievance Procedure for all volunteers. It will always be Open Door Mission's policy to give full consideration to every volunteer's opinion. There will be no discrimination against or toward anyone for his or her part in presenting grievances.

Under this policy, a grievance is defined as any event, condition, rule or practice which the volunteer believes violates his or her civil rights, treats him or her unfairly, or causes him or her any degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness on the job. A grievance may also deal with an attitude, a statement or an opinion held by a supervisor or a fellow volunteer.

1. **See the Open Door Mission's Volunteer and Partner Director first.** If you feel that any volunteering condition, policy, practice or action by Open Door Mission is unjust, you should tell the Volunteer and Partner Director about it and discuss the matter confidentially and in private with him or her. If for some reason the Volunteer and Partner Director fails to offer you the opportunity to discuss the matter, or if the discussion does not lead to a satisfactory conclusion, then proceed to the next step.
2. **Grievance Conference.** Open Door Mission's Volunteer and Partner Director's immediate supervisor will review the grievance and ask to meet with you. At this conference, you should feel free to openly discuss your complaint and substantiate your reasons for feeling the way you do. The supervisor will consider your input and render a decision.

## **GENERAL HEALTH**

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

## **VOLUNTEER CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

Respect for our guest's privacy and ensuring the confidentiality of information is a program priority. Confidentiality is extremely important since we have battered women and people in custody battles here whose lives can be seriously affected by breach of confidentiality. A large part of the volunteer work you will do on behalf of the program involves access to personal information about guests who live at Open Door Mission. Any guest information, either recorded or not, which is acquired in connection with any form of volunteer work in or for the program, is considered confidential.

**Confidential information includes information about the guest's identity, his/her residence at Open Door Mission, what transpired in any group activity, and any information collected for or contained in guest records. All such information must be treated confidentially.** In most cases, Federal Confidentiality Regulations prohibit the disclosure of any information to anyone concerning or identifying a current or former program guest unless the guest or his/her guardian has consented in writing. The determination of whether or not a valid consent form for any guest is on file is the responsibility of the staff supervisor. **The decision to release any information may only be made by appropriate staff.**

Revealing the simple fact that an individual lives at Open Door Mission may result in putting that person in a dangerous situation. Information that comes to you as part of your volunteer placement is NOT to be discussed with other volunteers, parents, siblings, or anyone else, other than the professional program staff which provides supervision of your program.

**RESPONDING TO A REQUEST FOR DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION:**

If you are asked to release information which is confidential, an appropriate, non-committal response should be given, such as, "I'm sorry. I do not know the answer to your questions. Please see the staff supervisor on duty."

**WHEN ANSWERING TELEPHONES:**

If your volunteer placement requires you to answer the telephone, you may be asked if a certain guest lives at Open Door Mission in order to send a message to that person. The appropriate response is, "I'm sorry. I cannot verify whether or not that person lives here." Do not offer or agree to take a message as that is an acknowledgement that the person is a guest. If the caller insists the person resides at Open Door Mission and asks to leave a message, the appropriate response is, "I am a volunteer. Please wait while I call the staff supervisor on duty."

**PHOTOGRAPHING/VIDEO-TAPING GUEST(S):**

Volunteers are prohibited from photographing, audio taping or video taping any guest(s) of Open Door Mission without management consent. This policy includes the use of any type of cellular phone camera, digital camera, video camera, tape recorder, or other form of image or audio recording device without management consent.