

# Volunteer Agreement Signature Form

To be read, signed, and returned to the manager before beginning any volunteer activities.

I have received and read a copy of the following and agree to follow the policies and procedures:

- ECHO Volunteer Application
- ECHO Volunteer Handbook
- Confidentiality Statement
- Civil Rights Training



\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Name (print)

Sign and return to:

Manager

ECHO Food Shelf

1014 South Front Street, P.O. Box 3212

Mankato, MN 56002

## Volunteer at ECHO Food Shelf Volunteer Handbook

information with others regardless of an expression of good intentions. Refer all requests for information to managers. What happens at the site stays at the site. The exception, of course, is any illegal or inappropriate behavior that should be reported to state or federal officials.

- Make sure individual data is kept confidential.
- Sexual harassment is prohibited. Do not engage in or tolerate unwanted or unwelcome sexual behavior including jokes, touching, requests for sexual favors, etc. Report violations to management or to state or federal officials.
- Advise people who allege discrimination about how to file a complaint. They may write to: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY).
- If conflicts occur, remain calm. Call for assistance immediately if you feel threatened. Consider mediation or a third party to help resolve the situation.
- Follow the platinum rule – treat people the way they would like to be treated!

## Confidentiality Statement

I understand that I must treat all information received in the performance of my volunteer work for ECHO Food Shelf as confidential.

I understand that ECHO Food Shelf respects the rights of its clients, staff and volunteers with regards to privacy of information. I agree to respect these rights in the performance of my volunteer duties and to keep “professional” confidentiality in all my statements outside of ECHO Food Shelf.

I also understand that I am not permitted to remove or make copies of any records, reports, or documents. Release of confidential information can result in dismissal from my duties with ECHO Food Shelf and could involve me in legal proceedings.

## Civil Rights Training for Staff and Volunteers

- **Goals of Civil Rights** –that everyone is treated with fairness and equality while receiving food at the food shelf
- **Legal Prohibitions** – discrimination is prohibited on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, and disability in special nutrition programs funded by the USDA and the Food and Nutrition Service, which includes your food shelf.
- **Types of Discrimination** – Intentionally treating someone differently because of their differences; making a rule that affects a protected class group negatively; and retaliation against complainant or his/her family, associates or others involved in complaint process or exercising civil rights.
- **When do Civil Rights rules apply** – Civil rights rules apply any time there is any federal financial assistance. Federal financial assistance is receiving anything of value from the federal government – not just cash. Because your food shelf receives federal commodities, the rules apply.
- **Special Circumstances** – Make sure people with disabilities and limited English are accommodated.
- Treat all people with dignity and respect.
- Maintain confidentiality. It is not appropriate to talk about who is receiving benefits and to make remarks about them. Never share

## Volunteer Application

Please fill out an ECHO Volunteer Application, which can be found in the back of this Handbook.

Mail or deliver to:

ECHO Food Shelf  
1014 South Front Street, PO Box 3212  
Mankato, MN 56002

## About ECHO Food Shelf

### Hours

ECHO is open for clients on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Volunteers are asked to report one-half hour before client hours.

### Holidays

ECHO is closed on the following holidays: New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving, December 24 if a weekday, and Christmas. ECHO is also closed for inclement weather whenever local schools are closed.

## Mission Statement

The Emergency Community Help Organization (ECHO) or ECHO Food Shelf has the following mission: PREVENTING HUNGER THROUGH EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE.

Located at 1014 South Front Street, ECHO is open to all people in North Mankato and Blue Earth County who are in need of food assistance.

## ECHO Volunteer Program Information

Statement of Purpose for Volunteers at ECHO:

Volunteers of all ages play an integral part in fulfilling the mission of ECHO. They provide support, expertise, time, experience, ideas, and energy to projects and tasks that would not be possible without

volunteers. Volunteers collect food from various local businesses, accept donations from individuals, sort donations, stock shelves and assist clients with their shopping.

### **How to Become a Volunteer:**

Fill out and return an application. An Application is available in this packet, via phone at (507) 345-7477, via e-mail at [echofoodsshelf@Yahoo.com](mailto:echofoodsshelf@Yahoo.com), or mail to ECHO Food Shelf, P.O. Box 3212, Mankato, MN 56002. The Manager will set up an interview to discuss the volunteer opportunities in person, tour the Shelf, and determine if your interests match an available position.

### **Expectations of Volunteers:**

A volunteer is someone who chooses to perform services at ECHO without compensation or expectation of compensation, and who performs a task at the direction of, and on behalf of, ECHO. A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by ECHO prior to performance of the task.

### **Volunteers are expected to:**

- Come in as scheduled, on time, and stay until the end of the time committed.
- Be pleasant, helpful, welcoming, and understanding when interacting with clients.
- Follow ECHO's policies and procedures as listed in this manual and report any safety concerns or maintenance issues.
- Check in and out and record the hours they have worked.
- Respect the privacy of all clients, volunteers and staff and treat all information as confidential. Volunteer must sign and return a Volunteer Confidentiality Statement.

### **Policies and Procedures**

ECHO Food Shelf recognizes that a work environment free from harassment and hazardous conditions encourages its volunteers toward greater productivity, creativity, and satisfaction. Conduct or any work condition that substantially interferes with your own or another volunteer's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment will not be tolerated. Please refer to the ECHO Policies and Procedures section on the following pages of this handbook. You should report incidents that violate the following

food source. Until the mid-1990's, clients were referred to ECHO by area churches, MVAC, or County Human Service Agencies. This became burdensome for everyone involved, so that now clients self-identify as needing food assistance and come to ECHO without referral.

ECHO provides a 5-7 day supply of food in each food order; each person in a household receives 18-22 pounds of food. A typical order receives canned fruit, vegetables, beans, soup, cereal, rice, pasta, peanut butter, tuna, meat, milk, eggs and bread. Garden produce and other items are provided as available. Soap, detergent, toilet tissue and personal hygiene products are also provided when available from donations.

The great majority of the food and money which ECHO receives comes from the local communities. Local businesses, individuals, and organizations provide support to ECHO. Area churches are vital to ECHO's operation and provide faithful and generous financial and volunteer support.

Dear Volunteer,

Welcome! ECHO's volunteer program consists of a very active group of men, women, and teens working in every area of ECHO. Our volunteers come from all walks of life ... retirees, husband and wife teams, students, and people currently employed with full-time or part-time jobs.

You may join them in one-time special events or for ongoing projects. You will find camaraderie within the volunteers and staff and have opportunities to interact with interesting people. Join the fun! I look forward to working with you.

Edward Babel  
Chairman of the Board  
P.O. BOX 3212  
Mankato, Minnesota 56002  
(507) 345-7477

The new project also involved people from the Salvation Army, the Ministerial Association, Minnesota Valley Action Council, and Blue Earth County Human Services. A community food shelf was planned; and in 1981, a kick-off dinner was held with Viking Jeff Sieman as the speaker. The money raised was used to start the food shelf.

ECHO (Emergency Community Help Organization) was incorporated as an organization that same year. The food shelf was first housed in Lonnie Bristol's basement where the food was stored. Volunteers boxed up the food and took it to MVAC for clients. The first food box was given out in March, 1982.

Since then, the food shelf has relocated three times: first to a room in the Lincoln Community Center, then to the building at 614 South Second Street, and finally to 1014 South Front Street. The South Second Street building, formerly Jerry's Body Shop, was purchased with funds raised by the community (largely from charitable gambling receipts). In 2000, an addition was built which was funded in part by an Open Your Heart grant. In 2011, the South Front Street building (originally DeGroot's Appliance and more recently Costumes Galore) was purchased and funded by a Capital Campaign directed to the Greater Mankato/North Mankato business and residential Community. In the beginning, it was thought that ECHO would serve about 10 families per month with a need for emergency food assistance. Since then, along with emergency assistance, our service has expanded to include families and individuals with longer term or chronic needs. Requests for assistance have grown so that in 2005, ECHO filled over 9,000 requests for food and distributed almost 500,000 pounds of food. In 2010—11, ECHO moved from preparing a standard box of food for clients to a system of Client Choice where the families could "shop the shelves", with volunteer assistance, for food they needed and would be able to use. In 2011, ECHO recorded 16,097 household visits, and averaged 1,300 visits per month. Ninety to one hundred volunteers distributed almost 1,114,000 pounds of food. The average client visited ECHO 5-6 times per year and 20,418 children and 30,871 senior citizens and adults were served.

ECHO serves the people of Blue Earth County and the City of North Mankato. Others who come to the food shelf are given several days' emergency supply of food, if needed, and are directed to an appropriate

policies to your supervisor for discussion and resolution. Any information you provide in good faith regarding harassment or a violation of these or other ECHO policies will not affect your volunteer status in any way.

**Equal Opportunity Policy:** ECHO Food Shelf will recruit, employ, and train volunteers without regard to race, color, religion, gender, age, marital status, national origin, or disability.

**Drug-Free Workplace:** The ECHO Food Shelf recognizes that the use and distribution of controlled substances, including prescription drugs, not only violates the law but also poses serious health and safety risks to ECHO's staff, volunteers, clients and property. ECHO's utmost concern must be for the well being of its entire operations and safety of its property. Consequently, ECHO will take all appropriate actions to maintain a drug-free workplace. The possession, use, distribution, or manufacture of a controlled substance, or being under the influence of such substances, by any of ECHO's volunteers on the premises or while on ECHO business is unlawful. Being under the influence of alcohol while on ECHO's premises or while on ECHO business also is prohibited. If such action is confirmed by a thorough investigation, appropriate actions will be taken, including possible suspension or immediate dismissal.

**Harassment:** It is the policy of ECHO Food Shelf that each volunteer member has the right to work in an environment free of sexual harassment and offensive actions or remarks of a racial, ethnic, religious, disability, age-related, or sexual nature. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances or physical contact, requests for sexual favors, and creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment by such conduct. Harassment also may include remarks, epithets, or jokes that are related to race, ethnic background, age, marital status, sex, disability, or religious affiliation. Any volunteer who engages in this prohibited manner of conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal. If you believe you have been the subject of harassment, you should report the act immediately to your manager. Because a key part of ECHO's policy is its commitment to effective enforcement, volunteers are encouraged to tell the offending person that his or her conduct is unwelcome and request that the conduct cease.

Persons so told are expected to comply immediately and graciously with such a request.

Complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly and discreetly, thereby giving everyone concerned the opportunity to explain the matter fully. If the investigation leads to a determination that the charges of harassment are true, appropriate corrective actions will be taken, including, but not limited to, informal counseling, written warning, suspension and/or dismissal of the offending party. Regardless of the outcome of the investigation of a complaint of harassment, ECHO will not take or knowingly permit any employee or volunteer to take any retaliatory action of any kind against you for reporting acts of harassment. Retaliation in any form is a serious violation of this policy and should be reported immediately. ECHO recognizes that the question of whether a particular action or incident is of a purely personal or social nature and without an injurious effect requires a factual determination. Given the nature of this type of discrimination, ECHO also recognizes that false accusations of sexual harassment can have serious effects on innocent men and women. We trust that all volunteers will continue to act responsibly to establish a pleasant working environment free from harassment.

**Smoking:** In compliance with Minnesota law, in order to preserve the quality of food, and to recognize health and safety concerns, ECHO Food Shelf has adopted a “Smoke-free Workplace” policy. Therefore, smoking is prohibited within buildings owned or leased by ECHO, vehicles, and exhibit areas. Smoking is permitted only in appropriate outdoor areas such as parking areas, walkways, and the picnic table area directly behind the loading dock. Cigarette butts should be disposed of properly.

**Business Communications:** A variety of systems are made available to facilitate conduct of ECHO business. These include U.S. mail, telephone, fax, computer e-mail, bulletin boards, and others. These systems are not available for normal volunteer use. ECHO reserves the right to access, for legitimate business purposes, messages created, received, or sent over these systems. Therefore, the ultimate privacy of messages cannot be assured to anyone and confidentiality is not guaranteed

storage.

### **Power Failure**

1. In the event of a power failure, emergency lights should automatically turn on.
2. Staff persons should immediately retrieve flashlights.
3. Check immediately for persons in the restrooms and break room, as they will be in total darkness. All available staff should then check all areas.
4. Request that all remain where they are until light can be provided.
5. Monitor emergency radio for reports of power repair.
6. If power failure will last for an indefinite time, ECHO may close operations so that refrigerators and freezers can maintain food as long as possible. This will be a managerial decision.

### **Natural Gas Leak**

1. Gas leaks are identified by an odor similar to rotten eggs. Do not use electronic devices or light switches.
2. Evacuate building immediately and move upwind from odor.
3. Once evacuated, a manager will call 911.

### **Armed or Dangerous Person**

1. Staff will call 911; provide location, type of incident, and description of person.
2. Notify others if possible; do not use an alarm.
3. Remain in office; lock all doors or evacuate building if safe to do so.
4. Remain in office or away from building until directed by emergency response personnel.

### **ECHO’s History**

In 1981, the “Bread for the World” group at the Lutheran Campus Center called together people in the community to address the problem of hunger. The people who responded formed a Hunger Action Coalition to find a way to provide a coherent response to hunger in the community rather than the piecemeal way it was being handled. Area churches especially were having a difficult time responding to the people who came to them asking for food assistance.

## **Fire Emergency**

1. The first person aware of a fire shall alert other occupants by shouting fire and alerting the staff on duty.
2. Begin evacuating the building immediately; assist others as long as it does not put you in harms way. Close doors once everyone has evacuated if safe to do so. Do NOT lock doors. Once safely evacuated, go across Front Street to the gas station parking lot. Should the fire be located and if it is small, staff may attempt to extinguish it utilizing the closest fire extinguisher; otherwise staff should close the door to isolate it.
3. Never re-enter the building until emergency services gives permission to do so.

## **Medical Emergency**

1. Staff will call or instruct someone to call 911. Make sure to tell the dispatcher your location, (ECHO Food Shelf at 1014 South Front street).
2. Keep all non-essential individuals away from the scene.
3. If available, post a person at the entrance to assist Emergency Personnel to find the victim.

## **Severe Weather**

1. If weather looks threatening, Staff should monitor conditions and listen for warning to be given on Emergency Radio.
2. If a tornado watch is posted, notify building occupants of the watch and continue monitoring.
3. If a tornado warning is posted, all building occupants should proceed immediately to the “Safe Area” which is in the basement. The basement is accessed with the stairs by the back entrance. If volunteers choose to leave, they must exit ECHO and leave ECHO’s parking lot immediately.
4. Staff will monitor Emergency Radio for change in conditions.
5. Upon notification of “All Clear” signal, staff will access damage and instruct occupants to exit “Safe Area.”
6. During the winter ECHO will be closed for inclement weather when Mankato Public Schools are closed.

## **Hazardous Materials/Chemical Spills**

1. ECHO has no hazardous materials or chemicals other than cleaning supplies which are stored in designated areas apart from food

**Food and Beverages:** In order to preserve and safeguard food storage by reducing or minimizing the risks of spills and potential pest infestation, the storage and consumption of food and beverages by volunteers is restricted to the “Break Room.” Water bottles may be carried and used anywhere in the building.

**Ethics:** A Code of Conduct has been established to provide guidelines for staff and volunteer in carrying out the duties of their affiliation with ECHO Food Shelf. In general, volunteers covered by this code must: fully and conscientiously fulfill the duties of their positions; avoid conflicts of interest; not misuse ECHO’s name, reputation, property, or services; nor shall they compromise its good will in the community.

## **Youth Volunteer Policy**

All minors (under the age of 18 years) must have ECHO permission slips signed by parent or legal guardian.

## **Individual Volunteers**

- Must be at least 16 years old.
- Must make an appointment to schedule work.
- If an appointment cannot be kept must notify ECHO.
- Children age 5-15 years old must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

## **Group Volunteers**

Generally group volunteers are most helpful after major food drives.

- 13 to 16 year old volunteers must have an adult supervisor for every 8 youth.
- 10 to 12 year old volunteers must have an adult supervisor for every 5 children.
- 7 to 10 year old volunteers must have an adult supervisor for every 2 children.
- No child volunteers under the age of 5 years.
- There must be a staff or board member present.

## **Code of Conduct**

**Volunteer Responsibilities:** I agree to be courteous and respectful of all staff, visitors, and other volunteers. I agree to show respect for ECHO property and the personal property of others.

## **Volunteer Behavior:**

- If you become aware of any potentially dangerous and/or illegal situations regarding weapons, drugs, alcohol, fights, property damage, theft, etc., or have information regarding such, you are requested to report it to the manager or other staff person you are working with.
- You are to maintain professional behaviors including refraining from profanity or vulgar language.
- Damaging any ECHO property will not be tolerated. Depending upon circumstances, a police report may be made. Parent or guardian will be liable to pay for damages for youth under age 18.
- You are subject to immediate dismissal for possession of any firearm, knife, explosive or other dangerous object while on ECHO property.
- You are to treat everyone you encounter fairly and with respect, regardless of gender, race, age, religion, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, disability, or economic status.
- If you are also an ECHO client, a staff person, rather than another volunteer will assist you, when you pick up your own order.
- Because you are an ECHO volunteer, you may be approached with questions about starting a food drive or collection. Please refer these requests to ECHO staff.

## **Administrative Information**

**Performance** – Paid employees monitor volunteers. If volunteers are not able to complete the duties, they will be asked to move to a job that better fits their abilities, skills, and interests.

**Recording Hours Worked** – Please remember to record the hours you worked in the Sign In Book in the office. Every year volunteers are recognized for their contributions to ECHO. As a nonprofit organization, we use volunteer hours as a sign of community support.

**Nametag/Identification** – As a volunteer you will receive a nametag. Please wear your identification any time you are volunteering at ECHO. Scheduling - Call or e-mail the office to sign up. Schedules are arranged with the manager.

**Illness/Unavailable for Scheduled Time** - Call the manager as soon as

possible.

**Dress Code** – Dress for the weather; something clean, neat, and comfortable. Because sorting and stocking shelves involves bending over, some types of popular clothing may not be appropriate.

**Changing Your Assignment** – If you are looking for something different from, or in addition to, your current placement, please contact the manager to explain what you are looking for and to see what is available.

**Resignation** – Please give the manager notice of your resignation as soon as possible. We understand that life circumstances, interests, and availability can change. Please let us know if you are no longer able to volunteer at ECHO.

**Dismissal** – Dismissal occurs if the volunteer refuses to follow the guidelines set forth in this document, does not abide by the Code of Conduct, or does not abide by any other policy or procedure listed in this and other volunteer information.

## **ECHO's Emergency Plan**

This Emergency Action Plan is intended to provide guidelines on general evacuation and means of exit along with inclement weather procedures that will help provide protection against injury to building occupants, damage to property, and disruption of operations. All volunteers should become familiar with the provisions of this plan.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

1. All occupants of the ECHO Food Shelf shall evacuate the building when notified by a staff member. Once notified, everyone shall proceed to the nearest safe exit. Exit locations are clearly marked by lighted signs above doors.
2. Once you have safely evacuated the building, proceed to the designated meeting place across Front Street to the gas station parking lot.
3. Re-enter the building only when instructed by emergency services as safe to do so.