



Neighbors, Inc.
Volunteer Handbook

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neighbors, inc.

222 Grand Avenue South
South Saint Paul, MN 55075
P: 651-455-5000
F: 651-455-1319

January 1, 2013

Greetings,

Welcome to Neighbors, Inc.! We are delighted that you have decided to become a volunteer in service to our community through Neighbors. From its beginning in January of 1972 Neighbors has been totally dependent on volunteers to accomplish its mission, which is, "With the help of its volunteers, Neighbors, Inc. will strive to reduce poverty, promote self-sufficiency and build community." What was true in 1972 remains true today; you and your fellow volunteers ARE Neighbors; it is only through you that we are able to serve our community.

We know that you have many options when it comes to the use of your spare time, so we are especially grateful that you have chosen to volunteer with Neighbors. In the past few years the number of persons seeking assistance from Neighbors has exploded. Were it not for the commitment of our volunteers, we would not be able to serve all of those who are in need of assistance.

I hope that you will find your volunteer experience with Neighbors to be highly rewarding and satisfying. Again, welcome to Neighbors, and thank you.

Sincerely,

John Kemp
Executive Director
Neighbors, Inc.

**With the help of its volunteers, Neighbors, Inc. will strive
to reduce poverty, promote self-sufficiency and build community.**

About Neighbors

Welcome to Neighbors

We welcome you as a new volunteer to the Neighbors' team. By donating your time, you ensure that we are able to more effectively meet the needs of individuals and families in our community. It is our hope that your volunteer experience will be rewarding and enjoyable.

Organization Background

Neighbors, Inc. was formed by eighteen volunteers who wanted to create a safety net of services for local families in need of assistance. Since 1972, Neighbors has provided emergency and supportive assistance primarily to persons living in northern Dakota County. Today, over 1,000 volunteers serve Neighbors each year to ensure that people are living hopeful, independent, and self-sufficient lives.

Mission

With the help of its volunteers, Neighbors, Inc. will strive to reduce poverty, promote self-sufficiency, and build community.

Vision

All people who live in Northern Dakota County will have access to the supportive services necessary to live hopeful, independent, self-sufficient lives in which their basic needs are met and they are productive members of their communities.

Core Values

- *Respect* - We believe that all persons are persons of value and worth and we treat each person with courteous regard.
- *Empowerment* - We believe that every person has the ability to make life choices that can lead to self-sufficiency.
- *Compassion* - We care about, and are conscious of, the sufferings or troubles of others and have a sincere desire to help alleviate their burdens.
- *Fairness* - We believe that every person with whom we come in contact has the right to be treated justly and honestly, free from self-interest, prejudice or favoritism.

Contact Information

Neighbors, Inc.
222 Grand Avenue West
South Saint Paul, MN 55075

Main Phone 651-455-5000
Fax 651-455-1319
E-mail info@neighborsmn.org
Website www.neighborsmn.org

Hours of Operation

Office Hours
Monday – Friday, 8:15 am - 4:30 pm

Clothes Closet Hours
Monday – Thursday, 10 am - 7 pm
Friday, Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm

About Volunteering At Neighbors

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer contributes service in the form of time and energy to Neighbors, Inc. towards accomplishing the organization's mission, and:

- Does not receive compensation unless it is for reimbursable expenses or mileage (as defined by Fair Labor Standards Act),
- Has a willingness to serve and freely serves without pressure or coercion,
- Does not perform similar types of work while simultaneously being employed at Neighbors.

A volunteer is not an employee of Neighbors.

Partner in Service

Volunteers are considered "partners-in-service" and are expected to perform duties as outlined, follow instructions from supervisors, work independently, and work cooperatively with other volunteers, employees, and clients.

All volunteers serve with the supervision of support staff or other experienced volunteer. Supervisors will:

- Give you the respect due a fellow member of the team.
- Assign you to a needed task, and provide you with helpful "on-the-job" instruction.
- Discuss with you any matters concerning your volunteer assignment and your performance.

Where to Park

Volunteers may park anywhere in the lower and middle lots. Please try to avoid parking in the far upper lot (closest to the corner of Grand Ave and 3rd Ave) which is available for visitors and clients.

Personal Belongings

Please do not leave your personal belongings unattended. Coats, purses, and bags can be left in special designated areas in the building arranged by each program. Neighbors does not accept responsibility for any lost or stolen property.

Name Tags

Name tags have been provided to all volunteers and employees. We ask that you wear yours. Name tags are used to identify you as a volunteer. If your name tag is lost or damaged please contact the Volunteer Programs Department for a replacement.

Dress Code

It is important for volunteers to dress appropriately for the type of activity they are serving in. Volunteers should also be dressed presentably since they are representing the Neighbors organization through their service. For example, ripped clothing or shirts with inappropriate images or phrases are unacceptable. Activities like the Food Shelf and Clothes Closet require volunteers to be dressed comfortably because of the type of work required. Volunteers at the Front Desk or providing office assistance should dress neatly for the office environment. A volunteer can ask their supervisor for guidance on appropriate dress.

Volunteer Schedule

Service Logs

Please complete a Service Log for the volunteer service you perform. Although each volunteer activity has different methods for tracking hours, your supervisor will inform you of the way you will need to track yours. Service Logs are used to report volunteer service to funders, the Board of Directors and the community. Volunteers are also given recognition for their service based on Service Logs. Most importantly, for insurance reasons it is also used to identify which volunteers provided service on particular days in case of an accident or emergency.

Absences

The service you perform is vital to the organization and the people we help, so it is essential that you are present and on time for all scheduled shifts. If you will not be able to serve on your shift or will be late, please contact your supervisor as soon as possible so a replacement can be found. Assist your supervisor with finding a replacement if asked to help.

If you are ill, such as a cold or flu, on the day that you are scheduled to serve, the volunteer will inform your supervisor, and stay home and get rest. Do not worry about missing your shift. We want to avoid spreading illness to other clients, volunteers and employees. It is more important for you to get better before volunteering.

Holiday and Closure Days

Please check with the supervisor about holidays and other closure days. Traditionally, Neighbors is closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day
Presidents' Day	Independence Day	Day after Thanksgiving
Good Friday	Labor Day	Christmas Day

When New Year's Day, Independence Day, or Christmas Day fall on a Sunday, the following Monday will be considered the holiday. When these holidays fall on a Saturday, the preceding Friday will be considered the holiday.

Unscheduled Agency Closings

In the event of a weather emergency, the agency may close. If you are unsure whether to come in for a scheduled shift during severe weather, call your supervisor. Use good judgment with regard to travel conditions and stay home if you do not feel safe traveling. Finally, be sure to inform your supervisor of your decision.

Exiting Service

While we hope that you enjoy your time volunteering at Neighbors, we do understand that at some point you may need to leave your volunteer activity. If you foresee having to leave Neighbors, either permanently or for a long period of time (i.e. wintering out of state), please notify your supervisor as far in advance as possible. We also ask all volunteers to complete an exit survey before leaving Neighbors permanently. The information collected in the survey will help us enhance the volunteer experience and improve upon our current volunteer program.

Standards of Conduct

Without Judgment and With Respect

Neighbors, Inc. does not discriminate against anyone for any reason because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, age, or other legally protected status.

It is of utmost importance that each person, client, volunteer, donor or employee that does business with Neighbors is treated with respect and served without judgment. Volunteers representing Neighbors have a responsibility to the community we serve. Each person is allowed their own opinions, beliefs, manners of living, and cultural patterns. It is not the place of anyone else to interject, advise or impose their own personal opinions upon another person. Please treat everyone equally, with respect, dignity, and without judgment.

Customer Service

Neighbors is a “community-centered” organization. Volunteers have a responsibility to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of others. When dealing with visitors, customer, clients, volunteers and employees:

- Warmly greet each person you interact with.
- Smile and display overall positive body language.
- Be mindful of the topics you address in conversation.
- Respect boundaries between social interactions and work.
- Recognize that families, children, employees and colleagues come in varieties.

Harassment and Offensive Behavior

To achieve the mission and goals of Neighbors the rights of all employees and volunteers must be respected. It is our policy that each employee or volunteer will enjoy a work environment free of offensive behavior. Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct which has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment is not tolerated. Harassment which is based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or status with regard to public assistance is expressly prohibited. Any individual engaging in such conduct will be subject to appropriate action, including discipline or termination.

One type of harassment which is expressly prohibited is **sexual harassment**. The Minnesota Human Rights Act defines sexual harassment as follows:

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

- submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, for obtaining employment; or
- submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual’s employment; or
- that conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual’s employment, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive atmosphere.

If an employee or volunteer is the victim of harassment or offensive behavior, he/she should first inform the offender that the conduct is not welcome. If it persists, he/she should report the incident to his/her supervisor. If the supervisor is the offender, the employee should report the incident to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is the offender, the employee should report the incident to the Chair of the Internal Affairs Committee of the Board of Directors.

A prompt, thorough, fair investigation will take place, giving careful consideration to protect the rights and dignity of all people involved. Retaliation against an individual for reporting or participating in an investigation of such conduct is prohibited. It is the policy of Neighbors to resolve harassment and offensive behavior issues in as timely and effective a manner as possible. Disciplinary steps may include verbal or written reprimand, suspension, or dismissal.

Confidentiality

We have an obligation to our clients to maintain their confidentiality and respect their privacy. By doing this, Neighbors will continue to serve as a safe place for community members when seeking help during times of crisis and hardship.

Every client that comes through the doors of Neighbors has the right to confidentiality.

As a volunteer at Neighbors, you may learn certain confidential information. Do not disclose or discuss such confidential information outside of the supervision of Neighbors, except in the following circumstances:

- You learn of behavior or conduct that constitutes past or present serious criminal activity, and you believe that disclosing this information will assist in a criminal investigation or avoid possible injury or harm to property or others.
- You learn of physical abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult or other conduct that may be a violation of state law concerning Vulnerable Adults.
- You learn of an individual's intent to harm himself/herself or others.
- You are subpoenaed by a court of law to divulge confidential information.

Particular Neighbors situations will not be discussed in any public setting and information about the person(s) you come in contact with will not be discussed even with other volunteers. If needed, you are able to seek further direction from your supervisor or the Director of Volunteer Programs in a confidential environment. No one is permitted to remove or make copies of any Neighbors records, reports or documents without prior approval. Release of confidential information to unauthorized persons could cause legal ramifications and result in dismissal from your volunteer activity.

Assisting Clients Beyond Assigned Duties

The services Neighbors provides are to be standardized for all clients. For example, volunteers are not allowed to provide clients rides other than the rides that have been set up through the Transportation Program. If someone requests a service outside of your regular volunteer responsibilities, provide them with the Neighbors' main phone number (651-455-5000) to ask for assistance.

Volunteers cannot provide cash, special gifts or favors to any person receiving assistance from Neighbors. Also, volunteers are not to accept gifts from clients, as this may set up an expectation that clients must provide gifts in order to receive assistance.

Phone and Computer Use

Please respect the proper use of phones and computers at Neighbors:

- Volunteers may not use Neighbors' phones to make personal phone calls.
- Turn cell phones off or the ringer to silent.
- Clients are only allowed to use the phone upstairs at the front desk. If you are unsure of whether a request to use the phone is acceptable ask your supervisor.
- Neighbors' computer equipment should only be used for agency purposes, such as for Service Logs, data entry, research, communication, etc. Agency computers are not for personal use, such as personal e-mails, writing personal letters, and printing, transmitting or downloading material that is defamatory, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, offensive or illegal.
- Misuse of agency equipment can result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Facility Appearance

We all have a stake in how Neighbors is represented to our visitors, customers, clients, employees and volunteers. Keep these simple points in mind as you volunteer at the Neighbors building:

- When we come across litter, we will pick it up and dispose of it properly.
- When we spot spills, we will see to it they are cleaned up. We will be especially concerned about any debris or spill that could cause someone to slip and fall.
- Equipment and furniture will be returned to its proper place.

Theft

Theft is taken very seriously at Neighbors and is cause for immediate dismissal. Theft includes, but is not limited to, taking donated items or agency property for personal use, and unauthorized use of agency services or facilities. Neighbors is able to provide assistance because of the items (clothing, food, bakery, household items, etc.) that are donated by the community and organized by our volunteers. In order to continue to help the community and maintain our integrity, it is important that these items get to the people who need them most.

Feedback.

We encourage feedback, but discourage complaining. We are all human and need to vent on occasion, but gossiping and complaining should not occur, especially in earshot of other employees, volunteers, and visitors to Neighbors. If a volunteer needs to deal with a situation they should go to their supervisor or may go through the outlined Grievances procedure.

Grievances

The following procedure will be used to address concerns of volunteers or community members regarding the conduct of any employee or volunteer of Neighbors.

1. If a problem develops, the individuals should meet together to informally attempt to resolve the issue.
2. If Step 1 proves unsuccessful, the complaint should be brought to the attention of the supervising Director who will investigate the complaint and report back to the person bringing the complaint.
3. If Step 2 proves unsuccessful, the individual bringing the complaint should submit, in a reasonable time but not more than 30 days after the alleged occurrence, his or her complaint in writing* to the Executive Director. The Executive Director must respond in writing to the individual bringing the complaint within ten (10) working days.
4. If the individual bringing the complaint is dissatisfied with the response from the Executive Director he or she may appeal to the full Board of Directors. The individual, either in person or through the counsel of both, shall have the right to address the Board of Directors. The decision of the Board of Directors shall be final.

*Alternative means for filing complaints, such as personal interview or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made in those instances where the individual bringing the complaint is unable to bring their complaint in writing. In an attempt to comply with ADA guidelines, Neighbors personnel will be available to assist any person who, due to special needs or limitations, is not able to follow any or all of the above steps in this policy.

Dismissal

Volunteers may be asked to end their volunteer service at the discretion of their supervisor or the Volunteer Programs Department. In general, failure to adhere to policies of Neighbors can be grounds for immediate dismissal. Grounds for immediate dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Gross misconduct or insubordination.
- Reporting for a volunteer assignment or Neighbors sponsored event under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Theft or misuse of agency funds, equipment, or materials.
- Providing false information on the volunteer interest form or during the screening process (this includes false information by omission).
- Illegal, violent or unsafe acts.
- Abuse or mistreatment of clients, fellow volunteers or employees.

- Releasing confidential information.

All incidents will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Director of Volunteer Programs. The volunteer(s) involved with the incident will then have the opportunity to meet with the Director of Volunteer Programs about the incident to review the allegations and evidence, and respond. After the meeting, the Director of Volunteer Programs will decide on what action to take (i.e. dismissal, probation period, etc.). If the volunteer disagrees with the decision the Director of Volunteer Programs made, they may go through the outlined Grievances procedure.

Whistleblower Protection

Neighbors prides itself on its adherence to federal, state and local laws and/or regulations, including business ethics policies. As such, even though it is not obligated to do so, Neighbors, Inc. has decided to voluntarily adopt a whistleblower protection policy. Pursuant to this policy, any employee or volunteer who becomes aware of any violation of federal, state or local law or regulation, including any financial wrongdoing, should immediately report the violation to the Executive Director to allow the organization to investigate and, if applicable, correct the situation or condition.

If the Executive Director is involved, or is believed to be involved, in the matter being reported, employees or volunteers may, in the alternative, make a report to Neighbors Board Chair. The Board Chair and Executive Committee will conduct an investigation and take appropriate action within a reasonable period of time. Such complaints will be held in confidence to the extent the needs of the investigation permit.

“Financial wrongdoing” may include, but is not limited to:

- Questionable accounting practices;
- Fraud or deliberate error in financial statements or recordkeeping;
- Deficiencies of internal accounting controls;
- Misrepresentations to company officers or the accounting department
(including deviation from full reporting of financial conditions.)

If any employee or volunteer reports in good faith what they believe to be a violation of the law and/or financial wrongdoing to the Executive Director or the Board Chair, or to a federal, state or local agency, or assists in an investigation concerning financial wrongdoing, it is Neighbors, Inc.’s policy that there will be no retaliation taken against the employee or volunteer.

Employees and volunteers are reminded of the importance of keeping financial matters confidential. Those with questions concerning the confidentiality or appropriateness of disclosure of particular information should contact the Executive Director.

This policy encourages employees or volunteers to put their names to allegations because appropriate follow-up questions and investigation may not be possible unless the source of the information is identified. Concerns expressed anonymously will be explored appropriately, but consideration will be given to the seriousness of the issue raised; the credibility of the concern; and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Although the employee or volunteer is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, the employee or volunteer should be able to demonstrate that the report is being made in good faith. Allegations made in bad faith may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Safety & Security

Emergency Action Plan

During training, your supervisor will provide instructions for how to handle emergency situations. An Emergency Action Plan is located in the Food Shelf, Clothes Closet, Warehouse, and Front Desk for volunteers to remind themselves of specific procedures.

Accidents and Injuries

If you or anyone else is seriously injured or immobilized while on Neighbors property or while performing a service for Neighbors:

- DON'T GUESS! Call 911 and request an ambulance.
- Seek the appropriate care immediately.
- Contact your supervisor or the nearest employee to complete an accident report.

It is important that Neighbors is made aware of all accidents and injuries, no matter how minor they may appear. Volunteer liability insurance is provided in the event a volunteer should become injured in the course of their volunteer service.

Substance Abuse

Neighbors has no desire to intrude into the personal lives of its volunteers. However, both on-the-job and off-the-job involvement with any mood altering substances can have an impact on our agency and on Neighbors' ability to achieve its objectives of safety and security. Therefore, volunteers are expected to report to their volunteering duty and/or Neighbors sponsored event with no mood altering substances in their body.

The possession, sale or use of mood altering substances while volunteering shall be a violation of safe volunteer practices and will be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal. Volunteers who show signs or evidence of having consumed alcohol, and/or drugs, will not be permitted entrance to Neighbors, be allowed to remain on the facility grounds, or participate in any volunteering capacity. Violators will be dismissed from all volunteer programs.

Criminal History

In order to ensure a safe environment, all potential volunteers must report their criminal history to the Volunteer Programs Department during the volunteer recruitment process and prior to their placement as a volunteer. Potential volunteers who refuse to comply with this request will not be allowed to volunteer. Anyone who is convicted of a felony or convicted of violent crimes, crimes of a sexual nature, theft crimes or identity theft crimes are not eligible to serve or continue serving as a volunteer. All other criminal convictions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, including but not limited to DUIs, DWIs, minor traffic infractions, truancy, and possession of controlled substances.

Driving Record

Some volunteer opportunities may require you to travel to and from various locations using your personal vehicle. You will be considered responsible for fines, traffic violations or accidents incurred on or off your volunteer duty.

Friends & Neighbors and Transportation Program drivers are required to present and maintain possession of a valid driver's license. In order to volunteer, a driver must submit a copy of their driving record to the supervisor. Any changes in your driving record must be reported to the supervisor.

Special Volunteer Circumstances

Volunteers Requiring the Use of a Personal Care Attendant

In order to ensure a safe environment for our volunteers and clients, any volunteer requiring the use of a personal care attendant, accompanying employee or family member must have their attendant with them at all times during their service at Neighbors. All attendants are also considered a volunteer and must complete the same screening process to qualify as any other volunteer. Attendants must be actively engaged with and supervise the volunteer they are accompanying during their scheduled volunteer service.

Clients Serving As Volunteers

Clients who have received any of Neighbors basic assistance services (including the Food Shelf, Clothes Closet, Holiday Program, or cash assistance) may not volunteer at least six months from the last date in which they received assistance. This policy is in place to ensure there is no conflict of interest and to protect confidentiality for both the clients who use Neighbors' services and the volunteers. Additionally, relatives of clients may serve as volunteers, but will not be placed in a position of direct service or relationship to members of their family who are receiving services.

An active volunteer must immediately report the use of Neighbors programs or services while currently volunteering to their supervisor and the Volunteer Programs Department. While receiving assistance, the volunteer will be placed on a "temporary leave" from volunteer service and will last for six months after the last date in which they received assistance. Failure to report the use of services or assistance that has been received within a timely fashion is grounds for ending the volunteer's service at Neighbors.

Nepotism

Recruitment, hiring, promotion, or retention will be without favoritism/discrimination based on relationship to other employees, volunteers, or members of the Board of Directors. For Neighbors to better manage these situations, please inform the Volunteer Programs Department if you are placed in this position in which a relative has supervisory authority over you or is being supervised by you. Relatives are defined as husband, wife, partner, mother, father, son, daughter, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, grandparent, or in-law.

Volunteers Under the Age of 18

Volunteers who are under the age of 18 are required to complete a Parent Guardian Permission Form before beginning volunteer service. There is a minimum age requirement for certain types of volunteer service. Generally, potential volunteers under the age of 18 must provide their date of birth to ensure that they meet the age requirements. Additionally, an adult must accompany a volunteer who is under the age of 14. Accompanying adults must also undergo the same volunteer recruitment and screening process as any other volunteer.

Miscellaneous

Other Ways to Help

Neighbors is grateful to its volunteers, all of whom allow the organization to deliver high quality programs and services to the community. Volunteers are important in supporting Neighbors' work in other ways too. Volunteers interested in supporting Neighbors beyond their volunteer service, should consider the following:

Raise Awareness

- Talk about Neighbors' service in the community with your family and friends. Pass out business cards that can be obtained from the Volunteer Programs Department.
- Schedule a tour of Neighbors for your company, church, or civic group. Or, invite a trained speaker from Neighbors to speak at your next company, church, and/or civic group meeting.
- Become a trained speaker for Neighbors.

Donate

- Conduct a food, clothing, or personal hygiene drive. Please use the "wish list" of current supply needs that is updated monthly and available on our website.
- Make a financial contribution to support Neighbors programs. Cash, check, credit card, or stock gifts of any size are welcomed and appreciated.
- Shop at the Clothes Closet thrift store. All proceeds go to support Neighbors' hunger relief and basic needs programming.
- Encourage your company, church, and/or civic group to adopt Neighbors as their "Charity of Choice". Check with your company to see if they have a "matching gift" program. Many companies will match their employees' donations. Or, check to see if your company has a charitable giving program. If so, talk with them about Neighbors. Companies will often financially support an organization where their employees volunteer.
- Send a gift in honor or memory of a family or friend to Neighbors on their behalf. Or, leave a legacy by naming Neighbors in your will, estate plan, or life income agreement such as a charitable remainder trust or life insurance policy.

For more information on how to support Neighbors financially, contact the Development Department at 651-306-2143 or by e-mail.

Employment at Neighbors

When paid employee positions become available, anyone meeting the position requirements is welcome to apply. Neighbors is an equal opportunity employer, which precludes any special consideration or preferences regardless of volunteer status.

Acknowledgment of Policies and Procedures

The Volunteer Handbook is an important document intended to help you become acquainted with Neighbors, Inc. and its policies and procedures. This handbook will act as a guide to your service at Neighbors; it is not the final word in all cases. Individual circumstances may call for individual attention.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of the Volunteer Handbook and agree to serve within these stated policies and procedures. I understand that I may be dismissed from volunteer service for not adhering to these policies and procedures.

Print Volunteer Name

Volunteer Signature

Date