



**Volunteers of America**

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA & NORTHERN NEVADA**

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## Volunteer Vision Statement

Volunteers of America, Northern California & Northern Nevada (VOA NCNN) places a high value on you, the volunteer. We understand that you have the ability to bring a great deal to our programs in a way that our paid staff cannot. Your presence alone as an unpaid staff member (volunteer) communicates a very powerful message of support for our clients. We recognize your support also allows and/or assists our staff to provide more meaningful and personalized care to them.

As such, we promote and encourage commitment on your part to ensure that you are doing your best to be present in a positive and flexible manner, and without judgment. We ask that you enter our programs as an open-minded learner first. Entering our programs in this way allows you to meet our clients where they are in their lives in a non-threatening and supportive way. We expect that you will do this with care, concern and compassion. We also expect that you will continue these practices during your time with us as a volunteer staff member.

Volunteers of America, NCNN strives to provide you with as much training and support as necessary to assure that you feel confident you are able to incorporate yourself appropriately and with success. If at any time you feel you need further information, additional training or more support, it is your responsibility to request that from your direct supervisor or the Community Engagement Coordinator. We will gladly assist you to the extent that we can in achieving your desired level of training.

Finally, Volunteers of America, NCNN asks that you keep an open line of communication with us regarding any matters that should arise, and if at any time you feel you must discontinue your service with us you agree to notify us in person, via electronic communication, writing, or phone. We promise the same standard of communication with you.

# Mission, Vision, & History

## Mission

To change individual lives, instill hope, increase self-worth and facilitate independence, through quality housing, employment, and related supportive services.

## Vision

Strengthening communities by providing the blueprint and tools for individuals to rebuild their lives and reach their full potential.

## National History

On March 8, 1896, Ballington Booth, the son of the Salvation Army founders, and his wife, Maud Charlesworth Booth, the refined daughter of an Anglican rector, made a bold announcement. In the Great Hall of New York City's Cooper Union, they pronounced to a crowd of thousands the birth of a new organization dedicated to serving the spiritual and material needs of the poor and disadvantaged - Volunteers of America.

Maud and Ballington envisioned a movement committed to "reaching and uplifting" the American people. On behalf of the new organization, the Booths pledged to "go wherever we are needed, and do whatever work comes to hand," a declaration that has guided Volunteers of America's outreach efforts ever since.

The name Volunteers of America was chosen by our founders, Ballington and Maud Booth, when the organization was founded 125 years ago. They volunteered to dedicate their hearts, spirits, and lives to help reach and uplift people in need. Our name meant the organization was comprised of people voluntarily choosing to help others. Back in 1896, a volunteer was anyone who was committed to a mission or cause.

## Our Work

Founded locally in 1911, the Northern California & Northern Nevada affiliate of Volunteers of America (VOA NCNN) is one of the largest providers of social services in the region, operating more than 40 programs including housing, employment services, substance abuse and recovery services to families, individuals, veterans, seniors, and youth. In fact, VOA NCNN provides shelter or housing to over 3,000 men, women and children every night. Nationally, Volunteers of America helps more than 1.5 million people annually in more than 400 communities.

# Core Values

## Team Work

Together as a team, we can achieve what individuals cannot. Our individual strengths energize our joint efforts to improve the lives of the people we serve.

## Respect

We are richer and stronger because of our diversity and we promote an environment that offers dignity, understanding, and compassion in order to reach and empower all.

## Accountability

We hold ourselves personally and collectively responsible to do right and adhere to ethical principles in an environment of openness and honesty.

## Communication

We are committed to the timely and transparent exchange of information and ideas and encourage respectful interaction through listening, understanding, and assumption of positive intent.

## Customer Service

We strive for the highest standards in all we do and seek continuous improvement through feedback from our partners and those we serve.

## Purpose of Volunteer Handbook

The purpose of these Volunteer Handbook Policies is established to serve the best interests of the volunteer and Volunteers of America, NCNN. This Handbook is designed to answer many of your questions regarding volunteering. This Handbook applies to VOA NC & NN volunteers. It provides information outlining our policies. We will try to keep the manual current, but there may be times when a policy may change before the manual can be revised. You should keep this Handbook as a reference throughout your volunteer assignment with us.

# Policies

## Absences

We know that emergencies happen and that volunteers may not be able to come in for their designated volunteer time. In the case of an emergency, it is important that you notify us as soon as possible. The regular, dependable attendance of each volunteer is considered an essential part of our successful service and operation.

## Background Checks

Additional screening procedures may be instituted when volunteers will be placed in direct contact with clients, responsible for financial or other valuable organizational resources, or in other positions identified by the local office. These procedures may include reference checks, criminal background checks, etc. Volunteers who refuse permission to conduct these checks will not be accepted for placement in these identified positions. If a background check is required, volunteers must use VOA NCNN's background check and the cost is paid for by the volunteer.

## Confidentiality

It is imperative that anything you see, hear, know, or witness regarding any of our clients and their circumstances remains strictly confidential. Volunteers are not to disclose client information to anyone, including other clients, volunteers or individuals on or off Volunteers of America premises, except as mandated by law. This includes seeing someone you know accessing any of our services. Confidentiality extends to include any knowledge of a client's history.

## Boundaries

Volunteers are never to enter into any type of relationship with clients. This includes business, personal, social (including social media platforms), and sexual relationships.

Volunteers are never to engage in messaging or becoming social media friends or followers of clients on any social media platform. This includes, but is not limited to Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, etc.

Volunteers are never to take photos or videos showing our clients.

Volunteers are never to buy or sell items to clients.

Volunteers are never to invite clients to their homes.

Volunteers are never to invite clients to spend the night at their homes.

Volunteers are never to transport clients in their personal automobiles.

Volunteers are never to share personal information with a client. This includes, addresses and phone/cell numbers and personal information about themselves or about family members' situations.

Volunteers are never allowed to arrange to meet a client outside of the facility.

Volunteers are never allowed to share any kind of information about another client with a client.

Volunteers are never to have any outside contact with clients (other than incidental contact) with a client, his/her family or close associates, except those activities which are an approved integral part of the program.

Volunteers are never allowed to show favoritism or preferential treatment of one client or group of clients over another. This includes bringing in items or donations, give any gifts, favors or services to specific clients, their families or close associates.

Volunteers are never to accept or request for themselves, or any member of their families, any personal gift, favors or services (i.e. changing tires, jump starting cars, clearing snow from vehicle etc.) from any client or any clients' family or close association, no matter how trivial the gift or service may seem.

Violations of policies and procedures related to volunteer-client relationships are dealt with in a very serious manner and result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of volunteer service. Please seek supervision from the Community Engagement Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns regarding appropriate professional boundaries.

### [Dress Guidelines for Employees, Volunteers & Interns](#)

In a professional/casual work setting, volunteers should wear clothing that is comfortable and practical for work, but not distracting or offensive to others. Any clothing that has words, terms, or pictures that may be offensive to other volunteers or employees is unacceptable.

### [Drivers](#)

Volunteers who drive personal vehicles on company business must provide evidence of automobile liability insurance as required by the state of California. A current certificate or proof of insurance must be kept in the volunteer's file.

### [Drug & Alcohol Policy](#)

Reporting to volunteer work under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, or drugs (except on medical prescription), being on Volunteers of America, NCNN premises while under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, or drugs, and manufacturing, bringing, having, consuming, or distributing alcohol, any controlled substance, or drugs on our premises are strictly prohibited.

### [Harassment Including Sexual Harassment](#)

It is our intent to provide a work environment free from all verbal, physical and visual forms of unlawful harassment. All volunteers are expected to be sensitive to, and respectful of, their co-workers and others with whom they come into contact with while representing Volunteers of America. Volunteers of America expressly prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment, whether due to sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, color, national origin, citizen status, creed, religion, age, mental or physical disability, status as a veteran, political ideology or any other reason protected by law. Any unwanted behavior, jokes, or comments are considered to be harassment.

### In-Kind Donations from Volunteers

Volunteers are welcome to make in-kind donations of material goods and supplies to the programs in which they serve. Volunteers are not permitted to make reimbursable purchases for any program. If you make a purchase for a program, you understand that it is an in-kind donation and you may not request reimbursement. Monetary donations are our greatest need.

### Outside Interactions

Based on the vulnerability of our clients, if you see a client outside of Volunteers of America, contact and acknowledgment is at the discretion of the client. Otherwise, a simple courtesy “hello” or smile is appropriate.

### Record of Volunteer Hours

The contribution of our volunteers’ time is important. We must keep an accurate record of volunteer hours to show the contribution to the agency from the community. This information is important to our grantors when Volunteers of America applies for funding. Therefore, we ask that you record your volunteer hours per the procedure of the program in which you are volunteering. \* *Unfortunately Volunteers of America, NCNN is unable to validate court-appointed volunteer hours*

### Safety

Each staff and volunteer is expected to obey safety rules and exercise caution in all work activities. Immediately report any unsafe condition or hazardous situations that you observe to staff. If you are unsure how to do a job safely, ask staff.

### Reporting Injuries

Volunteers must immediately report any injuries while volunteering. Their supervisor will provide an Accident Report to be completed immediately. If a volunteer witnesses an accident they should notify their supervisor or any supervisor on shift immediately. A written report must also be completed.

### Technology

If your volunteer position requires computer use, or other devices, the expectation is that you will use this technology solely for your volunteer work with our organization. VOA computers and other devices are not for personal use. Please do not use your personal cell phones in front of clients. If you need to take a call, please step into an office or outside.

### Volunteers of America Property

All Volunteers of America property and donations must remain at the Volunteers of America site, unless otherwise approved by an appropriate staff person.

### Weapons

Weapons are prohibited on Volunteers of America’s premises. This policy applies to weapons of all kinds, including guns, knives, and related paraphernalia such as ammunition.

### Youth Volunteers

Due to the nature of our agency and the services we provide, Volunteers must be 13 years of age or older. Volunteers who have not reached the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. The volunteer activity that is assigned to a minor must be performed in a non-hazardous environment and comply with all appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

### News Media Inquiries

No volunteer may give information concerning Volunteers of America or any of its programs or clients to the news media unless specifically authorized to do so by management. These inquiries should be referred to the Director of Communications.

### Warning & Dismissal

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the organization or who fail to perform their volunteer assignments at a satisfactory level may be subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with their supervisors. Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of organization equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of clients or co-workers, failure to abide by organization policies and procedures, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

## Acknowledge of Receipt

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have been given and read the Volunteers of America, NCNN Volunteer Handbook. I understand that it summarizes VOA NCNN's volunteer guidelines and expectations of me as a volunteer. I understand that volunteering with VOA NCNN is not for a specified term and is at the mutual consent of VOA NCNN and myself. I agree to abide by the Policies and Procedures laid out in the Volunteer Handbook.

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Print Name

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Signature

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Date