

# THE SAFE STEP

*Your connection to protecting those who improve your community*



## TRAINING AND SUPERVISION FOR VOLUNTEER SAFETY AND SUCCESS

### WHY VOLUNTEER AGREEMENTS MATTER

Written volunteer agreements are essential for nonprofit and community-serving organizations. They help:

- Clarify the scope of a volunteer's role and responsibilities.
- Confirm the absence of compensation, reinforcing the unpaid nature of the relationship.
- Distinguish volunteers from employees, helping avoid misclassification.
- Protect both the organization and the volunteer from legal and financial risks.

### BEST PRACTICES

#### 1. Volunteer Agreement Elements A strong volunteer agreement should include:

- **Role Description:** Define the duties, expectations and limitations of the volunteer position.
- **Compensation Clause:** Clearly state that the volunteer will not receive wages, benefits or any form of compensation.
- **At-Will Relationship:** Emphasize that either party may end the relationship at any time.
- **Acknowledgment of Policies:** Require volunteers to acknowledge receipt and understanding of the Volunteer Handbook and safety policies.
- **Separation from Employment:** If the volunteer is also an employee, affirm that the volunteer service is entirely separate from their paid role.
- **Consideration Clause:** Describe the non-monetary benefits the volunteer receives (e.g., training, experience, networking opportunities).

#### 2. Legal and Risk Considerations

- Volunteers must not receive wages, benefits or incentives that could be viewed as compensation
- Any stipends or reimbursements must be limited and documented
- Employees should never be pressured to volunteer outside of paid work hours

#### 3. Implementation

- Require all volunteers to sign a Volunteer Agreement before beginning service.
- Provide role-specific training and safety orientation.
- Conduct periodic reviews of volunteer roles to ensure they remain distinct from employee duties.
- Document all volunteer hours, training and incidents for accountability and insurance purposes.
- Include a clear disciplinary and termination policy in the Volunteer Handbook.

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