**Volunteer Program And Policies of [Your Sanctuary]**

1. **Purpose Of The Volunteer Policies:**

Volunteer policies are provided to offer guidance and direction to volunteers and volunteer interns at [Your Sanctuary]. The policies are intended to clarify the roles and responsibilities of volunteers. The policies are for internal management guidance only, and do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. Volunteers are not employees of [Your Sanctuary]. [Your Sanctuary] reserves the exclusive right to change any volunteer program policies at any time. Volunteers will be notified as to any changes and all volunteers will be responsible for adherence to the updated policy. [Your Sanctuary] may consider exceptions or requests for changes to these policies. Change or exception requests must be addressed to [Your Sanctuary] in writing. Final approval will be discussed and issued accordingly.

**Roles Of The Volunteers**

[Your Sanctuary]considers volunteers as partners in implementing the mission, vision, and values of the organization.

**Mission: [Your Sanctuary’s** [**Mission Statement:**](https://opensanctuary.org/article/creating-a-business-plan-for-your-sanctuary/#your-organizations-mission-vision-and-values)**]**

**Vision: [Your Sanctuary’s Vision Statement:]**

**Values: [Your Sanctuary’s Values:]**

**Definition of “Volunteer” and Categories of Volunteer Involvement:**

A “volunteer” is anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task under the direction of and on behalf of [Your Sanctuary]. Volunteers are not employees of [Your Sanctuary].

Volunteers of [Your Sanctuary] can be divided into the following categories:

**a. One-Time Volunteers**

These volunteers provide professional services, special event support, or service for one-time project(s). They are not regularly scheduled volunteers at [Your Sanctuary]. One-time volunteers may be exempt from certain policies, which will be noted in the appropriate sections of this handbook.

**Suggested Requirements:**

i. Hours of volunteer service will vary and depend on the project

ii. Sign a Volunteer Agreement and Liability Waiver

iii. Complete a Volunteer Application

**Training**

i. Training/instructions (if necessary) will be provided either on the day of service, or in advance depending on the complexity of duties

**Limitations**

i. Not allowed to handle animal residents.

**b. Regular Volunteers**

These volunteers commit to regularly being a part of [Your Sanctuary]’s operations in the department of their choosing.

**Suggested Requirements:**

i. Be able to commit to at least 2+ hours per week

ii. Complete a Volunteer application

iii. Sign a Volunteer Agreement and Liability Waiver

**Training**

i. Attend all volunteer meetings that pertain to the volunteer’s selected function

ii. Shadow a [Your Sanctuary] staff member or volunteer leader within the area of selected department for initial training

iii.Training/instructions (if necessary) will be provided either on the day of service, or in advance depending on the complexity of duties

**Limitations**

i. Animal handling depends on the volunteer’s selected department. Prior to handling residents, training is required.

**c. Internships**

Interns are selected to help on a specific project or program for a specified amount of time. They are recruited from an outside group or school.

**Requirements:**

i. Be able to commit to certain hours in a week depending on the position.

ii. Complete an Internship application.

iii. Sign an Internship Agreement and Liability Waiver

iii. Interview with appropriate department head of [Your Sanctuary]

**Training:**

i. Attend all volunteer meetings that pertain to the intern’s selected function

ii. Shadow a [Your Sanctuary] volunteer leader within the selected function

iii. Training/instructions (if necessary) will be provided either on the day of service, or in advance depending on the complexity of duties

**Limitations:**

i. Animal handling depends on the intern’s department. Prior to handling residents, training is required.

**d. Volunteer Leaders**

Volunteer Leaders are experienced volunteers who provide training, guidance and support to fellow volunteers.

Volunteer Leaders act as ambassadors of the volunteer program and [Your Sanctuary]. They provide support to all volunteers and ensure consistency in care and safety protocols.

**Requirements:**

i. Must demonstrate competency and excellence within their selected department

**Training:**

i. Attend all volunteer meetings that pertain to the volunteer’s selected

department

**Limitations:**

i. Animal handling depends on the volunteer’s selected department. Prior to handling residents, training is required.

**Volunteer Proposed Projects And Events**

All projects and events that may utilize [Your Sanctuary] volunteers, including volunteer committees, must follow the same [Your Sanctuary] policies and procedures that apply to all other [Your Sanctuary] volunteer activities. Projects may include but are not limited to fundraisers, education opportunities, outreach opportunities, etc.

**Scope Of Volunteer Involvement**

[Your Sanctuary] may ask volunteers to participate in all programs and activities that are deemed appropriate by [Your Sanctuary] provided these volunteers possess the required levels of skill (if necessary) and are willing to work on that particular event.

**II. Volunteer Management Procedures**

**1. Record Maintenance**

Each volunteer at [Your Sanctuary] will have an individual record on file using a sign-in sheet that shall include dates of service, duties performed at [Your Sanctuary], and track their volunteer hours. Original volunteer applications for active volunteers will be kept on file.

**2. Non Harassment And Anti-Violence Policy**

[Your Sanctuary] is committed to providing a work environment free of unlawful harassment. It is the policy of [Your Sanctuary] that hostility, threats, intimidation, assaults and/or violence will not be tolerated. [Your Sanctuary] policy also prohibits sexual harassment, and harassment based on race, religious creed, color, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, or any other basis protected by Federal, State or local law. [Your Sanctuary]’s anti-harassment and anti-violence policy applies to all persons involved in the operation of [Your Sanctuary] and prohibits unlawful harassment by any volunteer of [Your Sanctuary], including any person doing business with or for [Your Sanctuary].

In order to insure a safe, productive work environment at [Your Sanctuary] grounds, it is necessary that this policy be strictly enforced. If a volunteer is aware of any type of harassment, hostility, threat, intimidation, assault or violence to or by a volunteer of [Your Sanctuary], they are asked to please contact a staff member immediately. Because [Your Sanctuary] desires to stop harassment or violent behavior before it occurs, it is important to know some of the early warning signals.

The following are a few possible indications of potential violence in the work environment. Volunteers are asked to please notify a staff member if they are concerned that workplace violence may occur. [Your Sanctuary] needs each volunteer’s assistance in reporting violations of this policy, and in maintaining a safe and productive work environment.

a. Intimidating others, or instilling fear in co-volunteer.

b. Verbal threats of harm, e.g. predicting that bad things are going to happen to a co-volunteer.

c. Threatening actions such as menacing gestures or flashing concealed weapons.

d. Obsessive behavior in the form of holding a grudge against a co-volunteer, or in some cases, a fascination with an unrequited romantic interest.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

a. Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments.

b. Visual conduct such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented posters, calendars, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures.

c. Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement, or interfering with work because of gender, race or any other protected basis.

d. Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued program participation, or to avoid some other loss, and offers of benefits in return for sexual favors.

e. Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment, or for initiating or assisting in any action or proceeding regarding unlawful harassment or discrimination.

All threats of violence or harassment will be taken seriously. If any volunteer believes that they have been unlawfully harassed, that person should submit a complaint to [Your Sanctuary] as soon as possible after the incident. The complaint should include details of the incident or incidents, names of the individuals involved, and the names of any witnesses. [Your Sanctuary] will investigate all harassment allegations.

Upon completion of the investigation, a determination will be made, and the concerned parties will be notified of the outcome. If [Your Sanctuary] determines that unlawful harassment has occurred, effective remedial action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances involved, including action to prevent any further harassment. This may include counseling for the alleged perpetrator, discipline, and/or discharge of the perpetrator, additional security measures, or other appropriate action under the circumstances and as provided by law.

**3. Conflicts Of Interest**

[Your Sanctuary]’s volunteer applicants who have conflicts of interest with the mission, vision and values of [Your Sanctuary], or develop a conflict of interest during their volunteer service, and promote or use that conflict to the detriment of any of [Your Sanctuary]’s operations, may be asked to take a break in providing service with [Your Sanctuary]. Volunteers who undermine the mission of [Your Sanctuary], or work to the detriment of [Your Sanctuary]’s policies and procedures, operations or programs may be asked to take a temporary break from [Your Sanctuary], or asked to discontinue their service at [Your Sanctuary] entirely in the event that an amicable resolution cannot be met.

**4. Representation Of [Your Sanctuary]**

Prior to taking any action, or making any statement that might affect or create an obligation for [Your Sanctuary] or disseminating information obtained from [Your Sanctuary] that is not otherwise available to the public, volunteers must obtain written clearance from [Your Sanctuary]. All media interactions and all fundraising activities must be approved in advance by [Your Sanctuary]. Such actions and statements may include, but are not limited to:

a. Posting information as described above that is obtained from [Your Sanctuary], or personal information concerning or identifying [Your Sanctuary] volunteers, or false information about [Your Sanctuary] on any internet site, such as Facebook, Twitter, Craigslist, Instagram etc.

b. Public statements or statements to the press while appearing to represent [Your Sanctuary].

c. Attempting to create a coalition on behalf of [Your Sanctuary] with other organizations without prior permission from [Your Sanctuary].

d. Lobbying individuals, groups, organizations, or government bodies or representatives (i.e.: rescues, veterinarians, behaviorists, trainers, etc.) on behalf of [Your Sanctuary].

f. Making agreements involving any contractual or financial obligations on behalf of [Your Sanctuary].

g. Using the [Your Sanctuary] logo, name or image of any animal in [Your Sanctuary]’s care on any promotional or informational materials.

h. Using the [Your Sanctuary] name to organize meetings, gatherings or social events without prior notification to [Your Sanctuary].

i. Fundraising using [Your Sanctuary]’s name or animals.

j. Publication or use of any confidential information as described in Section 5 below without written consent from [Your Sanctuary].

**5. Confidentiality**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as volunteers for [Your Sanctuary], whether this information involves a single volunteer, client, animal, other person, or overall [Your Sanctuary] organization. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in asking the volunteer to discontinue their service. All volunteers will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement before volunteering at [Your Sanctuary]. Confidential information includes but is not limited to: animal and client information from our computer system, whether gained through the course of volunteer service or from other internal sources, shelter photographs, all records, files, forms, applications, mail lists, passwords, security codes, correspondence, messages or any other entities belonging to [Your Sanctuary] and/or bearing [Your Sanctuary]’s logo and/or name. Such information is the sole property of [Your Sanctuary] and may not be disseminated, used, published or sold without the written consent of [Your Sanctuary].

**6. Work Assignments**

Volunteers are assigned to various duties according to the department picked by the volunteer. If a volunteer is interested in helping in any other area, they should notify a [Your Sanctuary] staff member.

**7. Dress Code**

Volunteers are asked to present a clean and neat appearance. Dress codes vary by volunteer activity and season, and must be followed for the volunteer’s safety and for the safety of the residents.

1. Long pants or jeans are recommended to be worn while working at [Your Sanctuary]. This means no shorts, skirts, leggings or sweatpants. For off-site events, please dress according to the nature of the event.
2. Please dress warmly during the winter months. Cover-all (highly recommended), or snow pants, gloves, warm boots and hats are highly recommended. It is very cold in the working area, and at times it may be slippery or snowy on the grounds.
3. Only low heeled, closed toe shoes may be worn with non-slippery soles.
4. Attire must be neat, clean, and without any offensive language or graphics.
5. When working directly with the residents, no purses or any type of shoulder bag should be worn, only hands-free bags, such as backpacks or fanny packs.
6. Jewelry must be kept to a minimum. Dangling earrings or necklaces may not be worn for the safety of the residents.
7. Summer hats may be worn while outside, but not while working in the stall areas indoors.

**9. Drug And Alcohol Policy**

[Your Sanctuary] has a zero tolerance policy for drug and alcohol use on [Your Sanctuary]‘s property. [Your Sanctuary] has a significant interest in promoting a safe and productive atmosphere for all volunteers. The use of or being under the influence of illegal drugs on [Your Sanctuary]‘s premises, or while conducting [Your Sanctuary]‘s business is inconsistent with [Your Sanctuary]’s policy and is prohibited. Consumption of alcoholic beverages while on [Your Sanctuary]’s premises is likewise prohibited unless authorized by [Your Sanctuary] solely at a corporate function/event. However, under no circumstances is intoxication allowed while on [Your Sanctuary]’s premises or while conducting business.

**10. Cell Phones And Other Electronic Devices**

The use of cell phones and other electronic devices is strictly forbidden when directly interacting with any residents. This is for the safety of the resident and the person interacting with the resident. Volunteers may use these devices only when not interacting with residents.

**11. Smoking**

[Your Sanctuary] complies with state and local laws concerning smoking and is a smoke-free workplace. Smoking is prohibited anywhere within [Your Sanctuary]’s property and within 50 feet from [Your Sanctuary]‘s property or vehicles.

**12. Absenteeism**

Our residents are counting on volunteer help. Volunteers must make every effort to show up and be on time for their committed volunteer hours. We recognize that there may be times when a volunteer’s absence or tardiness cannot be avoided. In such cases, it is the volunteer’s responsibility to email or telephone [Your Sanctuary]’s staff or volunteer leadership prior to any absence or tardiness, or as soon as possible directly after.

If a volunteer knows they are going to be absent for an extended period of time, they should contact [Your Sanctuary]’s staff or volunteer leadership in advance so other arrangements can be made to cover their volunteer hours.

**13. Language**

Volunteers are requested to not use inappropriate or insolent language to any other volunteer or staff member of [Your Sanctuary], or to any person conducting business with [Your Sanctuary], including members of the public.

**14. Activity Records**

Individual volunteers are responsible for signing in and out daily and for recording their volunteer duties and hours. All volunteers, including one-day volunteers working on special projects and/or events, must have releases signed in advance.

**15. Friends and Relatives**

Volunteers are welcome to bring friends or family members with them during their scheduled volunteer shifts, but will need to pre-arrange this with [Your Sanctuary]’s staff or volunteer leadership before arrival. The friends or relatives will need to sign a waiver form and sign in/out for [Your Sanctuary] records. A volunteer’s friends or relatives will need to be with the volunteer at all times.

**16. Minors As Volunteers**

[Your Sanctuary] will not accept volunteers under the age of 16, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. Volunteers between the ages of 16 and 18 need to work alongside an adult. Volunteers who are over the age of 18 can volunteer at [Your Sanctuary] unsupervised.

**17. Accident Or Injury**

Any injury to a volunteer or to an animal, including but not limited to animal bites, falls, or slips, should be reported immediately to [Your Sanctuary]. In all of these instances, an Incident Report will need to be completed immediately and submitted. If a volunteer is injured at an event, they should contact [Your Sanctuary]’s staff or volunteer leadership immediately. It is essential that all incidences of animal bites be reported immediately to [Your Sanctuary]‘s management. Volunteers are not covered by [Your Sanctuary]’s insurance policies for injuries they incur as a result of their volunteer activities.

**III. Volunteer Training and Development**

**1. Orientation and Guidelines**

All volunteers must attend a general orientation that covers the mission, vision and values of [Your Sanctuary]. The volunteer applicant must complete a volunteer application and sign a release form. If interested in daily care, feeding and maintenance, they must be trained in these specific tasks from a qualified staff member or volunteer leader.

**2. Volunteer Involvement in Orientation and Training**

Experienced volunteers may be asked to assist with the design and delivery of volunteer orientations.

**IV. The Relationship Between Volunteers And [Your Sanctuary]**

**1. Volunteer Relationships**

Volunteers are considered to be an integral part of implementing the mission and programs of [Your Sanctuary], each volunteer contributing a valuable and complementary role.

**2. Lines Of Communication**

Volunteers need to have a complete understanding of their work assignments to ensure success. Volunteers will have access to all appropriate information if required. To keep the lines of communication open, volunteers are expected to read [Your Sanctuary]‘s volunteer newsletters, and emails.

**3. Concerns, Complaints And Suggestions**

Volunteers are encouraged to discuss any concerns related to their volunteer assignment with [Your Sanctuary]’s staff or volunteer leadership. Secondarily, they may take their concerns, complaints or suggestions to [Your Sanctuary]. Written documentation is requested (email is acceptable) for any serious concerns or safety matter.

**4. Unable To Continue Volunteering At [Your Sanctuary]**

Volunteers are under no contractual obligation to continue their service at [Your Sanctuary]. It is requested that volunteers who are unable to continue their service at [Your Sanctuary] provide advance notice and reason to [Your Sanctuary]’s staff or volunteer leadership.

**5. Reasons for requesting the volunteer to take a break from providing service at [Your Sanctuary]**

a. Cruelty to animals

b. Failure to be respectful of other volunteers

c. Failure to follow [Your Sanctuary] policies and procedures

d. Harassment of any kind

e. Volunteering under the influence of drugs or alcohol

f. Utilizing [Your Sanctuary] property for any illegal or unauthorized purposes