



# **Volunteer Handbook**

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**The Volunteer Handbook was organized in conjunction with the North Liberty Community Pantry Operations Manual. Please refer to the Operations Manual for more information about the topics and information in this Handbook.**

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## Mission Statement

The mission of the North Liberty Community Pantry is to engage our community in feeding and clothing our neighbors.

## Vision Statement

We will become the model for other community food pantries as reported by colleagues and leaders in community pantries.

## Value Statements

- Everyone has the right to be free from hunger
- Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect
- Families need community support to be successful
- Families have the right to self-determination
- The community has a role/social responsibility in providing for their members
- Everyone deserves healthy nutrition choices, along with the access to knowledge and resources to implement healthy eating

## Volunteer Ethics Statements

- Volunteers shall be expected to uphold the mission and values of the North Liberty Community Pantry.
- In providing services to its clients, the Pantry shall respect each client's right to receive services with informed and voluntary consent.
- Volunteers are expected to report and responsibly handle any financial donations made for the Pantry.

## Services

### **Food**

Families may pick up food once per week. In-area families are able to choose their food items. Out-of-area families will be given sacked food. See the **Operations Manual** for more information about eligibility and special circumstances, such as families picking up for other families and families receiving deliveries.

### **Clothing**

Each family is allowed a total of four pieces of clothing per family member, per month. A family of four would be able to select a total of 16 clothing items monthly. In addition, families are eligible to receive Goodwill vouchers once every 6 months. See the **Operations Manual** for more details about this service.

## **Toiletries**

Each family is eligible for one bottle of liquid laundry detergent or one container of dry detergent every two months. Each family is eligible for one double roll of toilet paper per week (or two single rolls per week).

## **Additional Services**

Please see the **Operations Manual** for a description of additional services provided by the Pantry through special projects.

## **Volunteer Application Process**

Interested community members may sign up and attend the next scheduled volunteer orientation to be trained as a Pantry volunteer. The necessary paperwork will be completed at new volunteer orientation. Two references and a background check will be required. References may not be immediate family members. Children under age 16 should be referred directly to the Executive Director.

## **Background Checks**

Background checks are required before volunteering at the Pantry. The background check includes a volunteer support committee member utilizing:

- Iowa Courts Online - [www.iowacourts.state.ia.us](http://www.iowacourts.state.ia.us)
- The National Sexual Offender Registry - [www.nsopr.gov](http://www.nsopr.gov)
- Iowa Sex Offender Registry - [www.iowasexoffender.com](http://www.iowasexoffender.com)

The volunteer support committee is responsible for determining whether an individual with a background check in question will be allowed to volunteer. Applicants who have been convicted of crimes against people or property will not be allowed to volunteer at the Pantry if the crime directly relates to their desired volunteer role. Background checks will be repeated every two calendar years for all Pantry volunteers. Background checks will be completed for volunteers assisting with special events for the Pantry in which they will have direct client contact. Those volunteering for a one time, special event not involving client contact may not be subject to complete background checks.

## **Transportation**

Volunteers are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from the Pantry. All volunteers driving for the Pantry are required to have a valid driver's license, as well as liability insurance coverage. Volunteers who have been convicted of driving under the influence in the last five years and volunteers with an excess number of moving violations may not be allowed to drive for the Pantry. The Volunteer Support committee is responsible for making such determinations, on a case by case basis.

## **Volunteer Expectations**

Upon completion of orientation and a completed background check, volunteers will be able to pick times and days that they are able to volunteer at the Pantry. On occasion, volunteers may be asked to complete tasks that are not previously scheduled. Volunteering at the Pantry includes helping those who are in need of emergency food and clothing services in the community. Please see the **Code of Conduct**.

All volunteers are expected to abide by pantry policies. Please see the **Volunteer Expectations** document for a detailed explanation of the pantry's expectations of volunteers.

It is expected that volunteers arrive on time and work the entire duration of the time or special event that they are scheduled. Volunteers are responsible for finding their own replacement if they can't work a scheduled shift or event. Otherwise, the Volunteer Coordinator should be notified as soon as possible if a volunteer will be unable to fulfill their commitment.

## **Customer Service Expectations**

Every family should be treated with respect and kindness. It can be very difficult for families to use the Pantry's services; therefore, treating them with dignity and respect is essential to them feeling welcome and accepted. Each family deserves to receive sufficient and satisfactory services while utilizing the Pantry. Remember, the Pantry is not giving away diamonds. Please see the **Code of Conduct** Appendix that each volunteer is required to read, review, and sign before beginning as a volunteer.

## **Other Pantry Policies**

### **Confidentiality**

#### **Client Confidentiality**

All volunteers are expected to keep the identity and any other information regarding families using the pantry strictly confidential. Communications and observations between families and volunteers that occur during a shift are private and should not be shared with others. All client information is kept confidential. It is only appropriate for a volunteer to speak with a family they see in the community if the family initiates conversation. Please see the **Confidentiality Statement** for a more detailed explanation of our client confidentiality expectations.

#### **Volunteer Confidentiality**

Identifying and contact information about Pantry volunteers or Pantry staff will not be given out to any clients under any circumstances. This protects the safety and identity of the volunteers at the Pantry.

## Non-Discrimination of Goods and Services

The Pantry's policy is to provide equal treatment in provision of goods and services to its consumers without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, disability or veteran status (hereinafter "Protected Category Status").

The Pantry's policy is to assure that no person will be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination for any goods or services offered by the Pantry because of Protected Category Status. No activity undertaken by the Pantry may be used to promote any discriminatory practice nor shall the Pantry become a party to any agreement that permits any discriminatory practice. The Pantry shall not grant, deny or revoke any privilege to obtain goods from or use the services of the Pantry on the basis of Protected Category Status.

## Harassment

Any form of harassment, including sexual harassment, in the Pantry or at a Pantry-sponsored event is unacceptable and a violation of Pantry policy. Harassment will not be tolerated or condoned by the Pantry. Each Pantry volunteer is responsible for preventing or reporting conduct that may be considered sexual harassment or other harassment. Sexual harassment may be in the form of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to the conduct, either openly or implied, becomes a term or condition of employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for volunteer decisions, including but not limited to performance evaluation, discipline, and/or scheduled assignment;
- the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with volunteer performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Volunteers who have been subjected to or witnessed sexual or other harassment at the Pantry are asked to report the situation to the Executive Director as soon as possible. Complaints of harassment will be promptly and thoroughly investigated, kept as confidential as possible and appropriate action will be taken. This may include termination of an individual's ability to volunteer.

## Volunteer Safety

Volunteers are always encouraged to take every precaution to feel safe when working at the Pantry. This may include asking for help with a difficult client or caller, as well as help with taking heavy food down from a high shelf. Volunteer safety includes both physical and emotional well-being. ***Everything in the Pantry is replaceable except you.*** In emergency situations, volunteers may take any necessary measure to maintain personal safety, including

calling the police. A first aid kit is located on the wall to the right of the desk for minor cut or scrapes.

The Pantry should not be opened for a shift until at least two volunteers are present. If two volunteers are not present at the beginning of a shift, volunteers should refer to the notebook for the schedule and volunteer phone numbers. Other scheduled volunteers should be called and reminded of their shift. The Executive Director may be contacted if other scheduled volunteers cannot be reached. The Pantry door must be locked during any period of time it is unattended, no matter how brief.

## Grievances

Volunteers may file a grievance against another volunteer or a family if unable to resolve the issue without assistance. The Executive Director serves as the point of contact for filing grievances. If the grievance is against the Executive Director, the volunteer may speak with the Board Chair or the Pastor of the First United Methodist Church of North Liberty. Please see the **Incident Report** Appendix, which is explained in detail in the **Operations Manual**, for information on how to report an issue.

## Liability

All volunteers must understand that the scope of their relationship with the Pantry is limited to a volunteer position and that no compensation will be given for services provided. The Pantry will not provide any benefits traditionally associated with employment to the volunteer. Pantry Volunteers are covered by the insurance carried by the First United Methodist Church of North Liberty for injuries incurred during volunteer service. The volunteer should immediately report any personal injury or illness as a result of the volunteer services to the Pantry.

## Pantry Building and Shift Policies

### Building Access

Each door to the pantry has a coded lock. The Executive Director will provide the codes to volunteers after the necessary orientation has taken place. Volunteers are expected to keep the codes confidential. The codes are periodically changed for security purposes. Volunteers will be notified of these changes and the date they will be put into effect.

### Computer, Internet, and Phone Use

Personal internet and phone usage should be kept to a minimum while in the Pantry. Volunteers may use the Pantry computer/internet to assist families in locating other helpful community resources, if time allows and other families are not waiting to check in/out. *In order to ensure confidentiality for those who use Pantry services, clients may not use the Pantry computer at any time.*

A list of volunteer email addresses is kept specifically for the purpose of communication regarding Pantry business. This list should not be used by Pantry staff or volunteers for any other purpose.

## **Dress Code**

Volunteers should dress in appropriate and comfortable attire while at the Pantry. Closed toed shoes are recommended. Clothing that promotes alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, or is otherwise offensive in nature is not acceptable.

## **Equipment Usage**

Volunteers must respect the equipment used in the Pantry. Please notify the Executive Director if something is broken (i.e. computer, refrigerator, or freezer is not working).

## **Financial Donations**

Financial Donations brought to volunteers during a shift should be locked in the bottom file cabinet drawer in the folder marked "For the Executive Director." A note should be placed with the donation so the Executive Director will know the purpose of the donation and who provided the donation. Volunteers who receive cash or checks donations intended for the Pantry should notify the Executive Director immediately. If the Executive Director is unavailable, an envelope with the donor's information and your volunteer information should be placed underneath the locked Director's office door.

## **Hand Hygiene**

The Pantry is committed to providing the most clean and sanitary environment possible. Volunteers must wash their hands before and after handling food, as well as after using the restroom. Gloves should be worn when handling unpackaged food. Hand sanitizer is available for use as well, but is not an adequate substitute for regularly washing hands with warm water and soap.

## **Meals and Food**

Volunteers are welcome to bring a beverage and snack while they are working in the Pantry. Volunteers may snack on something in the Pantry if needed, but are encouraged to eat items which are not in short supply. Government commodities cannot be utilized as snacks for volunteers.

## **Name Tags**

Volunteers will wear nametags when working in the Pantry. If a nametag is lost or broken, contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Substance Abuse**

The use, possession, transfer, or sale of any drug or other intoxicant, including alcohol, while on Pantry grounds is strictly prohibited. No volunteer shall use, sell, distribute, dispense, possess, or manufacture any alcoholic beverage or illegal drug at the Pantry, while on duty, or in a vehicle leased or rented for Pantry business.

In compliance with the Iowa Smokefree Air Act, the North Liberty Community Pantry prohibits smoking inside the building or on the property of the North Liberty Community Pantry. Property includes any rented or leased facility or vehicle. Smoking is prohibited at any event sponsored by the Pantry, regardless of the location of the event.

## **Thermostat**

Volunteers may adjust the thermostat in the Pantry to a temperature that is comfortable for them. It will reset itself at the next interval.

## **Valuables**

It is recommended that volunteers avoid bringing valuables into the Pantry. The Pantry is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

## **Volunteer–Pantry Relations**

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The Pantry requires volunteers to disclose any potential conflicts of interest to the Executive Director. A conflict of interest is defined as any outside interest, contract or transaction that could result in material or financial gain. Conflicts of interest are disclosed when new volunteers start or when the conflict arises. Volunteers may accept gifts or items of nominal or insignificant value or entertainment of nominal or insignificant value that are not related to any particular transaction or activity of the North Liberty Community Pantry. However, no gift may be accepted which is intended to influence a contract or transaction or may influence a Volunteer in the performance of his or her duties. Please use the best judgment possible and contact the Executive Director if any questions arise.

### **Document Retention**

The Pantry will retain volunteer orientation papers and other documents for a total of two years after a volunteer's involvement with Pantry operations has ended. Electronic documents (i.e., number of volunteer hours) will be kept indefinitely for record keeping purposes.

### **Reference Requests**

The Executive Director can assist volunteers with letters of recommendation or references to outside organizations, schools or employers as appropriate. Please give two weeks' notice for letters of recommendation and inform the Executive Director when listed as a reference.

## **Supervision and Evaluation**

Supervision will be available by phone or e-mail when needed. Please contact the Executive Director directly when questions or concerns about the Pantry arise. The Pantry does not have a formal evaluation/review process for volunteers. Volunteers may contact the Executive Director if an evaluation is desired.

## **Volunteers as Clients**

Any volunteer who uses Pantry services may receive services outside of their shift in the same manner as other families. Client status is protected by confidentiality.

Two seats on the Pantry Board of Directors are reserved for clients. Anyone using the Pantry's services is invited to speak with the Executive Director or a board member about the possibility of serving on the board.

## **Volunteering – Special Circumstances**

### **Court-ordered Community Service (Group)**

The Pantry may be able to accommodate groups of volunteers completing court-ordered community service hours if on-site supervision is provided by the Department of Corrections (or similar entity). Requests must be directed to the Executive Director a minimum of two weeks prior to the desired starting date.

### **Court-ordered Community Service (Individual)**

Volunteers requiring Community Service Hours must have a background check completed prior to volunteering. Individuals seeking fulfillment of community service hours must meet with the Executive Director to determine volunteer opportunities.

### **Youth Service Project Volunteers (Individual)**

Youth are able to complete the general orientation and become regular volunteers. The Pantry is able to accept four to five students in the spring and fall for youth service projects. Students must make arrangements with the Executive Director. Specific dates and times will be scheduled in advance. Only one student is allowed per pantry shift. A minimum of two weeks' notice is required. All students are required to read, sign, and agree to our confidentiality standards. The Pantry may not be able to accommodate all youth who need service project hours.

### **University/College Student Volunteers (Individual)**

The Pantry can accommodate one or two college students who have service learning requirements per semester. Students should contact the Executive Director a minimum of four weeks prior to the date they would like to start their learning experience. Specific information about the hours and activities required to meet the class specifications are needed. The Pantry may not be able to accommodate all college students who need service learning hours.

## Group Volunteers

Volunteer groups such as church, university/college organizations, or businesses seeking volunteer opportunities at the Pantry may be accommodated on a limited basis. The Pantry requires a minimum of one month notice to schedule group volunteer opportunities. Volunteer opportunities may not be available at all times and all days. Contact the Executive Director to discuss a possible day and time to volunteer.

## Weather Closure

The Pantry's greatest concern is for the safety of our volunteers and families. The Pantry will remain open as scheduled unless the Iowa City Community School District (ICCSA) cancels school. If the ICCSD dismisses early, the pantry will close the afternoon shift. When inclement weather occurs on a day when the ICCSD is closed, a decision regarding closing will be made by the Executive Director (or on-call Saturday volunteer) and the shift leader. Closures will be submitted to KCRG.

In the event of a tornado, anyone present at the Pantry is encouraged to seek shelter in the walk in freezer, or in the church bathrooms. Volunteers are to encourage families to stay, but cannot deter a family from leaving if they wish to do so.

## Job Descriptions

Please see the **Job Descriptions** Appendix for a much more detailed description of volunteer positions.

## On Shift Pantry Activities

### Desk Worker

- Greet the families as they enter the pantry
- Control the flow of families through the pantry
- Complete necessary paperwork
- Answer any questions the family might have

### Scale Worker

- Record weight of food and number of clothing items taken
- Distribute limited items to families

### Sacker

- Sack groceries
- Help take groceries out

### Floater

- Stock and straighten distribution room shelves
- Process donations
- Assist with other activities as necessary

## Off Shift Pantry Activities

### **Stocker**

- Stock and straighten distribution room shelves
- Process food and produce donations

### **Clothing Processing Worker**

- Process clothing donations
- Straighten clothing in distribution room
- Take excess clothing to Goodwill

## External Food and Clothing Processes

### **Clothing Pick Up Worker**

- Pick up and deliver clothing to pantry

### **Food Pick Up Worker**

- Pick up and deliver food to pantry
- Process food donations