

# **Volunteer Program Policies & Procedures**

## **I. Volunteer/ Employee Relations**

Volunteers are critical to the success of the New Hope Ministries, and are essential to the organization's day-to-day operations. A volunteer is any non-employee individual who, without compensation or the expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the organization. Volunteers and paid employees are considered partners in implementing the mission and programs of New Hope Ministries, each with complementary roles to play. Designated employees will provide orientation, training, supervision, and feedback to volunteers. Volunteers that assist with one time events and special activities will have orientation and training specific to the one-time event or special activity.

## **II. Equal Opportunity Policy**

As a Christian Social Service Agency, New Hope Ministries employs Christians who are in agreement with the statement of faith of the organization. This is considered a bona fide occupational qualification under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Within this qualification, New Hope Ministries is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment. Accordingly, all terms and conditions of employment will be carried out without regard to race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex (including pregnancy), veterans' status, marital status, genetic information or any other factor protected by federal, state or local law. New Hope Ministries will not tolerate acts deemed to constitute discrimination or harassment based on race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex (including pregnancy), veteran's status, marital status, genetic information or any other factor protected by federal, state or local law.

New Hope Ministries desires to also create equal opportunities for volunteers to participate in the programs we provide. While we are a religious organization, religious profession or participation is neither a requirement nor disqualification for serving as a volunteer, notwithstanding that certain volunteer roles may carry requirements for delivering spiritually oriented services and may require profession of the Christian faith and agreement with our statement of faith. Volunteers are welcome to discuss religion and respectfully share about their faith, and it should be understood that we do not require any type of religious participation to receive any of our services.

## **III. VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Volunteers are a valuable asset to New Hope Ministries. Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful positions, the right to be treated fairly, the right to a safe work environment, the right to effective supervision and support, the right to full involvement and participation, and the right of recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the goals and procedures of the agency.

## **IV. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM PROCEDURES**

## **A. Application Form**

Prospective volunteers are required to complete an application form for consideration for the volunteer program. Applications may be completed on line, in writing, or in person with staff assistance. Please refer to our procedure of special requirements for minors serving as volunteers. Applications for volunteering are available on New Hope's website at [www.nhm-pa.org](http://www.nhm-pa.org) or in person at any of our locations.

## **B. Interviewing**

Prior to being assigned or appointed to a position, all volunteers will be interviewed to ascertain their suitability for, and interest in, a volunteer position. The interview will offer the opportunity to learn more about the prospective volunteer, and give the prospective volunteer the opportunity to learn more about the organization and available positions.

## **C. Screening and Criminal History**

New Hope Ministries is bound by state laws regarding background checks, and seeks to provide a safe environment for all. The following requirements will guide background check requirements and those with a criminal history serving as volunteers.

- 1) Episodic volunteers may be accepted without having to complete a criminal history. Those who wish to become regular volunteers will be required to complete a free criminal background check. These volunteers will only be able to serve in non-sensitive positions and will not be permitted direct contact with children in our programs. Those individuals who appear on the Megan's Law registry will not be able to serve in this capacity.
- 2) The presence of a criminal history is not an automatic disqualification for service, but may limit the roles a volunteer is able to perform, particularly when it involves handling cash, confidential information, or contact with children. Evaluations will be handled with sensitivity and decisions will be made on a case by case basis.
- 3) Applicants for volunteering are encouraged to share criminal history on their application. Those seeking community service documentation will be treated with kindness and their privacy will be respected, but they should disclose this requirement at the time they are applying to volunteer.
- 4) Any volunteer who is applying for a role that involves direct contact with children will also be required, per state law, to complete a Child Abuse Clearance and if necessary, an FBI Clearance. New Hope will assist volunteer candidates with all of these checks and will help with payment if that is a limiting factor for the volunteer. Please see New Hope's Background Checks Procedure for more information.
- 5) Background Checks will be considered valid for a period of five years. Volunteers are required to inform the agency's Volunteer Coordinator of any convictions after a background check has been received.

## **D. Orientation and Training**

All volunteers will receive a general orientation to the nature and purpose of the agency, all pertinent policies and procedures, including safety and confidentiality training. Volunteers will

also receive specific training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer position.

### **E. Job Description**

Each volunteer position in the organization is given a description of duties and qualifications. This job description is provided as a useful guide to tasks which the volunteer may be asked to perform and will serve as a basis of orientation, supervision, and feedback.

### **F. Supervision**

Every volunteer will have a clearly identified staff supervisor who will be responsible for support and direction. The supervisor will be responsible for guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance. At times, a senior volunteer may serve this function, but there will always be an employee with ultimate responsibility for the volunteer.

### **G. Feedback and Evaluation**

Our desire is to help volunteers to fit well into the roles they perform, and have the opportunity to select specific roles in the agency. Volunteers shall receive informal feedback regarding their performance and progress. Volunteer input will be sought and is greatly appreciated as we are always seeking ways to deliver the best service experience possible to our volunteers and guests.

### **H. Recognition and Opportunities for Advancement**

Volunteer service is very valuable to the **New Hope Ministries**, and we will consistently recognize volunteers on both an informal and formal level. Annual volunteer recognition will be conducted to highlight and reward the contribution of volunteers to the organization.

### **I. Volunteer Records**

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer with the organization. The record will include volunteer application, photo release and confidentiality agreements, preferred and emergency contact information, and any applicable clearance documents.

### **J. Scheduled Volunteer Time/ Record of Volunteer Hours**

A volunteer sign-in process (usually electronic) will be present at work locations, and volunteers should sign in and out each time they work. A non-electronic process will also be available.

## **V. VOLUNTEER CONDUCT**

### **A. Standard of Conduct**

The lasting impression that volunteers make on those we serve and serve with, reflects directly on all of New Hope Ministries. Our words and deeds should help build one another up and support the reputation of the agency. All volunteers and employees are expected to act professionally and in accordance with their position descriptions.

### **B. Attendance**

As with any staff, volunteers should do their best to be present and on time for each event or activity for which they are scheduled. When volunteers know that they will be late or absent, they

are requested to contact the person(s) in charge of the event or their supervisors at least 24 hours before they are expected to come or as soon as possible so that alternate plans can be made.

### **C. Grievance Procedure**

When volunteers have a grievance or concern regarding their volunteer service or their work environment, they should report it promptly. This especially pertains to safety concerns. Every effort will be made to achieve speedy and effective resolution, and all complaints will be treated confidentially (Confidentiality may not be guaranteed for complaints involving sexual harassment or child abuse). If resolution is not obtained the Board of Directors Grievance Policy will be followed.

### **D. Discontinuation of Volunteer Service**

If volunteers wish to leave volunteer service for any reason, it is requested that they contact the Volunteer Coordinator so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Volunteers have the right to terminate their volunteer service for any reason. New Hope Ministries reserves the same right.

### **E. Media Conduct**

Volunteers should be careful not to represent themselves as a spokesperson or representative for the organization under any circumstances without prior approval. Media opportunities should be directed to the Executive Director or the Director of Development.

### **F. Alcohol/Drugs**

When participating in New Hope Ministries' activities, volunteers are prohibited from purchasing, transferring, using or possessing illicit drugs, alcohol, or prescription drugs in any way that is illegal or create an unsafe condition. This policy is intended to promote a drug and alcohol free work place in order to ensure a safe, healthy, and productive environment for all volunteers and employees.

### **G. Harassment Policy**

Volunteering should be an enjoyable experience. Harassment is not only illegal, but it also creates uncomfortable conditions and unpleasant experience for everyone involved. Any volunteer who feels harassed should speak to his/her volunteer supervisor or the Executive Director in an attempt to reach a solution.

## **VI. SAFETY AND LIABILITY**

**A. Safety:** Although New Hope Ministries does its best to provide safe conditions for volunteers, it counts on volunteers to be the best protector of their own personal safety. Volunteers should always be aware of where they are and what they are doing. Volunteers should pay particular attention to safety instructions and proper equipment use. Volunteers should speak up if they have a safety concern and report any injuries to the person in charge as soon as possible.

**B. Liability:** New Hope Ministries provides commercial general liability insurance to volunteers and employees, while they serve as agents of New Hope Ministries. Volunteers must be working under the supervision and control of New Hope Ministries to be covered. Specific coverages available under this policy will be defined by the insurance policy under effect at the time of requested coverage. This policy may be withdrawn or modified at the sole discretion of New Hope

Ministries and is not a guarantee of any benefit. Members of the New Hope Ministries' board of directors are covered by Director's and Officers' liability insurance.

**C. Driving:** When New Hope Ministries assigns a volunteer to drive a vehicle that New Hope Ministries owns, leases, or rents, the volunteer is covered by New Hope Ministries' motor vehicle liability insurance. When volunteers drive their own vehicles or some other vehicle not owned, leased or rented by the New Hope Ministries liability and physical damage insurance does not apply.

**D. Certificate of Ability:** Potential volunteers who indicate that they are under the care of a physician for any physical or psychological ailment that might impede their ability to work may be asked to present a certificate from their physician(s) as to their ability to satisfactorily and safely perform their duties. Any volunteer who, after accepting a position with the organization, enters a course of treatment that might adversely impact the performance of volunteer duties should consult with the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **VII. Volunteer Intern Guidelines**

New Hope Ministries welcomes the participation of unpaid interns from a variety of academic programs, who seek to fulfill academic requirements and gain needed professional experience. While any students are welcome to participate at New Hope in a regular volunteer capacity, in order to be considered as an intern, the following criteria must be met:

1. The student must be enrolled a bona fide academic program.
2. Interns must complete a volunteer application and required background checks per any other volunteer. All standards of conduct expected of any volunteer will apply to interns.
3. Every intern must have a designated staff supervisor and there must be a contact person at the students' academic institution.
4. Requirements for the internship must be clearly agreed to in writing including requirements for specific experiences, supervision, supervisor qualifications.
5. New Hope may limit the number of interns that can be accepted in a given semester based on its ability to provide a quality learning experience for each student.
6. Each approved intern will receive an orientation to the agency, regular supervision, and training in the roles they will be performing.

New Hope Ministries follows the Classification of Unpaid Volunteer Interns criteria under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). In order to engage unpaid interns, organization's internships must satisfy all the following criteria to be exempt from the FLSA:

1. The intern should receive trainings that are academically educational or are congruent with vocational school.
2. The training should be for the benefit the intern.
3. The intern works under close supervision or observation and does not replace a regular employee.
4. The employer should not receive "immediate advantage" from the intern's work and sometimes the actions of the intern may impact "normal operations" of the organization.

5. A job is not a guarantee at the end of the internship.

6. Both the employer and intern understand and agree that the internship is unpaid.

(Source: INTERNS: A Basic Resource Guide for Employers, p. 21)