

# Meals of Love Volunteer Handbook





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## Purpose of the Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to Meals of Love! Volunteers are the heart and soul of Meals of Love and we depend on more than 400 volunteers every weekday to help prepare meals and to deliver Meals of Love at our dining center locations in \_\_\_\_\_.

The Volunteer Handbook is designed to acquaint you with Meals of Love and provide you with information about volunteering with our organization. The handbook has been organized by topic to help you find information easily. No handbook can answer all the questions you might have about our policies and programs. We encourage you to talk with your supervisor or volunteer coordinator if you have questions about the content of this handbook or your volunteer service with us.

**Volunteers should carefully review and familiarize themselves with the contents of the Volunteer Handbook as soon as possible, for it will answer many questions about volunteering with Meals of Love.**

Thank you for giving your time and talent to help others. We hope you find volunteering with Meals of Love a positive and rewarding experience.

*“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”*

*Dr. Felice Leonardo Buscaglia*

## About Meals of Love

[Our Vision](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Our Values](#)

[Diversity Statement](#)

## Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

As a volunteer you have the right to:

- Work in a healthy and safe environment
- Be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- Be given accurate and truthful information about Meals of Love
- Be given a copy of the Meals of Love Volunteer Handbook and any other policy/procedures that affect your role
- Not fill a position previously held by a paid worker
- Have a role description and agreed hours of contribution
- Be provided with orientation to Meals of Love and your volunteer role
- Have your confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with all applicable laws
- Be provided with appropriate training and support to carry out your role

As a volunteer you have the responsibility to:

- Be reliable
- Respect confidentiality
- Carry out your volunteer duties according to the position description
- Be accountable for your actions
- Be committed to Meals of Love
- Undertake training as required by Meals of Love
- Ask for support when you need it
- Let your supervisor or volunteer coordinator know as early as possible if unable to attend
- Be courteous to participants, staff and other volunteers
- Raise any issues you may have with Meals of Love and not denigrate Meals of Love to participants, staff and other volunteers
- Value and support other team members

## Volunteer Time

Volunteers should record their time by signing in through the Meals of Love Volunteer Portal. This includes time working in kitchens, delivering meals, office work, meetings, training, etc.

## Service at the Discretion of the Organization

Meals of Love accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of Meals of Love. Volunteers agree that Meals of Love may decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with Meals of Love or make changes in the nature of the volunteer assignment at any time.

## Code of Ethics and Conduct

The Code of Ethics & Conduct is a guide to help volunteers to live up to Meals of Love's ethical standards and their own. Meals of Love will not permit, condone or tolerate illegal or unethical behavior. No volunteer will be required to tolerate this type of behavior.

### Illegal or Unethical Behavior

Illegal or unethical behaviors are forms of misconduct which undermine the integrity of the Meals of Love's reputation. This behavior can occur between volunteers in the workplace, as well as between volunteers and participants, outside vendors, donors, any governmental or regulatory agencies, consultants, employees, visitors, etc. Some forms of illegal or unethical behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Fraud
- Falsification of Meals of Love's records
- Failure to comply with all applicable laws and government regulations
- Violence and threats of violence to staff, volunteers, participants and others
- Theft
- Drug & alcohol abuse
- Sexual and other discriminatory harassment
- Discrimination

### Obey all relevant laws

Volunteers should seek advice from their supervisor or from Human Resources, whenever they have a question concerning the application of a law.

### Treat everyone fairly, with dignity and with respect

This means we treat others with dignity and respect, and demonstrate the values of Meals of Love.

Deal honestly and fairly with participants, staff, volunteers, suppliers, donors, and governmental and regulatory agencies.

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves with integrity at all times, and in a manner that reflects well on themselves and on Meals of Love.

### Avoid conflicts of interest

Volunteers should avoid actual or potential conflicts of interest situations.

### Maintain confidentiality

Volunteers must observe the confidentiality of information that they acquire in carrying out their duties.

### Investigation

All allegations of improper, illegal, or unethical conduct will be promptly and objectively investigated. Your confidentiality and that of any witnesses and the person or persons that allegedly acted inappropriately will be protected to the extent appropriate while allowing for a fair investigation and any necessary corrective action.

When the investigation is completed, you will be informed of the outcome of the investigation, to the extent appropriate, without breaching the necessary confidentiality.

## Volunteer Responsibilities to Disclose

The integrity of the organization is diminished whenever these standards are violated. If you become aware of facts or circumstances that you believe constitute a violation, you should promptly report the suspected violation to a member of Management or Human Resources.

## Drug-Free Policy

Meals of Love provides a drug-free environment in compliance with federal, state and local laws. The purpose of this policy is to reinforce the long-standing commitment of Meals of Love to provide a safe and healthy environment for all.

The use, possession, manufacture, and distribution, dispensation or sale of illegal drugs, alcohol, or any controlled substance on Meals of Love premises or program sites, in **Meals of Love vehicles** or during volunteer hours, is strictly **prohibited**. Similarly, it is **prohibited** for any volunteer **to be under the influence** of illegal drugs, alcohol, or any controlled substance on Meals of Love premises or program sites, in **Meals of Love vehicles** or during working hours.

For purposes of this policy, the following terms have the following definitions:

1. “Under the Influence” means that the volunteer is affected by an illegal drug or alcohol or the combination of a legal drug and an illegal drug and/or alcohol in any detectable manner.
2. “Legal Drug” means any prescribed or over-the-counter drug which has been legally obtained and is being used for the purpose for which it was prescribed or manufactured.
  - a. Marijuana – including “medical marijuana” – is illegal under federal law and may not be used in the workplace. All volunteers are prohibited from being under the influence of marijuana while at work.
3. “Illegal Drug” means any drug which is not legally obtainable or which is legally obtainable but has not been legally obtained including, but not limited to, marijuana, any prescription drug, substance or chemical not legally obtained, and any prescription drug, substance or chemical not being used for prescribed purposes.

Violation of this policy may be cause for immediate termination of volunteer duties.

## Personal and Emergency Contact Information

It is the responsibility of each volunteer to regularly update their personal contact information and emergency contact information. This update can be made online through the **Meals of Love Volunteer Portal**.

## Participants and Relatives as Volunteers

Participants and relatives of participants may be accepted as volunteers where such service does not constitute an obstruction to or conflict with provision of services to the participant or others.

## Volunteer Age Requirements

Meals of Love has multiple volunteer opportunities, each with different age requirements. In some cases, volunteers may need to be accompanied by an adult.

Here are the age requirements for each volunteer opportunity:

### Central Kitchen

The age requirement to volunteer in the Central Kitchen is 10 years and older. Any volunteers who are under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult *or* teacher if volunteering with a school. Groups of up to 12 volunteers can be accommodated; confirming scheduling and availability with a volunteer coordinator is required.

### Kitchen and Dining Support

The age requirement to volunteer at one of our dining centers in a *Kitchen and Dining Support* role is 7 years and older. Any volunteers who are under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult.

### Meals of Love Delivery

To deliver meals to our program participants volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. Any volunteers who are under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

### Community Connectors

To represent Meals of Love through our Community Connector group volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. Any volunteers who are under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

## Volunteer Boundaries

You should only provide services or perform tasks as outlined in your volunteer duties description. If you believe a participant is in need of additional support (house cleaning, yard work, personal hygiene, personal shopping, etc.) you should notify a Meals of Love staff member.

### Do's and Don'ts

- DO recognize your own personal boundaries
- DO avoid getting into situations that could be misunderstood
- DO think before you say 'Yes'
- DON'T give out your home telephone number or address
- DON'T take the other person to your own home
- DON'T become emotionally over-involved
- DON'T get involved in a sexual or intimate relationship
- DON'T accept any form of harassment/violence from others
- DON'T buy expensive gifts or give money to participants
- DON'T accept expensive gifts or money from participants
- DON'T lend to or borrow from participants money/material goods
- DON'T give rides to participants

## Volunteer Dress Code

Because each volunteer is a representative of Meals of Love in the eyes of the public, it is important that each volunteer dress neatly and in a manner consistent with the nature their volunteer duties. Supervisors will inform the volunteer of additional requirements. **Certain volunteers may be required to wear safety equipment or clothing. All kitchen volunteers must wear long pants and closed-toe shoes. Aprons, gloves and hairnets are provided.**

## Safety

To assist in providing a safe and healthy environment for volunteers, staff, participants and visitors, Meals of Love has established a workplace safety program. This program is a top priority at Meals of Love. **Information is provided to volunteers about workplace safety and health issues through one-on-one training and regular internal communication channels. These may include supervisor-volunteer meetings, bulletin board postings, memos or other written communications.**

Volunteers and supervisors receive periodic workplace safety training. The training covers potential safety and health hazards as well as safe practices and procedures to eliminate or minimize hazards.

In the case of an accident, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, you should immediately notify your supervisor.

## Computer Usage

Meals of Love may provide computers, e-mail, and Internet access to assist volunteers in performing their duties. Computers, e-mail and Internet access should be used for business related purposes only.

Meals of Love strives to maintain a workplace free of harassment and is sensitive to the diversity of its volunteers, employees and participants. Therefore, Meals of Love prohibits the use of computers and the email system in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others, or harmful to morale. This would include the display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages and cartoons, as well as ethnic slurs, racial comments, jokes or anything that may be construed as harassment, inappropriate, unprofessional or showing disrespect towards others.

## Open Door Policy

Meals of Love is committed to providing and maintaining productive and professional working relationships with all its volunteers. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion or question receives a timely response from Meals of Love supervisors and management. When lines of communication are kept open in all directions, individuals can jointly solve problems before they become unnecessarily complicated. If volunteers have concerns, they are strongly encouraged to voice these concerns openly and directly to their Supervisor, Human Resources or to any member of Management.

## Whistleblower Protection Policy

Meals of Love requires its directors, officers, employees and volunteers to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities.

Meals of Love has adopted a Whistleblower Protection Policy. The policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and volunteers to raise concerns with Meals of Love without fear of retaliation.

Following are examples of concerns that should be reported:

- Suspected illegal activity or noncompliance with laws, governmental rules and regulations or financial disclosures, accounting, internal accounting controls or auditing matters.
- Conflicts of interest
- Disclosure of confidential information
- Discrimination or harassment
- Donor stewardship – failure to provide due care with respect to donations
- Falsification of contracts, reports or records
- Misconduct or inappropriate behavior
- Safety – failure of meeting requirements needed to perform all duties in a secure environment or as specified by Meals of Love procedures.
- Theft
- Violation of Meals of Love policies or procedures

### Reporting Procedures

Volunteers should report suspected activities identified above with someone who can address those concerns properly. In most cases, a volunteer's supervisor is in the best position to address an area of concern; however, if you are not comfortable speaking with your supervisor or you are not satisfied with your supervisor's response, you are encouraged to speak with the Director of Human Resources, anyone in management who you are comfortable approaching or make a report using our anonymous reporting hotline.

- Toll-free telephone English speaking
- Toll-free telephone Spanish speaking
- Callers speaking languages other than English or Spanish may request their preferred language
- Website: [Mealsoflove.org](http://Mealsoflove.org)
- E-mail:
- Fax:

The Whistleblower Protection Policy is not intended for complaints about your supervisor – you should address these concerns with your supervisor, or their direct supervisor. If issues remain unresolved, you may contact the Director of Human Resources for assistance.

## Mandatory Reporting Policy

This policy is designed to prevent physical, financial, sexual or emotional abuse of Meals of Love participants. As a Meals of Love volunteer you may come into contact with vulnerable populations during your daily work activities and therefore, you are the "first line of defense" against situations that are harmful but preventable.

All Meals of Love volunteers are expected to understand the definition and warning signs of elder abuse and neglect and report potential abuse or neglect to your supervisor or the appropriate aging and disability agency.

### Definitions of Abuse or Neglect

Abuse of older adults or people with disabilities can be physical, verbal, financial or psychological.

Abuse can take many forms, including:

- Hitting or slapping
- Withholding food/medication/medical care
- Use of chemical and/or physical restraints
- Yelling, insults or threats of violence
- Misuse of funds
- Theft
- Fraud

### Warning Signs of Abuse or Neglect

Warning signs of abuse include:

- Injuries incompatible with the explanation given
- Dramatic weight loss, dehydration or poor hygiene
- Untreated medical or mental health conditions
- Unpaid bills despite adequate assets
- Sudden appearance of new acquaintances
- Sudden absence of care giver
- Enforced social isolation

Abuse can occur for a variety of reasons, but common contributing factors are:

- Stress created by the care needs of the senior or person with a disability
- Inadequate financial resources
- Isolation and lack of emotional support for people at risk and their caregivers
- Existing family problems and dynamics

## Self-Neglect

Self-neglect occurs when, by choice or lack of awareness, older adults and people with disabilities live in ways that disregard their health or safety needs, sometimes to the extent that this disregard becomes hazardous to themselves or others.

Older adults and people with disabilities who neglect themselves are not willing or able to perform essential self-care tasks such as providing food, clothing or adequate shelter; obtaining adequate medical care; obtaining goods and services necessary to maintain physical and mental health, well-being, personal hygiene and general safety and managing financial affairs.

## Reporting Procedures

All volunteers are required to immediately report suspected activities identified above to a Meals of Love supervisor. Supervisors receiving reports must contact the appropriate aging and disability protective service agency and document the report.

(list of phone numbers goes here)

Staff must also report all suspected instances to the participant's case manager, if known. If the notice to the participant's case manager was verbal, then it must be followed by written notification within 48 hours. Further, when required by state, federal or contract regulations, volunteers must immediately make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

## Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Meals of Love is committed to providing an environment free of unlawful discrimination or harassment. Meals of Love's policy prohibits sexual harassment and discrimination or harassment because of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, marital status, age, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law. Meals of Love's anti-discrimination and harassment policy applies to all persons involved in its operations and prohibits discrimination or harassment by any of its employees, volunteers and participants.

## Harassment

Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, national origin or age or any other protected class or that of their relatives, friends, or associates. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards or elsewhere on Meals of Love's premises or circulated in the workplace.

## Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct that occurs because of a volunteer's sex or gender and has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

## Complaint Procedure

If a volunteer believes they have been subjected to discrimination or harassment, they should immediately report the matter to their supervisor or in their absence, the Director of Human Resources. If Director of Human Resources is unavailable or if the volunteer believes it would be inappropriate to contact their supervisor, the volunteer should contact the **department director, Chief Executive Officer or other appropriate management personnel.**

Meals of Love will investigate all complaints of discrimination or harassment. To aid in the investigation, volunteers are strongly encouraged to include in the complaint the details of the incident or incidents, the names of the individuals involved and the names of any witnesses.

If Meals of Love determines that unlawful discrimination or harassment has occurred, effective remedial action will be taken commensurate with the severity of the offense.

It is every volunteer's responsibility to read and support the harassment policy. All volunteers must pledge to promptly report violations if they witness or are a victim of such misconduct.

## Confidentiality of Information

All Meals of Love volunteers are required to respect and maintain the confidentiality, both during and after their volunteer service with Meals of Love, of all Meals of Love trade secrets and proprietary information, including but not limited to participant information, business documents, reports, records, files, and correspondence and communications, to which the volunteer has access in carrying out their responsibilities and duties. None of the above may be copied or removed from the premises of Meals of Love without prior written consent from the volunteer's manager. The names and addresses of Meals of Love donors are also considered confidential, as well as any and all participant and volunteer information. Release of confidential information to any unauthorized parties must be approved in advance in writing by **the Chief Executive Officer.**

All Volunteers are expected to show the highest regard for the privacy of each participant by observing strict regulations created by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) which protects the confidentiality of participant information on record with Meals of Love. Confidentiality is essential to the sound relationship with our participants. It is also a legal and ethical matter of the utmost importance. All volunteers are to exercise great care when discussing participant services. Care should be taken to prevent discussions regarding participant services from being overheard by other participants, volunteers or staff members not involved in such services.

Any inappropriate discussion of participant information or similar violation of these standards may result in immediate termination of volunteer service. Volunteers must not disclose information for any purpose without written consent of the participant, the participant's attorney, or the participant's guardian, except as may be required by funding agencies, or directly connected with arranging for services to be provided, or administration and development of the program.

Volunteers have an obligation to report violations or suspected violations of these prohibitions to their immediate supervisor or Human Resources.

## Conflict of Interest

Meals of Love has adopted a conflict of interest policy which is designed to help volunteers of Meals of Love identify situations that present potential conflicts of interest and to provide Meals of Love with procedures to appropriately evaluate transactions where potential conflicts arise.

Each volunteer must act in all matters in a manner that will safeguard the reputation and integrity of Meals of Love and will preserve and strengthen public confidence in Meals of Love activities. Likewise, volunteers should refrain from engaging in any transaction in which personal interests conflict, potentially conflict or appear to conflict with those of Meals of Love. An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when a volunteer is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for yourself or for a relative as a result of Meals of Love's business dealings. For the purposes of this policy, a relative is a person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the volunteer is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

No volunteer shall accept payment of any kind (including gifts, cash, discounts, concessions, services or other similar item or benefits) for services rendered as part of his or her volunteer service.

No volunteer shall use Meals of Love letterhead or any title of Meals of Love or refer to Meals of Love or misidentify themselves as an employee thereof in connection with any matter as to which they are not authorized as a representative of Meals of Love and to express an opinion on its behalf.

Participation in any activity prohibited by this policy can result in the termination of volunteer service.

## Solicitation Policy

Meals of Love prohibits any volunteer from soliciting any of its participants, staff, volunteers or visitors and/or distributing any literature, pamphlets or other materials on **Meals of Love premises**, except for approved Meals of Love business.

Meals of Love prohibits any volunteer from soliciting, collecting from, or selling to any other volunteer, staff or participant during the working time of the soliciting person or of the person being solicited. In addition, the posting of written solicitations **on company bulletin boards** is prohibited. Such boards are reserved for official organization communications such as federal and state labor law information, community partner, volunteer and staff announcements, internal memoranda, organizational announcements, etc.

Any violation of this policy may result in immediate termination of volunteer service.

## Use of Personal Vehicles for Meals of Love Business

Some positions will require the use of a volunteer's private vehicle. Maintaining a valid Florida or driver's license and current auto insurance is a requirement for these positions.

If a private vehicle is used for Meals of Love purposes, the following will apply:

### Valid Driver's License

All operators of personal vehicles on Meals of Love business must have a valid Florida driver's license. No volunteer with a suspended license may operate a vehicle on Meals of Love business until the license has been reinstated.

### Insurance

All drivers of personal vehicles on Meals of Love business must have full liability insurance (personal injury and property damage) in at least the minimum limits required under state law. No volunteer with expired insurance may operate a vehicle on Meals of Love business until the insurance has been renewed.

### Operating Expenses

**Meals of Love will reimburse volunteers using a personal vehicle on Meals of Love business at a rate set by the Chief Financial Officer to cover all operating expenses.** Mileage report forms must be completed and submitted monthly for reimbursement to occur. Failure to do so within 30 days may result in the mileage not being reimbursed. Failure to request reimbursement will not make Meals of Love responsible for any costs, damages or claims.

Since mileage reimbursement covers all operating expenses (including insurance), a volunteer will be required to use their own insurance to cover any accidents, vandalism or theft that might occur on these occasions.

### Safety

Meals of Love expects volunteers to operate personal vehicles in strict compliance with all traffic laws and regulations. Driver and passengers are all required to wear seatbelts.

### Traffic Violations

A volunteer who receives any parking or traffic citation while using their personal vehicle on Meals of Love business is responsible for all fines, court costs, etc.

Any violation of the above policy regarding vehicles or misrepresentation of eligibility to use a personal vehicle on Meals of Love business may result in termination of volunteer service.

## Return of Property

Volunteers are responsible for Meals of Love property which includes all materials, files, keys, passwords or any other written or electronic information issued to volunteers or in volunteer's possession or control. All Meals of Love property must be returned on or before your last day. Meals of Love may take all actions deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property.

## Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of and have reviewed the Meals of Love Volunteer Handbook and understand that it sets forth the obligations of my volunteer service with Meals of Love. I understand Meals of Love maintains the most current version of the Volunteer Handbook on the [mealsoflove.org](http://mealsoflove.org) website. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the rules, policies and standards set forth in the Volunteer Handbook and I agree to comply with all policies and procedures. I understand I should consult my supervisor or Human Resources regarding any questions not answered in the Volunteer Handbook.

Volunteer (signature) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer (name printed) \_\_\_\_\_