



# ***VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK***

VISIT THE BRIDGE OUTREACH'S WEBSITE AT  
[www.bridgeoutreachnh.org](http://www.bridgeoutreachnh.org)

Dear Volunteer:

On behalf of the Bridge Outreach Center's volunteers, staff, and Board of Directors, we would like to thank you for considering being a part of our team. Volunteers are particularly important to us, and together we are privileged to serve our community through our different programs.

You will find that becoming a Bridge Outreach Volunteer is both a challenging and rewarding experience as you encourage those who are needing support. Whether you decide to serve by helping the Littleton Food Pantry, promoting our work through social media, fundraising events, special events (like our Thanksgiving and Christmas programs), or helping with administrative tasks, you will undoubtedly touch many lives.

We are grateful for your time and commitment in serving and making a difference in this community and cannot wait to partner with you.

Welcome to the team!

Sincerely,

**Corine Sawadogo**  
**Executive Director**

## **Bridge Outreach Program Services**

### **The Littleton Food Pantry** (70 Redington St, Littleton NH 03561 Phone (603) 444- 6517)

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The pantry services residents of: Littleton, Lisbon, Dalton, Whitefield, Bethlehem, Lyman, Landaff, and Franconia. Each month, Hundreds of individuals/families receive much needed food, personal hygiene products, household items, and clothing supplies, all free of charge.

The Littleton Food pantry receives monthly foods delivers from the USDA and The New Hampshire Food Bank. Our volunteers also pick up daily food supplies from various local supermarkets that include produce and meat products.

Financial support for the operation of the pantry comes from the generous donations of caring individuals, local businesses, corporate outreach funds, and foundation grants.

The Littleton Food Pantry also serves as a depot drop off location for other food pantries in the North Country to pick up their supplies. (I.D. and proof of financial/ economic need required for client services as/per USDA guidelines).

### **Christmas Connection** (70 Redington St, Littleton NH 03561 Phone (603) 444- 6517)

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There are many local families who are unable to purchase gifts for their own children due to financial hardship. The **Christmas Connection** program helps to provide a special & memorable Christmas for those in need! Your financial support will go towards the purchase Christmas gifts that Parents/Guardians will receive, and have the opportunity to personally wrap to give to their children at Christmas! (all wrapping supplies will be provided)

# Volunteer Standards & Guidelines

To make your service here as fruitful and enjoyable as possible, we have developed a *Volunteer Standards & Guidelines* process. These are designed to answer many of your questions about the practices and policies of The Bridge Outreach Center (BOC) such as what you can expect from The BOC and what our expectations are. While volunteering at The Bridge Outreach Center, we ask that you carefully observe these standards and guidelines.

## REVISIONS

The Bridge Outreach Center reserves the right to amend, revise or delete any policy or procedure referred to in these Volunteer Standards & Guidelines at any time without notice. Changes may be communicated to volunteers in meetings, by memo or incorporated into revised manuals. If you have any questions about Volunteers Standards & Guidelines, please ask your supervisor.

## EQUAL VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITY

The Bridge Outreach Center provides equal volunteering opportunities for every person regardless of age, gender, creed, national origin, religious persuasion, marital status, political belief or a disability that does not prohibit performance of essential job functions. All matters relating to volunteering are based upon ability to perform the job, as well as dependability and reliability, once placed.

## YOUR COMMITMENT

Volunteers contribute to the overall mission of The Bridge Outreach Center by providing another layer of compassion, caring, talent and skill to our team. We offer many different types of volunteer opportunities:

- Leadership Volunteers – These volunteers are faithful long-term partners who become valued team members and an extension of the staff. Leadership Volunteers work no less than once each month and are expected to diligently honor this commitment. Failure to honor the commitment may result in reassignment or termination.
- Hand – in – Hand Volunteers – These volunteers assist in areas that require little training, such as in the food pantry, assisting on the day of an event or Special Projects. They volunteer for a short amount of time, sporadically or to obtain a specified number of volunteer hours.
- Volunteer groups – Volunteer groups are an organized collection of people who have a designated leader. The Bridge Outreach Center offers High Impact placements, one-time projects, and special event projects for group volunteer service. However, all projects are not suitable for all groups. Group projects will be determined by the Bridge Outreach Center as the need arises.
- Internships – The Bridge Outreach Center is delighted when we can partner with outstanding academic institutions and top-notch students to provide internships. Internships are individually tailored to meet the specific needs of the area and the student.
- Court-mandated / Disciplinary Community Service / Employment First – The Bridge Outreach Center does not currently work with court mandated volunteers.

- Virtual Volunteers – COVID-19 has helped us become more creative in the ways we give back and there are no more limitations! Volunteers are now able to give of their knowledge and time to organizations across the country and even the globe via the internet. We welcome virtual volunteers, knowing that these positions will more than likely be administrative as the volunteer will not be physically present in our facility
- Skilled Volunteers- If you have any types of skills: fundraising, people organizing, plumbing, event management... we will work with skilled volunteers based on our current needs,

The Bridge Outreach Center expects all volunteers to work their assigned schedule. All volunteers are expected to be consistent in fulfilling the agreed upon commitment. If you cannot make a scheduled time, please contact your staff supervisor with as much notice as possible.

Volunteers are expected to be punctual for their assigned times. Please let your supervisor know if you will be late. If a volunteer is unable to meet his/her commitment to The Bridge Outreach Center, it may be necessary to replace that volunteer. The volunteer may take a leave of absence and return where needed by The Bridge Outreach Center. We cannot guarantee that your "spot" will remain open until your return.

### AGE REQUIREMENT FOR INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS

- The minimum age for an independent individual volunteer is 16.

### AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEER GROUPS

- To volunteer with a parent or chaperoned group, all volunteers be accompanied by 1 sponsor for every 10 students.

### PROCEDURE FOR HIGH IMPACT VOLUNTEERS, PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNSHIPS

- Submit volunteer application.
- Interview with the Executive Director. Occasionally, a volunteer placement or internship will require either the initial interview be with the prospective supervisor or require an additional interview with the prospective supervisor.
- **Pass reference and criminal history background check.** Volunteer is scheduled to meet with supervisor and/or begin placement.

### SIGNING-IN AND OUT

Volunteers must **always** sign-in and out at the building on The Bridge Outreach Center Campus they are assigned to volunteer in, before beginning your volunteer work each time, and then sign-out before leaving. This information is important so that we may recognize outstanding volunteer service, provide statistical data required for grant proposals and agencies such as United Way, and maintain a safe and secure environment.

### INTERACTIONS WITH CLIENTS, STAFF MEMBERS & OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Be wise! We want volunteers to get to know our staff, other volunteers and clients in the programs.

Here are a few specifics:

- Do not give rides to any client.
- Do not give money to any client.
- Do not leave your belongings unattended. If you must bring valuables with you, be sure to ask your supervisor where to store them. Never leave your purse or other valuables on the front seat of your car – even if the car is locked., put in your trunk. The Bridge Outreach Center does not assume any responsibility for loss, damage or theft of any personal property.
- Practice active listening and empathy. Do not make decisions for the guests. Always refer guests to staff members for questions and assistance.
- Report inappropriate behavior or anything that causes you to feel uncomfortable to your staff supervisor or to the Bridge Outreach Center's staff **immediately**.
- Always remain calm when speaking with guests. Remember that our guests are going through difficult times and their stress level may be high. Never take any frustrated comment made by a guests personally and never allow yourself to be drawn into an argument.
- Profanity is never acceptable when working with staff, clients or other volunteers.

### **CLIENT NEGLECT AND ABUSE**

It is the policy of The Bridge Outreach Center to provide a positive and encouraging environment for our clients in which they feel reasonably safe and where appropriate consideration is given to their privacy, dignity and individual needs. You are required to embody this policy in clients' interactions and avoid conduct considered client neglect or abuse. Examples of neglect or abuse include but are not limited to:

- Intentional physical or emotional abuse of a client. Abuse is defined as intentional or reckless action or omission that causes injury or emotional trauma to a client.
- Any sexual relationships or attempted relationships with a client or with anyone who has been a client (including clients on follow-up status) within the last six months.
- Moral or social behavior which could have serious detrimental influence on clients.
- Procuring alcohol, illegal drugs or unauthorized prescription drugs from or for clients of staff members.
- Exploiting a client for personal gain, including borrowing from or loaning money or any other item of value to a client or hiring a client for personal work.

Any violation of this policy constitutes misconduct and may lead to immediate discharge.

### **WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

Volunteers should observe the following guidelines when working with children:

- Volunteers should not discipline the children. Volunteers should report children's disciplinary matters to the staff member on duty.
- Volunteers should never be alone with a child.
- Volunteers should never touch or hug a child in a way that might be misinterpreted. Please remember that many of our children have come from abusive backgrounds. However, you will not know which children have been abused and which have not. It is best to let each individual child initiate contact.

### **HARASSMENT / SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of this Organization to provide a working environment free of harassment. Every form of harassment is expressly prohibited. Allegations of harassment will be investigated and, if warranted, appropriate disciplinary action, including termination, will be taken. Volunteers who believe they have been subjected to harassment should report the incident(s) to The Bridge Outreach Center's Volunteer and Partner Director

Harassment can include "jokes", comments or other personally offensive or unwelcome behavior based on a person's age, ancestry, color, creed, sex, marital status, medical condition, national origin, physical handicap, race or religion. Sexual harassment is defined as sexual suggestions, language, physical advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

If you believe you have experienced or observed an incident of harassment of any kind you are expected to report the incident immediately. Since harassment incidents may represent embarrassing or difficult to discuss circumstances, you should select the reporting option above with which you are most comfortable. Each charge of sexual harassment will be investigated with consideration given to confidentiality. Results of the investigation will be communicated to those who have a legitimate need to know and appropriate action will be taken as required.

### **WEAPON-FREE WORKPLACE**

To ensure that The Bridge Outreach Center maintains a workplace safe and free of violence, the Mission prohibits the possession or use of dangerous weapons on Mission property. A license to carry the weapon on Mission property does not supersede Mission policy. Any volunteer in violation of this policy will be subject to prompt disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination. All Mission workers are subject to this provision, including contract and temporary workers, customers, vendors, volunteers and visitors on Mission property. The Bridge Outreach Center also prohibits the carrying of a weapon or concealed handgun on your person or property while rendering any services or attending any event or function or conducting any business on the Mission's behalf. This prohibition includes carrying or maintaining a concealed weapon or handgun in any vehicle used in conjunction with your volunteer placement or brought onto The Bridge Outreach Center property.

"Dangerous weapons" include, but are not limited to, firearms, explosives, knives and other weapons that might be considered dangerous or that could cause harm. Volunteers are responsible for making sure that any item possessed by the volunteer is not prohibited by this policy.

### **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY**

The Bridge Outreach Center is committed to protecting the safety, health and well being of all employees, volunteers and other individuals in our workplace. We recognize that alcohol abuse and drug use pose a significant threat to our goals. We have established a drug-free workplace program that balances our respect for individuals with the need to maintain an alcohol and drug-free environment. The Bridge Outreach Center encourages volunteers to voluntarily seek help with drug and alcohol problems. In addition, The Bridge Outreach Center receives funds from several grants that require compliance with this policy. Violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. Any individual who conducts business for the Mission, is applying for a position or is conducting business on the Mission's property is covered by our drug-free workplace policy. Our policy includes, but is not limited to, employees, volunteers, interns and applicants. It is a violation of our drug-free workplace policy to use, possess, sell, trade and/or offer for sale alcohol, illegal drugs or intoxicants. Prescription and over-the-counter drugs are not prohibited when taken in standard dosage and/or according to a physician's

prescription. If the use of a medication could compromise the safety of the volunteer or any other individual in the Mission, the volunteer should not report for his/her shift.

## ETHICS

The Bridge Outreach Center conducts its business fairly, impartially, in an ethical and proper manner, and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. The Bridge Outreach Center is committed to conducting its business with excellence and integrity underlying all relationships, including those with clients, donors, volunteers, customers, suppliers and communities, and among employees. The highest standards of ethical business conduct are required

of The Bridge Outreach Center volunteers in performance of their responsibilities. Volunteers will serve with respect, concern, courtesy and responsiveness in carrying out the organization's mission. Volunteers will not engage in conduct or activity that may raise questions as to the Mission's honesty, impartiality or reputation or otherwise cause embarrassment to the Mission. Volunteers shall, during both volunteering and non-volunteering hours, act

in a manner which will inspire public trust in their integrity, impartiality and devotion to the best interests of the Mission, its clients and customers. Violation of this policy shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

## DONATIONS

All donations (money, food, clothing or any other in-kind donation) are to be used for the benefit of The Bridge Outreach Center, its clients. Volunteers are not authorized to use these donations for a personal benefit or to distribute them to clients without specific authorization from the appropriate supervisor. Only employees who have attended donations training are authorized to handle cash donations. Violation of this policy (unauthorized possession, use or distribution of donations) will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

## DRESS CODE

Volunteers must dress appropriately for your work, the season and in accordance with program requirements. Generally, business or business casual dress is acceptable for most professional or administrative positions. The following are not acceptable: ripped jeans, short-shorts, mini-skirts, short dresses, tank tops, sleeveless shirts, strap-type tops and tight-fitting, sleeveless or low-cut clothing. Shoes should be appropriate to your work. For your safety, do not wear "flip flop or sandals" – No open toed shoes or similar shoes that do not adequately protect your feet.

- The Bridge Outreach Center T-shirts, jeans and athletic shoes are appropriate for many volunteer activities
- Volunteers may wear jeans or walking shorts if working outdoors during warm weather. Walking shorts cannot be more than 2" above the knee.
- Volunteers assisting in the kitchen must wear long pants below the knee to protect the legs from splatters; a shirt with sleeves; closed-in shoes in both heels and toes; and a hairnet or cap. When possible, we ask volunteers to bring their own baseball caps and aprons. **Due to City of Omaha Health Department regulations, we will strictly enforce the dress code. Inappropriately dressed volunteers may not be able to participate in the project.** If even one volunteer is not in compliance with the dress code, The Bridge Outreach Center is in violation of the City ordinances and can be cited.
- As a general rule – dress conservatively.

## **REPORTING INCIDENTS**

An incident refers to any event or situation where someone could suffer injury. All incidents must be immediately reported to your staff supervisor or the Manager of Volunteer Services. This reporting policy is important for the safety and well being of everyone in order to ensure a continued safe and successful workplace.

## **SAFETY**

It is the policy of the Organization to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all volunteers. Volunteers must comply with all safety and health requirements by management, federal, state and local law.

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

The Organization does not assume responsibility for the loss, damage or theft of personal belongings, and volunteers are strongly advised not to carry unnecessary amounts of cash or other valuables with them when they come to volunteer. Please, under no circumstances leave your purse, wallet or other valuables on the seat of your car – even if the car doors are locked.

## **THE BRIDGE OUTREACH CENTER PROPERTY**

Desks, storage areas, work areas, lockers, file cabinets, credenzas, computer systems, office telephones, modems, facsimile machines, copiers, and The Bridge Outreach Center vehicles are The Bridge Outreach Center's property and must be regarded and maintained according to this policy. Handle all equipment with care, ensuring its safe and proper operation and storage.

## **INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

The use of The Bridge Outreach Center's internal and external electronic communication systems, including computers, e-mail access, voice mail, telephone systems, fax machines and all forms of Internet/Intranet access, is for Mission business and for authorized purposes only. The Bridge Outreach Center owns the rights to all data and files in any computer, network, or other information system used by the Mission. The Bridge Outreach Center also reserves the right to monitor voice mail, telephone systems, e-mail messages (including person/private/instant messaging systems) and their content, as well as any and all use of the Internet and of computer equipment used to create, view, or access e-mail and Internet content. Volunteers who use any part of the Mission's internal or external electronic communication systems as part of their volunteer placement are responsible for adherence to the complete internal and external electronic communications policy. Violation of the internal and external electronic communications policy can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **SMOKING / TOBACCO USE ON THE BRIDGE OUTREACH CENTER PROPERTY OR BUSINESS**

It is the policy of The Bridge Outreach Center to protect the health and safety of employees, volunteers, clients and visitors. Consequently, smoking or other tobacco use is not allowed inside the buildings or in vehicles owned or controlled by The Bridge Outreach Center. Please smoke where there are designated tobacco use areas.

## GRIVANCES

An effective, successful operation and satisfied volunteers go hand in hand. Volunteer grievances are of concern to The Bridge Outreach Center, regardless of whether problems are large or small. In order to provide for prompt and efficient evaluation of and response to grievances, The Bridge Outreach Center has established a formal Grievance Procedure of all volunteers. It will always be The Bridge Outreach Center's policy to give full consideration to every volunteer's opinion. There will be no discrimination against or toward anyone for his or her part in presenting grievances.

Under this policy, a grievance is defined as any event, condition, rule or practice which the volunteer believes violates his or her civil rights, treats him or her unfairly, or causes him or her any degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness on the job. A grievance may also deal with an attitude, a statement or an opinion held by a supervisor or a fellow volunteer.

1. See the The Bridge Outreach Center's Volunteer and Partner Director first. If you feel that any volunteering condition, policy, practice or action by The Bridge Outreach Center is unjust, you should tell the Manager of Volunteer Services about it and discuss the matter confidentially and in private with him or her. If for some reason the Manager of Volunteer Services fails to offer you the opportunity to discuss the matter, or if the discussion does not lead to a satisfactory conclusion, then proceed to the next step.

2. Grievance Conference. The Bridge Outreach Center's Volunteer and Partner Director immediate supervisor will review the grievance and ask to meet with you. At this conference, you should feel free to openly discuss your complaint and substantiate your reasons for feeling the way you do. The supervisor will consider your input and render a decision.

## GENERAL HEALTH

If you have any health condition that might be aggravated by or that adversely affects your volunteer assignment in any way, please speak with The Bridge Outreach Center's Volunteer and Partner Director. We will work with you to adjust your volunteer assignment or determine that you are not able to volunteer until the condition is resolved. Volunteers who have an infectious disease will not be permitted to work for the duration of communicability.

## Volunteer Confidentiality Policy

Respect for our client's privacy and ensuring the confidentiality of information is a program priority. Confidentiality is extremely important since we have battered women and people in custody battles here whose lives can be seriously affected by breach of confidentiality. Any client information, either recorded or not, which is acquired in connection with any form of volunteer work in or for the program, is considered confidential.

**Confidential information includes information about the client's identity, his/her residence at The Bridge Outreach Center, what transpired in any group activity, and any information collected for or contained in client records. All such information must be treated confidentially.** In most cases, Federal Confidentiality Regulations prohibit the disclosure of any information to anyone concerning or identifying a current or former program client unless the client or his/her guardian has consented in writing. The determination of whether or not a valid consent form for any client is on file is the responsibility of the staff supervisor. **The decision to release any information may only be made by appropriate staff.**

Revealing the simple fact that an individual lives at The Bridge Outreach Center may result in putting that person in a dangerous situation. Information that comes to you as part of your volunteer placement is NOT to be discussed with other volunteers, parents, siblings, or anyone else, other than the professional program staff which provides supervision of your program.

**RESPONDING TO A REQUEST FOR DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION:** If you are asked to release information which is confidential, an appropriate, non-committal response should be given, such as, "I'm sorry. I do not know the answer to your questions. Please see the staff manager on duty."

**WHEN ANSWERING TELEPHONES:** If your volunteer placement requires you to answer the telephone, do not offer or agree to take a message as that is an acknowledgement that a non staff person is a client. If the caller insists and asks to leave a message, the appropriate response is, "I am a volunteer. Please wait while I call the staff manager on duty."

**PHOTOGRAPHING/VIDEO-TAPING CLIENTS:** Volunteers are prohibited from photographing, audio taping or video taping any client of The Bridge Outreach Center without management consent. This policy includes the use of any type of cellular phone camera, digital camera, video camera, tape recorder, or other form of image or audio recording device without management consent.