



INDIANA FORECLOSURE PREVENTION NETWORK

Beginning Your Volunteer Experience

Orientation

As an introduction to your new role you should be taken through an orientation process. The orientation process ensures that volunteers are provided with essential information about:

- Their work and role for the organization
- The organization's philosophies and policies
- Code of conduct
- Equal Opportunity
- OSHA requirements including emergency evacuation procedures
- Introductions to other volunteers and staff

Orientation is a two-way process. You are the best person to identify your needs. Discuss them with your Volunteer Coordinator and ask if you have a question.

Training

Training should be provided where required in relation to your role.

It may be through a staff supervisor or an experienced volunteer within the area.

Additional training should be conducted as necessary, and may include such issues as Occupational Health & Safety.

Course Accreditation

Check out with your volunteer co-ordinator in relation to whether your volunteer training and hours can contribute toward recognized prior learning for any subjects offered through courses such as Community Services or Active Volunteering.

Code of Conduct

It is important to be aware of the code of conduct for staff and volunteers of the organization you are volunteering with. This information should be presented as part of your volunteer orientation/training and reference in your role description.

Occupational Health and Safety

As a volunteer, it is vital that you are aware of Occupational Health and Safety procedures. This is for your safety and the safety of everyone. This should be part of your induction prior to your commencement.

Each organization will have their policies and procedures that are pertinent to your volunteer role, please ask your Volunteer Manager or coordinator to outline what they are and where you can access a copy.

Bullying and Sexual Harassment

Harassment including sexual harassment and bullying has no place in the workplace and should not be tolerated. Any form of harassment and/or bullying where a volunteer feels offended, humiliated or intimidated by that conduct must cease immediately.

If you raise a concern, it should be treated seriously, carefully, quickly and confidentially. For further information, contact your Volunteer Coordinator/Manager, your Volunteer Coordinator/Manager's Team Leader or Manager or the organization's HR Department.

Equal Opportunity

What is Discrimination? Discrimination is treating someone unfairly because they belong to a particular group of people. It is unacceptable and could be unlawful for anyone to be treated unfairly on the basis of:

- Age
- Sex
- Marital status
- Pregnancy
- Sexuality

- Physical or intellectual impairment
- Race
- Religion

Insurance

Check whether the organization you are volunteering for is incorporated and has the appropriate insurance, such as Public Liability and Volunteer Personal Accident Insurance. Check with the Volunteer Coordinator/Manager if you have any questions about insurance.

Privacy

Your privacy, and that of everyone in the organization, is protected under the Privacy Amendment Act 2000.

You should be advised of what sort of personal information is held by the volunteer agency, the purpose, how it is collected, stored, used and disclosed and how to access your information.

Please be mindful of the information you share with others while carrying out your volunteering duties. Do not divulge or seek personal information from other colleagues, unless it is of mutual consent and outside of your volunteering environment. If you have any questions please contact your Volunteer Coordinator/Manager.

Confidentiality

As a volunteer you may have access to personal information about clients/customers. Under law people may have the right to have their confidentiality respected and may be able to pursue legal action if a significant breach of confidentiality occurs.

No information about clients/customers, including their identities, should be given to any person or agency outside of your volunteer organization without the permission of the organization and the client. These matters must always be discussed with your Volunteer Coordinator/Manager.

Volunteers must not, during their time with the organization or after leaving the organization, use or disclose any confidential information about a client/customer, fellow volunteer or co-worker.

At times discussions will occur about a client/customer. Sharing of information should be limited to those with whom there is a need to discuss such details and who are authorized to receive client/customer information. This may include your Volunteer Coordinator/Manager. Consideration should also be given to the privacy of the environment.

For further information regarding Privacy/Confidentiality practices within your organization, please speak to your Volunteer Coordinator/Manager.

Volunteering and Cultural Diversity

We live in a multicultural community and the many different cultures have strengthened and contributed much to Indiana's society – socially, economically and culturally. Culture is about the way we do things, how we feel, how we act and what we believe and aspire to. Some ways in which our multicultural community is reflected in our society include the food we eat, our customs, entertainment, language and history.

Indiana is rich in cultural diversity. According to the 2010 census, over 400,000 Hoosiers over the age of 5 speak one of 200 languages other than English. The biggest language groups include Spanish or Spanish Creole, German, French (including Patois and Cajun), other West Germanic languages (including Dutch, Pennsylvania Dutch, and Afrikaans), Chinese, Polish, Serbo-Croatian, other Slavic languages (including Czech, Slovak, and Ukrainian), Japanese, Arabic, Korean, Italian, Greek, Tagalog. It is estimated that one in five Hoosiers was either born or had a parent born overseas in a non-English speaking country. Many others are descendants of immigrants from Britain and Ireland, and Ft. Wayne is home to the largest population of Burmese immigrants in the U.S.

During your volunteering you are sure to come across many fellow volunteers and the people we volunteer for who are culturally diverse. It is important to respect and accept our community's diversity and recognise the positive value it has made to our society.

Looking After Yourself

Staying healthy while you are volunteering is very important. If you aren't feeling 100%, either physically or mentally, you won't be able to do your volunteer work as effectively as you would if you were feeling well.

There are a variety of ways you can ensure you feel up to doing the work. These include making sure you look after yourself both during your volunteer work and at home.

The following are a few tips...

- Ensure you are in the right volunteer role.
- Establish your personal priorities.
- Avoid over commitment of your time.
- Be realistic about your goals and ambitions.
- Avoid setting unrealistic deadlines.
- Move on or change roles when your role is no longer fulfilling.
- Accept that there are some things you may not be able to change.
- Seek help from others when you need it.
- If your volunteer role is stressful, debrief with your Volunteer Coordinator; it may not be the right role for you.
- Don't be afraid to take time off from your role if you are sick or need a break.
- Allow yourself time to relax and unwind.
- Keep things in perspective.
- Have fun and laugh!

It is important to recognize the contribution that all people can make through volunteer participation. Volunteering is a way of building individual skills, social networks and participation in the life of the community and having fun.

Thank you for participating in HoosierCorps. We hope you enjoy the time you spend in your role. Volunteer to give yourself some recognition as well, volunteering is good for you!

- For questions about volunteer opportunities or a volunteer agency you have selected, send an email to HHFVolunteer@ihcda.in.gov
- For questions about the Volunteer Hours Verification Form, send an email to HHFVolunteer@ihcda.in.gov

Volunteer Agency Contact Information

My Volunteer Coordinator/Manager is _____

Contact phone number is _____

Email address is _____

Alternative contact name and number _____

Volunteer Friend name and number _____

Volunteer Friend name and number _____