



Volunteer Manual

Welcome!

I would like to take the time to say thank you for being a valuable part of our mission to move forward and bring change within our community. We are so glad that you have decided to volunteer with Steps Foundation, Inc. Without you all none of this would be possible and there is no way that I can truly express all of my gratitude, but I will definitely do what I can every time I can to let you know that you are appreciated. I know that finding the time is not always easy, but we make the time where we can. Our mission to help families and students within our community is important and I look forward to making the difference with you.

Please take the time to read the manual and get familiar with our processes and procedures. This manual is designed to introduce you to Steps Foundation, Inc and to provide a basic overview of our guidelines that will guide us in the right direction.

As volunteerism within the organization grows and changes, there may be a need to modify the practices, procedures, and other information described in the manual. When such changes occur, you will be notified by an announcement or update. It is your responsibility to keep your manual current and stay informed about practices and changes that affect you.

If you have any questions or need any clarification of the information contained in this manual, please feel free to contact us.

With much love and gratitude,


Abigail Ellis, Founder



Mission Statement

Step's Foundation Inc's mission is to connect members of the local community to both valuable resources, and most importantly, each other through the administration of community workshops, support groups, career support services, and other social services. With a focus on youth development, youth leadership, family engagement and family empowerment, Step's Foundation, Inc aims to lay a foundation of continued support for the whole community to grow together.

Vision Statement

Our vision at Step's Foundation, Inc is to be a pillar of support for local communities that promote growth, creativity and education.

Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Diversity, equity, and inclusion is something that we value. At Step's Foundation, Inc we believe that together we can move our mission and solve problems within our community. We respect and value diverse life experiences and cultures, and ensure that all voices are valued, respected, and heard.

Core Values

Serve and Support – Show compassion, respect, and integrity while creating opportunities for members in the community to receive the necessary resources!

Transformation – Action meets connection when we serve to transform lives!

Empowerment – Providing opportunities and resources to our families and community to get the support they need to rise up to their highest potential!

Passion – Be inspired to do for others throughout the organization and in the community!

Selflessness and Community – We do what we do for the greater good not ourselves, while working in connection with our community to reach our goal of mutual support.

Volunteer Engagement Philosophy!

Volunteers are one of the greatest resources we have at Steps Foundation, Inc. People like you, who give their time, energy, and talents to provide help and inspire hope for our youth and families are very important. We are committed to creating opportunities for the youth and families in our community. Many of our programs would not be able to carry out their goals if volunteers were not involved. Our program volunteers, board members, and committees are priceless.

Benefits of Volunteering!

As a volunteer at Steps foundation, Inc, you will have the opportunity to provide service, enhance your personal and professional skills and perhaps gain valuable experience that will help you in the future.

We strive to provide our volunteers with a positive work environment, necessary training, supervision, evaluation, and recognition. In return, we expect you to honor your commitments to the organization, respect other staff members and volunteers, and perform your assigned duties to the best of your abilities.

Definition of Volunteer

You are considered a volunteer if you, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement for volunteer related expenses, perform a service at the direction of and on behalf of the organization. This includes participating in program activities or serving on the Board of Directors. As a volunteer, you will be accepted officially and enrolled by the organization prior to performance of your tasks.

Steps Foundation, Inc welcomes all groups to volunteer within our organization's program and does not discriminate against any volunteer because of race, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.

Classification of Volunteers

Ongoing Volunteers (Regularly Scheduled)

When a volunteer accepts a position with a regular schedule, s/he will be considered an ongoing volunteer after serving consistently for six months (or another pre-determined length of assignment)

Special Event Volunteers (Occasional)

People who serve as volunteers only once or occasionally in an event situation are considered special event or occasional volunteers.

Professional Volunteers

Professional volunteers are those who provide a volunteer service using their license, registration, or certification as required by the profession. These credentials must be current if they are providing that professional skill as a volunteer.

Recruitment and Selection Procedures

Volunteer Opportunity Descriptions

As a volunteer, you will be given an opportunity description outlining the specific responsibilities of your role. It is your responsibility to read about your position, gain an understanding of the requirements, and seek any necessary clarification from your supervisor. Signing the Volunteer Agreement Form demonstrates that you are aware of the duties your position entails and agree to perform them to the best of your abilities.

Recruitment

Steps Foundation, Inc uses a variety of different methods to recruit volunteers. You may find us reaching out to potential volunteers via our website and social media platforms, and by word of mouth. We also encourage you to let your friends and family know about our volunteering opportunities.

Applications

As a volunteer, you will be required to complete the Organization Volunteer Application. Specific programs may also require supplemental forms.

If you are participating as a volunteer for a one-time event, you will need to fill out the Volunteer Application and provide the name of the event you wish to volunteer for.

Interviews

Most ongoing volunteer positions require an interview with Steps Foundation, Inc staff member who will be supervising you. Interviews help us clarify the responsibilities and make sure we place you in the area where you feel you will benefit the most.

If you are participating as a volunteer in a one-time event, then an interview before the event is not necessary.

Background/Criminal Record Checks

In accordance with Steps Foundation, Inc standards, volunteers for ongoing positions are required to undergo a background/criminal records check and sex offender registry check prior to beginning service.

Driving records checks are required for volunteers who drive for our program or transport clients.

A state of Florida Department of Children and Family Services Central Case Records Search is required for volunteers who will be working directly with children.

Volunteers are responsible to cover the cost of all background and criminal records checks.

Volunteer Agreement Form

This form is to document that you have read, understood, and agreed to follow Steps Foundation, Inc volunteer practices and procedures and feel comfortable with the responsibilities of your specific volunteer position, we require you to sign a Volunteer Agreement Form when beginning service.

Aspects of Volunteer Service

Initial Orientation

All ongoing volunteers will be required to complete an orientation to Steps Foundation, Inc. Topics covered during orientation will vary depending on whether the volunteer is serving in a direct service or non-direct service capacity.

Program Orientation & Training & Supervision

As a new volunteer, your program will provide you with its own orientation and the necessary training required for your specific volunteer position. Also, you will have a clearly identified supervisor who will directly oversee your role within the program. This supervision will be available to you for consultation and assistance. One-time volunteers will also be informed of their supervisor in case questions or problems arise.

Record Maintenance & Volunteer Time Reports

Keeping track of the time given by our volunteers is very important to us. Each program is required to record hours for each individual volunteer and report them to the supervisor on a monthly basis. Some volunteer positions are more independent and require volunteers to keep track of their own hours which they must then report back to their supervisor.

Corrective Action

In inappropriate situations, corrective action may be taken following an incident or evaluation.

Recognition

As a volunteer, you are an essential part of our program operations. Therefore, we believe it is very important to recognize the time and effort that you put into your service. Recognition opportunities will occur at the organization level, as well as the program level.

Participation Guidelines

Certain practices are in place to ensure positive and safe volunteering experiences at Steps Foundation, Inc.

Drug Free Policy

The unlawful manufacture, distribute, dispensation, possession or use of controlled substance is not allowed in Steps Foundation, Inc program sites. Additionally, volunteers may not be impaired by any substance while serving. Such action may result in your immediate dismissal from the volunteer position.

Non-Smoking Policy

Smoking by our employees, volunteers, clients, or vendors in any interior offices or spaces of any building occupied by Steps Foundation, Inc is not allowed. There is also no smoking permitted within 60 feet of any entryway, vent, or doorway to the interior building.

Alcoholic Beverages

No participant of Steps Foundation, Inc will possess or consume beer, wine, or other alcoholic beverages while actively engaged or prior to actively engaging in mentoring or volunteering, nor shall any participant endorse the use of alcohol.

Weapons, Firearms, and Other Dangerous Materials

The possession or use of firearms, firecrackers, explosives, toxic or dangerous chemicals, or other lethal weapons, equipment, or material while participating in volunteering or mentoring activities is strictly prohibited. Any violation of this policy will result in the immediate suspension and/or termination. In addition, violations of this policy may result in notification being given to legal authorities that may result in arrest or legal action, and may be punishable by fine and/or imprisonment.

Dress Code

As a volunteer, you are responsible for presenting a positive image to our youth, sponsors and partners. You should dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of your duties.

Property Policy

As a volunteer for Steps Foundation, Inc, you will respect the property of Steps Foundation, Inc (even if we are off site and at another location) and the personal property of other volunteers and staff.

Code of Conduct

By volunteering with Steps Foundation, Inc you must possess a level of maturity, responsibility, and commitment which is an essential ingredient of our continued success. We are confident that while you are volunteering with us, you will continue to demonstrate these qualities, and conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times. Your primary responsibility as a volunteer of Steps Foundation, Inc is to perform your duties to the best of your ability so that we can all continue to grow and succeed. This responsibility carries with it a number of obligations such as obeying organization rules, cooperating with staff, and remaining loyal to the organization. While we hope and expect the need for disciplinary action will be rare, when your performance, attitude, or conduct falls short of our established standards, we will not hesitate to take appropriate action. Such action will range from oral or written warnings to dissolving all volunteer opportunities with us. Some types of misconduct are so intolerable that separation may be imposed for even the first offense.

Harassment/Sexual Harassment

Steps Foundation, Inc will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in undue hardship. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignments, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training. Steps Foundation, Inc prohibits any form of unlawful harassment or discrimination of employees, volunteers, customers/clients, visitors, or vendors.

Steps Foundation, Inc does not tolerate the harassment of any employee or volunteer by any other employee, volunteer, or supervisor for any reason. The company is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity and expects that all relationships among persons in the workplace will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice, and harassment. In addition, harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of state and federal laws which subject the individual harasser to liability for any such unlawful conduct.

Sexual harassment is considered to exist whenever there are unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to the conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a condition of the individual's employment
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed employee
- The harassment has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the employee's work performance or creating an environment which is intimidating, hostile, or offensive to the employee

Unacceptable Behavior

It is the policy of Steps Foundation, Inc that unacceptable behaviors will not be tolerated on the part of volunteers while participating in the program. This policy is in addition to behavioral requirements stipulated in other policies or procedures within this manual. This policy in no way is intended to replace or take precedence over other policies or procedures including, but not limited to, the following:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Transportation Policy
- Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy
- Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and Firearms Policy

A number of behaviors are regarded as incompatible with Steps Foundation, Inc goals, values, and program standards and therefore are considered unacceptable and prohibited while participants are engaged in volunteer activities:

- Unwelcome physical contact, such as inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, punching, and physical assault
- Unwelcome physical, verbal, visual, or behavioral mannerisms or conduct that denigrates, shows hostility, or aversion toward any individual
- Demeaning or exploitive behavior of either a sexual or nonsexual nature, including threats of such behavior
- Display of demeaning, suggestive, or pornographic material
- Known sexual abuse or neglect of a child
- Denigration, public or private, of any mentee parent/guardian or family member
- Denigration, public or private, of political or religious institutions or their leaders
- Intentional violation of any local, state, or federal law
- Drinking while driving under the influence of alcohol
- Possession of illegal substances

Any unacceptable behavior, as specified but not limited to the above, will result in a warning and/or disciplinary action including suspension or termination from participation in the mentoring program.

Confidentiality Policy

It is the policy of Steps Foundation, Inc to protect the confidentiality of its participants and their families. With the exception of the limitations listed below, program staff will only share information about mentors, mentees, students and their families with other Steps Foundation, Inc staff. Further, all prospective mentors, mentees, students and parents/guardians should be informed of the scope and limitations of confidentiality by program staff. Additionally, mentors are required to keep information about their mentee and his/her family confidential.

In order for Steps Foundation, Inc to provide a responsible and professional service to participants, it is necessary to ask mentor, mentees, students, parents/guardians, and other outside sources to divulge extensive personal information about the prospective participants and their families, including:

- Information gained from students, mentors and mentees written or otherwise, about themselves and/or their families, in application to and during program participation
- Participants' names and images gained from participants themselves, program meetings, training sessions, and other events
- Information gained about participants from outside sources including confidential references, school staff, employers

Records are, therefore, considered the property of the center, not the center workers, and are not available for review by mentors, mentees, or parents/guardians without approval from a supervisor.

Limits of Confidentiality

Information from mentor and mentee records may be shared with individuals or organizations as specified below under the following conditions:

- Information may be gathered about program participants and shared with other participants, individuals, or organizations only upon receipt of signed “release” forms from mentors, mentees, students or parents/guardians.
- Identifying information (including names, photographs, videos, etc.) of program participants may be used in organization publications or promotional materials only upon written consent of the mentor, mentee, student and/or parent/guardian.
- Information may only be provided to law enforcement officials or the courts pursuant to a valid and enforceable subpoena.
- Information may be provided to legal counsel in the event of litigation or potential litigation involving the organization. Such information is considered privileged information, and its confidentiality is protected by law.
- Program staff and volunteers are mandatory reporters and as such must disclose information indicating that a student, mentor or mentee may be dangerous to or intends to harm him/herself or others.

Safekeeping of Confidential Records

The Executive Director is considered the custodian of confidential records. It is his/her responsibility to supervise the management of confidential information in order to ensure safekeeping, accuracy, accountability, and compliance with Center policies.

Requesting Confidential Information from Other Agencies

A mentee’s or volunteer’s right to privacy shall be respected by the center. Requests for confidential information from other organizations or persons shall be accompanied by a signed release from the mentor, mentee, and/or parent/guardian.

Violations of Confidentiality

A known violation of the organization policy on confidentiality by a program participant or volunteer may result in a written warning or disciplinary action such as suspension or termination from the program.

Transportation Policy

It is the policy of Steps Foundation, Inc to not transport any students in the program in our personal vehicles.

Ethics Points

Steps Foundation, Inc has a excellent reputation of conducting all of our business according to the highest principles of business ethics. We are proud of this reputation. We are committed to conducting our business activities with honesty, and in full compliance with the laws and regulations of the State of Florida. We also believe in treating our employees with the same principles.

As a Steps Foundation, Inc employee you should know where we stand on basic ethical issues, so that you can act accordingly. The following business ethics sets down the guidelines for business conduct at Steps Foundation, Inc. It is our firm intention that these standards and rules guide the actions of all employees.

Equal Opportunities

It is our policy to be fair and impartial and avoid unlawful discrimination in all our relations with employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, physical or mental disability, national origin, marital status, ancestry, medical condition, sex gender, military/veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law. Steps Foundation, Inc believes in the freedom of opportunity for every individual to work at a job and for which he or she qualifies. We will make every effort to ensure that hiring, promoting, and transferring decisions are determined on the qualifications of the candidate. Other personnel actions such as compensation, benefits, discipline, terminations, training, and recreational activities also will be administered without unlawful discrimination. Any employee including members of management, who participate in any act of discrimination, will be subject to corrective action, up to and including separation from employment.

Conflict of Interest

As a volunteer of Steps Foundation, Inc, it is expected that you will avoid actions that involve, or appear to involve, conflicts of interest between your duties and other business ventures or personal relationships. It is in your best interest and that of the organization that you act with discretion and good common sense in conducting all business on behalf of the Steps Foundation, Inc.