

# LOFT Community Services Policy Manual- Volunteers

## Volunteer Policies

### Volunteer Policy

#### **Intent**

LOFT Community Services is committed to providing a professional and respectful environment for Board and non-Board volunteers, staff and clients.

It is recognized that LOFT is only able to fully realize its Mission and Vision with charitable financial and in-kind contributions from its community of supporters. This includes the contribution of time and talent provided by volunteers. Volunteers help in furthering the mission of LOFT by providing or helping to obtain resources not otherwise available. In addition, volunteers show by their involvement that the wider community values the health and well-being of LOFT clients and in this way, volunteers help to instill and support the sense of hope that is essential to recovery.

LOFT strives to support and recognize volunteers for their valuable contributions.

#### **Purpose of this policy**

The purpose of the LOFT Volunteer Policy is to provide guidance on all aspects of volunteer participation at LOFT. This policy should be read together with other LOFT policies and procedures as noted, as well as our Mission, Vision and Values.

These policies apply to all non-elected volunteers who undertake tasks on behalf of and at the direction of LOFT Community Services.

#### **Definition of a Volunteer**

A volunteer is a person who by choice and without financial compensation contributes time and service to assist LOFT Community Services in fulfilling its mission.

Volunteers under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

## **Recruitment:**

The LOFT Volunteer Program is open and inclusive of all individuals interested in participating. Individuals must be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the organization and may only be placed if their needs as volunteers match the needs of the organization. The recruitment of a volunteer is at the discretion of the staff member responsible.

## **Equity and Diversity:**

LOFT addresses diversity and equity in all facets of the organization as set out in more detail in the Diversity Policy available online. ([www.loftcs.org/policy-manual](http://www.loftcs.org/policy-manual)).

LOFT welcomes diverse individuals as volunteers reflecting our diverse client population. LOFT policies, procedures and programs demonstrate respect for the values and diversity of all people, and all programs are developed acknowledging the diversity of the persons served by LOFT.

Volunteers are asked to engage all people with respect for their uniqueness and dignity, and to treat all people with fairness and courtesy. Volunteers are asked to be sensitive to diversity and to avoid discriminating on any grounds as set out in the Diversity Policy.

## **Relationship between Volunteers and Paid Staff**

LOFT engages volunteers to enhance the role of paid staff, not as a replacement. Each volunteer will have an assigned Contact Person who is a member of the paid staff with responsibility in the area, program or project in which the volunteer is working.

The Contact Person is responsible for on-the-job training and supervision of the volunteer, and will be available to offer support and advice as needed. The Contact Person will also be responsible for scheduling the volunteer and logging volunteer time.

The volunteer is responsible for providing the Contact Person with accurate information about availability for working and for making the commitment to the work schedule agreed upon. The volunteer should check in with their Contact Person at the beginning and end of each work shift. If the volunteer is unable to attend for an agreed upon shift, they are responsible for letting their Contact Person know as far in advance as possible.

The Development Director or designate administers the volunteer program for the downtown office. Program volunteers are managed by Program Directors or a designated staff person.

## **Orientation and Training:**

LOFT recruits new volunteers on a continuous basis. Initially, an appointment time is set for each volunteer during regular working hours. This meeting includes an overview of LOFT's work, a discussion of the individual volunteer's interests and motivations, and an outline of the volunteer opportunities available. Volunteers are given an information package including contact information and relevant documentation which they are asked to complete and bring with them on their next visit.

Each volunteer receives thorough training in his or her role. This training is provided by the Contact Person or another designated person either "on-the-job" or in a dedicated training session, depending upon the specific volunteer role.

## **Supervision and Support**

Volunteers are assigned a named LOFT staff member as their Contact Person and supervisor. It is the responsibility of the assigned Contact Person to ensure an ongoing dialogue with the volunteer, and to provide advice and guidance as needed.

## **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

Respecting the privacy of our clients, donors, staff, volunteers and of LOFT Community Services itself is a basic value of LOFT.

LOFT is bound by the Personal Health Information Privacy Act (PHIPA) and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). LOFT policies with respect to both Acts are available at [www.loftcs.org/policy-manual](http://www.loftcs.org/policy-manual). (for PHIPA see "Privacy Policy" and for PIPEDA see "Donor Privacy Policy")

In addition, volunteers are required to review and adhere to the LOFT Confidentiality Policy for volunteers, provided in the orientation package.

## **Occupational Health and Safety**

It is our mission to ensure that LOFT Community Services maintains a safe and healthy environment for our employees, clients and volunteers.

LOFT Community Services' Health and Safety program is governed by the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), the Workplace Safety Insurance Act (WSIA), and LOFT's own policies and procedures. LOFT follows the Internal Responsibility System, wherein everyone involved within LOFT is responsible to identify and report any actual or potential hazard/incident.

Basic Health and Safety policies and procedures will be provided by the Contact Person at the commencement of volunteer services. In addition, the complete LOFT Health and Safety Policy is available at each program site.

### **Problem Solving and Complaints Procedure**

LOFT values the contribution made by its volunteers and does not expect there to be any problems. This procedure is provided to ensure that any problem that may arise is handled in a fair and consistent way.

If a volunteer has a problem with a task, a member of the staff or another volunteer, they should first discuss it with their Contact Person.

If the issue is not resolved, or the complaint is about the Contact Person, it should be taken to the Development Director or the relevant Program Director, or designate.

The complaint should be investigated and a decision reached within 14 days.

Where a problem can be solved informally, the Contact Person or other designated staff person will meet with the volunteer to discuss the issue and decide on appropriate action.

If a problem or complaint is of a more serious nature, the Contact Person or other designated staff person will work with the volunteer to initiate a formal complaint or reporting process in accordance with LOFT's Complaints Policy as found in the LOFT-wide Policy Manual.

### **Expenses**

Volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of pre-approved, actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred while engaging in volunteer service for LOFT. Approval must be obtained by the volunteer from their Contact Person before the expense is incurred. The volunteer is then required to track and submit receipts for actual out-of-pocket expenses using the LOFT Expense Claim form. Reimbursement for expenses paid by credit card must be accompanied with a detailed receipt. The credit card slip alone is not sufficient.

LOFT may reimburse for travel upon request by the volunteer. LOFT does not normally reimburse for regular travel to and from the LOFT office or program site where volunteer activity takes place. Travel done in order to fulfil volunteer responsibilities, for example, Speakers Bureau volunteers who travel to their speaking engagement, may be reimbursed at the request of the volunteer and with pre-approval by the supervising staff person.

Travel by personal car will be reimbursed for mileage at the current approved LOFT mileage rate. Travel by TTC will be reimbursed with tokens.

If regular travel represents a financial hardship for the volunteer, it may be reimbursed at the discretion of the Contact Person. Because the only money paid by LOFT to volunteers is reimbursement for actual out-of-pocket expenses, these payments have no impact on social assistance entitlements.

### **Screening and Police Reference Checks**

LOFT will work with each volunteer to determine his or her goals and needs as a volunteer and to match them as closely as possible with available volunteer opportunities.

LOFT requires that all volunteers who will have ongoing direct contact with residents or clients complete a Police Reference Check (PRC) as part of the selection process. LOFT recognizes and appreciates the level of trust that our residents and clients place in our staff and volunteers. The requirement for a PRC is part of our commitment to protect the safety and well-being of vulnerable individuals within the community we serve, and to comply with the requirements of government funders.

All new volunteers whose role will place them in ongoing direct contact with residents or clients will be required to consent to a Police Reference Check under the Vulnerable Sector Screening Program. The volunteer is responsible for the cost of this screening. Specific details on the cost of methods of payment will be provided at the first orientation meeting. This fee will be reimbursed to the volunteer once service formally begins.

### **Additional Volunteer Policies**

These policies have been developed to enhance LOFT's relationship with its valued volunteers, and to provide clarity and guidance on important topics. The following specific policies are also provided to new volunteers at their initial orientation, and volunteers are required to sign and return them to LOFT at their next visit.

1. Confidentiality Policy for Volunteers
2. Volunteer Code of Conduct
3. Volunteer Conflict of Interest Policy
4. Volunteers whose role involves the use of a LOFT computer will also be asked to sign and return the Computer Use Policy.
5. Specific roles may require that the volunteer sign additional LOFT policies relevant to that role, eg: Mobile Communications Device.

The LOFT-wide Policy Manual is available online at [www.loftcs.org/policy-manual](http://www.loftcs.org/policy-manual), or by going to the LOFT website at [www.loftcs.org](http://www.loftcs.org), clicking on About Us and selecting Policy Manual from the drop-down menu.

Volunteers will be asked to review the following policies, which will be provided in printed form for volunteers who do not have ready access to the internet.

- Diversity
- Human Rights
- Privacy
- Donor Privacy
- Confidentiality
- How to Make a Complaint
- Workplace Violence & Harassment Prevention
- Sexual Harassment
- Social Media

## Confidentiality Policy for Volunteers

### **Intent**

Respecting the privacy of our clients, donors, staff, volunteers and of LOFT Community Services itself is a basic value of LOFT. In addition, client information is protected by law under the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) and donor information is protected by law under the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).

Information on LOFT's adherence to both Acts is available at [www.loftcs.org/policy-manual](http://www.loftcs.org/policy-manual).

Individuals are asked to read and sign this policy at the time they become active LOFT volunteers, and annually thereafter.

### **Definition of Personal Information**

Personal information is any information that can be used to distinguish, identify or contact a specific individual. This information can include an individual's opinions or beliefs, as well as facts about, or related to, the individual. Business contact information and certain publicly available information such as names, addresses and telephone numbers as published in telephone directories, are not considered personal information.

### **Confidential Information**

Volunteers do not have access to confidential client information under any circumstances.

Personal and financial information about donors and/or other volunteers is confidential and is not to be disclosed or discussed with anyone. Print or electronic documents containing such confidential information are not to be left in the open or inadvertently shared.

Volunteers may be exposed to business or financial information about LOFT which is confidential, privileged or proprietary in nature. It is the policy of LOFT that such information must be kept confidential both during and after volunteer service.

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or privileged information is a serious violation of this policy and will subject the person(s) who made the unauthorized disclosure to appropriate discipline, including limiting or terminating volunteer involvement.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I have read, understand and accept the LOFT Volunteer Confidentiality Policy.

---

Volunteer Signature

---

Date

## Code of Conduct for Non-Elected Volunteers

### **Intent**

LOFT expects its volunteers to conduct themselves and the work they do on LOFT's behalf, in a manner that honours LOFT values and does not detract from public trust and confidence.

### **Policy**

Volunteers must treat with respect all clients, staff and fellow volunteers with whom they interact while volunteering with LOFT. Volunteers will not discriminate against any person or persons by reason of age, creed (religion), gender (including pregnancy and breastfeeding), sexual orientation, gender identity, family status (such as being in a parent-child relationship), marital status (including the status of being married, single, widowed, divorced, separated, or living in a conjugal relationship outside of marriage, whether in a same sex or opposite sex relationship), disability (including mental, physical, developmental or learning disabilities), race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, colour, political affiliation, or by association or relationship with a person identified by one of the above grounds or the perception that one of the above grounds applies.

Volunteers will not seek or accept gifts, payments, services, or other valuable privileges from any person, organization or group that is engaged or seeks to become engaged with LOFT in any way.

Volunteers must maintain the highest standard of confidentiality regarding information obtained directly or indirectly through their involvement with LOFT and at all times adhere to LOFT's Confidentiality Policy for Volunteers.

Unless expressly designated by the CEO to do so, a volunteer does not speak on behalf of LOFT. It is not appropriate for a volunteer to express an opinion publicly unless it is an opinion pertaining specifically to their personal experience as a LOFT volunteer. When a volunteer expresses an opinion privately on a subject related to LOFT's work, it is incumbent upon them to make clear that this is a personal opinion and not the opinion of LOFT.

Volunteers will remain cognizant of and sensitive to the vulnerability of individuals served by LOFT. When interacting with clients, volunteers will conduct themselves in a professional manner and will maintain appropriate boundaries at all time. It is not acceptable for a volunteer to socialize with a client outside the program or to give or receive a gift or favour to or from a client, without the knowledge and approval of the Contact Person. It is not appropriate for a volunteer to provide personal or financial advantage to a client.



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

I have read, understand and accept the LOFT Volunteer Code of Conduct.

---

Volunteer Signature

---

Date

**Conflict of Interest Policy for Volunteers**

**Definition**

Conflict of interest is any decision-making situation where the private interests of a Volunteer are in conflict with the best interests of LOFT. This can involve the volunteer, close family member or personal friend, directly or indirectly giving or receiving a personal benefit, gain, privilege or advantage through an insider

relationship. In such situations independent judgement and objectivity are threatened.

### **Intent**

The goal of this policy is for all inside parties to operate at arm's length with all outside parties with which LOFT does business.

### **Policy**

Volunteers must remain conscious of possible conflicts of interest, and must report any real or potential conflict of interest to their Contact Person immediately.

Volunteers and staff will avoid any arrangements or circumstances, including personal relationships, which may compromise the judgement and the ability of the staff or volunteer to act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of LOFT.

Similarly, volunteers will avoid any personal relationships with clients that may compromise the judgement and ability of the volunteer to act honestly, in good judgement and in the best interests of LOFT.

Volunteers are bound by the LOFT Volunteer Confidentiality policy. Further, any disclosure or use of information related to LOFT for the benefit, advantage or profit of the volunteer or an outside concern is prohibited.

Volunteers will not directly refer clients and/or their families to any private professional practices in which the volunteer may be engaged.

Volunteers will not accept gifts, fees, honoraria or personal benefits or advantages from any outside source doing business or seeking to do business with LOFT. Volunteers will not accept gifts, fees, honoraria or personal benefits or advantages from LOFT clients, or the friends or family of clients, when those gifts are intended to influence the Volunteer in any way.

In an exception to the above, a Volunteer may accept a gift of nominal value when it is given in recognition of a job well done.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I have read, understand and accept the LOFT volunteer Conflict of Interest Policy.

---

---

Volunteer Signature

Date