

LOFT Community Services Volunteer Guide

Thank you for volunteering your time in supporting our mission to help people achieve their optimal health and well-being in the community.

Volunteering at LOFT shows that the wider community values the health and well-being of our clients. Your actions help to instill and support the sense of hope that is essential to recovery.

LOFT's Volunteer Policy

LOFT strives to support and recognize volunteers like you for your valuable contributions. This guide and the policies outlined here are designed to ensure that volunteers are protected in their interactions with LOFT staff and clients.

These policies apply to all volunteers who contribute their time and services on behalf of and at the direction of LOFT in fulfilling its mission.

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

Volunteer Recruitment:

LOFT's volunteer program is open to all individuals interested in participating.

Successful applicants must be able to demonstrate a commitment to LOFT's mission and may only be placed if their needs as volunteers match LOFT's needs. Volunteer recruitment is at LOFT's discretion.

Volunteers and LOFT Staff:

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

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

You are responsible for providing the Contact Person with accurate information about your availability and committing to the schedule agreed upon. If you are unable to attend to an agreed upon shift, please let your Contact Person know as soon as possible.

Make sure you check in with your Contact Person at the beginning and end of each work shift. Your Contact Person can provide advice and guidance as needed.

Orientation and Training:

LOFT continually recruits new volunteers. Initially, an appointment time is set for each volunteer during regular working hours. This meeting will include an overview of LOFT's work, a discussion of your volunteer interests and motivations, and an outline of the volunteer opportunities available.

You will be given an orientation package with contact information and documents to fill out and bring on your next visit to LOFT.

You will receive thorough training in your volunteer role. You will be trained by the Contact Person or another designated person either "on-the-job" or in a dedicated training session, depending upon your volunteer role.

Equity and Diversity:

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. All programs are developed acknowledging the diversity of the persons served by LOFT.

We ask that all our volunteers engage all people with respect for their uniqueness and dignity and treat all people with fairness and courtesy. We also ask volunteers to be sensitive to diversity and to avoid discriminating on any grounds as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code. If you have questions or concerns about this issue, please see the Human Rights policy which is included in your orientation package.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

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

LOFT is bound by the Personal Health Information Privacy Act (PHIPA) and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).

As a volunteer you are required to review and follow the LOFT Confidentiality Policy in your orientation package.

Occupational Health and Safety

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

LOFT follows the Internal Responsibility System, where everyone involved within LOFT is responsible to identify and report any actual or potential hazard or incident. The complete LOFT Health and Safety Policy is available at each program site.

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.

Problem Solving and Complaints

If you have a problem with a client, staff member, or another volunteer, you should discuss it with your Contact Person.

If the issue is not resolved, or the complaint is about your Contact Person, it should be taken to the Director.

Expenses

You may be reimbursed for pre-approved, actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred while volunteering for LOFT. Make sure you first get approval from your Contact Person before incurring the expense.

Screening and Police Reference Checks

LOFT requires that all new volunteers who will have ongoing direct contact with residents or clients complete a Police Reference Check (PRC) under the Vulnerable Sector Screening Program as part of the selection process. The volunteer is responsible for the cost of this screening.

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.

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. You will be given copies of the additional policies listed below at your initial orientation and asked to sign and return them to LOFT at your next visit:

1. Confidentiality Policy for Volunteers
2. Volunteer Code of Conduct
3. Volunteer Conflict of Interest Policy

Specific roles may require that you sign additional policies, e.g. Computer Use Policy.

You will also be asked to review the following policies, which will be provided in your orientation package.

- Human Rights
- Workplace Violence & Harassment Prevention
- Sexual Harassment
- Social Media

If you would like information about other LOFT policies, the General Policy Manual is available online at <https://www.loftcs.org/who-we-are/accountability/> by clicking LOFT General Policy Manual.

Confidentiality Policy for Volunteers

Respecting the privacy of our clients, donors, staff, volunteers, and of LOFT Community Services itself is a basic value of LOFT. 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/who-we-are/accountability/ and clicking on the link "LOFT General Policy Manual."

Individuals are asked to read and sign this policy at the time they become active LOFT volunteers, and once per year 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 unintentionally shared.

Volunteers may be exposed to business or financial information about LOFT which is confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature. 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

Volunteer Code of Conduct

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

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 adhere to LOFT's Confidentiality Policy for Volunteers at all times.

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 times. 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

Volunteer Conflict of Interest Policy

Definition

A conflict of interest is any decision-making situation where the private interests of a volunteer conflict with the best interests of LOFT. This can involve the volunteer, a close family member, or 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 staff or volunteers 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