



Rainier Valley  
Food Bank

# **Volunteer Information Handbook**

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## **Thank you for volunteering with Rainier Valley Food Bank!**

With only three employees, our food bank could not operate without a cadre of committed, long-term community volunteers. Volunteers contribute over 1,200 hours of service every month and play a key role in helping us fulfill our mission. As we grow and evolve our operations, it is crucial that we continue to promote a favorable and lasting impression of Rainier Valley Food Bank in the minds of everyone with whom we interact, including clients, donors, media, volunteers and the general community. Our volunteers are important to us and we ask for your help to create a safe and meaningful volunteer experience. With that, all volunteers must review and acknowledge receipt of our organization policies and processes. We appreciate your service!

### **About the Handbook**

This handbook is designed to introduce you to Rainier Valley Food Bank and to provide a basic overview of the policies and procedures that provide all of us guidance and direction. As a volunteer staff member, you are provided with a safe work environment, necessary job training, supervision, evaluation and recognition.

In return we expect you to honor your commitment to Rainier Valley Food Bank, respect other staff members and perform your assigned duties to the best of your abilities.

As our organization grows and changes, there will be a need to modify policies, practices and other information in this handbook. When such changes occur, you will be notified by an announcement or update. It is your responsibility to keep your handbook current and to be informed about policies and changes that affect you.

If you have any questions or need any clarification of the information contained in this handbook, please contact the Community Engagement Coordinator.

### **Who we are**

The Rainier Valley Food Bank provides food assistance to low-income residents in southeast Seattle, with a focus on seniors, families, individuals with disabilities and the homeless. No one is turned away who meets the food bank's broad criteria for assistance. We have a commitment to honor our clients by offering healthy, nutritious food.

Our food bank is wheelchair accessible, and sets aside a service day for the elderly and disabled. The food bank also assists families with babies by offering baby food, formula and diapers as available. Rainier Valley Food Bank is open on Saturdays to serve working families and is located on three major bus lines serving the southeast Seattle area: the 7, the 9 and the 39.

We are a small facility with a big responsibility. In our tiny building—thanks to the donations of time, food and money from community members—we provide groceries for close to 10,000 people a month. In 2008, another food bank in southeast Seattle closed its doors, resulting in greater need in our community and higher demand on limited resources. The declining economy and rising grocery, healthcare and fuel costs have increased the need in our community. In 2009, we distributed an average of over 14,000 pounds of food a day, with three months topping out at 16,000 pounds a day. We expect this demand to continue through 2010.

## **Our Vision**

Rainier Valley Food Bank is a model for *community feeding community*. By nourishing southeast Seattle and enabling access to additional resources, we will create a community free of hunger.

## **Our Mission**

The mission of the Rainier Valley Food Bank is to treat our clients with dignity and respect by providing healthy, nutritious foods.

## **Our Guiding Values**

Compassion:

- Above all else, we will be respectful and responsive to our clients and serve them in a caring and sensitive manner.
- We value and protect our clients' privacy and ensure a safe environment for our clients and staff.
- We honor our clients' dignity by offering usable, nutritious food and distributing it in a respectful and sensitive way.

Resourcefulness:

- We bring our full resources to bear on the problem of hunger and collaborate with other agencies to best serve our clients.
- We are committed to providing quality, healthy food in the most cost-effective manner.
- We will be well managed, sustainable and a good steward of resources.
- We will ensure we have the expertise to be effective and are committed to learning and growing.

Community-Centered:

- We believe in being culturally competent and understanding the needs of the diverse cultures and ethnicities we serve.
- We are "community owned" and the neighbors in southeast Seattle work together to raise resources and awareness to meet our clients' needs.
- We honor and appreciate the contributions of our donors and volunteers.

## **Rainier Valley Food Bank Board of Directors**

An invigorated board representing top corporations and the Columbia City community are leading Rainier Valley Food Bank with a focus on fundraising, community awareness and management of the organization to better serve our clients and meet the increasing demand.

## **Volunteer Policies and Procedures**

### **Attendance and Absenteeism**

You are a volunteer staff member and we depend on you to complete your scheduled shifts. We do understand that, from time to time, certain situations may arise that prevent you from doing so. Please alert the Community Engagement Coordinator of any scheduled absences—such as vacation—as far in advance as possible so that an appropriate substitute may be found. In the event of an unscheduled absence—illness or emergency—please alert the Community Engagement Coordinator as soon as possible, preferably 24 hours before your scheduled shift begins.

Punctual and regular attendance is an essential responsibility of each volunteer at Rainier Valley Food Bank. Any tardiness or absence causes problems for fellow volunteers and clients. When a volunteer is absent, others must perform his or her work. No matter how skilled a volunteer, if they do not have a good attendance record, their contributions to the smooth functioning of Rainier Valley Food Bank are diminished. The purpose of this policy is to promote the efficient operation of the Rainier Valley Food Bank and minimize unscheduled absences.

Any volunteer who fails to report to work without notification to his or her supervisor three shifts or more will be considered to have voluntarily terminated their position.

Volunteers must sign in at the beginning of their shift and sign out at the end of their shift. We ask you to take breaks when you need them, just let a staff person know.

### **Standard of Appearance**

Dress appropriately for your duties. For example, physical work requires clothing that is comfortable and durable. Clothes cannot be torn, grayed, dirty, or reveal any part of the cleavage, midriff or buttock. Only closed toe shoes, no heels. Gloves (provided) must be worn if in direct contact with food.

### **Volunteer Personnel Files**

Your personnel file is confidential and consists of written documents retained by the Community Engagement Coordinator. The volunteer's personnel file can be only reviewed by the volunteer, the Community Engagement Coordinator and Executive Director.

This file contains basic contact information and records about your volunteer service with the Rainier Valley Food Bank.

### **Ending Your Volunteer Service**

You may resign from your volunteer service with the organization at any time. We request that you notify the Community Engagement Coordinator ideally two weeks prior to your departure and request that you complete the Exit Interview process.

## **Problem-Solving Procedure**

When a group of people work and volunteer together, problems may arise. It is important to all of us that such problems are solved as quickly as possible. Occasionally, however, it may be necessary to investigate certain problems in greater detail. Our problem-solving procedure provides you with the opportunity to have a review of any problem, dispute or misunderstanding that arises during the course of your volunteering.

- In situations where differences arise between volunteers or volunteers and staff, it is advised to first try to resolve these differences amongst the parties involved.
- If a third party is needed, the Community Engagement Coordinator is to be informed and involved. Under no circumstances shall differences be made public or involve other members of the organization.
- If the grievance is in regard to the Community Engagement Coordinator, the Executive Director should be contacted.

## **Disciplinary Practices**

The following guidelines may be used in some instances at the sole discretion of Rainier Valley Food Bank:

Step 1: Oral warning with documentation in the personnel file

Step 2: Written warning to individual and copy to personnel file

Step 3: Termination/Dismissal

These guidelines are based on cumulative infractions, regardless of whether the infraction is of the same general nature as a previous warning. The use of these disciplinary practices in no way alters the fact that your volunteering with the Rainier Valley Food Bank is "at-will".

## **Dismissal**

Dismissal of a volunteer is a serious consideration. Before a volunteer is dismissed, attempts to reconcile the situation will be made including a meeting between staff and volunteer involved, the Community Engagement Coordinator and, if appropriate, the Executive Director. Dismissal of a volunteer may take place if a volunteer is unreliable, irresponsible, disruptive, demonstrates inappropriate behavior, or fails to adhere to the policies and procedures of Rainier Valley Food Bank.

## **Driver Safety Policy**

The safety and well-being of our volunteers is of critical importance to the organization. We therefore each have a responsibility to not only protect ourselves when on the road but also do our part to protect those around us. Volunteers who are required to drive on company business at any time will be expected to consistently follow all the procedures below.

- All volunteers are expected to wear seat belts at all times while in a moving vehicle being used for Rainier Valley Food Bank business, whether they are the driver or a passenger.
- Use of handheld cell phones, whether personal or business-owned, while behind the wheel of a moving vehicle being used on Rainier Valley Food Bank business is strictly prohibited.

- Although use of cell phones under any circumstances is strongly discouraged while driving, the use of hands-free technology may be warranted in unusual or emergency circumstances.
- Engaging in other distracting activities including, but not limited to, eating, putting on makeup, reading or changing radio stations or music, is also strongly discouraged while driving, even when in slow-moving traffic.
- Use of alcohol, drugs or other substances, including certain over-the-counter cold or allergy medications that in any way impair driving ability, is prohibited.
- All volunteers are expected to follow all driving laws and safety rules such as adherence to posted speed limits and directional signs, use of turn signals and avoidance of confrontational or offensive behavior while driving.
- Volunteers should never allow anyone to ride in any part of the vehicle not specifically intended for passenger use and/or any seat that does not include a working seat belt.
- Volunteers must promptly report any accidents to local law enforcement as well as to the Community Engagement Coordinator or Executive Director.
- Volunteers are also expected to report any moving or parking violations received while driving on company business and/or in company vehicles.
- Failure to adhere to these procedures may result in disciplinary action.

### **Confidentiality Agreement**

Client information is confidential. No client information or proprietary information will be shared outside of Rainier Valley Food Bank. You will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement. By signing this document you acknowledge that you agree to refrain from the unauthorized use or disclosure of any proprietary or client information.

### **Emergency Evacuation Program**

In the event that the emergency fire alarm system is activated, all volunteers are to evacuate the building by following the procedures below.

- All volunteers should exit the building by way of the nearest exit. There are two exits: the front door of the building and the garage door in the front of the building.
- Once outside the building, walk to the corner of Rainier Avenue South and South Adams Street (next to the nail parlor). The Executive Director or Community Engagement Coordinator will ensure that everyone got out of the building and give further instructions.

## **Food Handling Safety**

Safe steps in food handling and storage are essential to prevent food-borne illness. You can't see, smell, or taste harmful bacteria that may cause illness.

- Always wear gloves when in contact with food.
- Never cross-contaminate, for example, touching meat and then fruits and vegetables.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.  
Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- Clean your hands often.  
When available, wash your hands with soap and warm water, then rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all skin surfaces. Wash for 15 to 20 seconds. It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. If using a gel, rub the gel in your hands until they are dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in the gel kills germs that cause colds and the flu.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.  
Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth. Germs can live for a long time (some can live for two hours or more) on surfaces like doorknobs, desks and tables.
- Stay home when you are sick and check with a health care provider when needed.  
When you are sick or have flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest and check with a health care provider as needed. Remember: keeping your distance from others may protect them from getting sick. Common symptoms of the flu include:
  - Fever (usually high)
  - Headache
  - Extreme tiredness
  - Cough
  - Sore throat
  - Runny or stuffy nose
  - Muscle aches
  - Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea

## **Policy Against Harassment**

Rainier Valley Food Bank is committed to maintaining a work environment free of unlawful harassment. The Rainier Valley Food Bank prohibits harassment based on sex (including sexual harassment, gender harassment and harassment due to pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions) and harassment based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation or any other status protected under federal or state law or local ordinance or regulation. All such harassment is unlawful. The Rainier Valley Food Bank policy applies to all persons involved in the operation and prohibits unlawful harassment by any volunteer/employee of the Food Bank including supervisors and co-workers.

## **Policy Against Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual attention of a persistent or offensive nature made by a person who knows, or reasonably should know, that such attention is unwanted. Sexual harassment includes sexually oriented conduct that is sufficiently pervasive or severe to unreasonably interfere with an employee's job performance or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. While sexual harassment encompasses a wide range of conduct, some examples of specifically prohibited conduct include:

- Threatening, directly or indirectly, to retaliate against a volunteer, if the volunteer refuses to comply with a sexually oriented request;
- Engaging in sexually suggestive physical contact or touching another volunteer in a way that is unwelcome;
- Displaying, storing, or transmitting pornographic or sexually oriented materials using Rainier Valley Food Bank equipment or facilities;
- Engaging in indecent exposure; or
- Making sexual or romantic advances toward a volunteer and persisting despite the volunteer's rejection of the advances.

Sexual harassment can be physical and/or psychological in nature. An aggregation of a series of incidents can constitute sexual harassment even if one of the incidents considered on its own would not be harassing.

Volunteers are prohibited from harassing other volunteers whether or not the incidents of harassment occur on Rainier Valley Food Bank premises and whether or not the incidents occur during working hours.

Sexual harassment can involve males or females being harassed by members of either sex. Although sexual harassment typically involves a person in a greater position of authority as the harasser, individuals in positions of lesser or equal authority also can be found responsible for engaging in prohibited harassment

### **Volunteer Responsibility:**

If a volunteer believes he/she has been subject to sexual harassment or any unwanted sexual attention, he or she should:

- Make their unease and/or disapproval directly and immediately known to the harasser;
- Make a written record of the date, time, and nature of the incident(s) and the names of any witnesses; and
- Report the incident to the Community Engagement Coordinator or Executive Director.
- All incidents of sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual conduct must be reported regardless of their seriousness.

## **Smoking**

In response to state and local laws and building codes, smoking is not permitted on the premises.

## **Solicitation**

Solicitation by non-staff or staff members for any reason on company property is not allowed.

## **Substance Abuse**

The possession, use or sale of illegal drugs is never acceptable in our business environment. Also, the abuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs and alcohol can compromise your job performance and conduct.

We recognize that substance abuse can be successfully treated. Seeking help or assistance is not considered grounds for discipline, but refusal to get help in certain circumstances may be. It is your responsibility to get professional help to improve your performance or conduct.

## **Volunteers who are also clients of the food bank**

Please follow these procedures for food distribution.

- Please pick up your food at the beginning of your volunteer shift and store it in the cubbies in the back office.
- Volunteers may not take extra food or have food that is not part of that day's distribution.

## **Volunteer's Code of Conduct**

- All clients must be treated with patience and respect. If you are experiencing difficulty with a client, please call on the Executive Director or other staff person to intervene.
- Be courteous, friendly and cooperative.
- You must follow the food distribution plan for the day you are volunteering. This plan was developed to help us ensure we are able to continue to provide similar amounts of food on an ongoing basis. Because of this, we cannot provide extra food or substitute any items.
- Any injury, accident, or incident where you might have experienced harm while volunteering must be reported to the Rainier Valley Food Bank staff.
- Please let us know if you have any restrictions that would prevent you from lifting or if you are unable to stand for more than one hour.
- If you are asked to perform a task or have a volunteer situation that is uncomfortable for you, please talk with the Executive Director.

The following behaviors are not permitted. Individuals who exhibit any of these behaviors will be asked to leave and will not be allowed to volunteer in the future.

- Offensive or derogatory comments or jokes, including epithets or slurs
- Yelling, intimidation or threats
- Pushing, hitting or any physical contact with a client, staff or other volunteer

- Questioning a client's right to food distribution or preventing a client from receiving food

#### **Rainier Valley Food Bank's commitment to our volunteers:**

- We are committed to equal opportunity volunteerism. We coordinate a diverse community of volunteers from varied backgrounds and social identities, including, but not limited to: people of color, immigrant communities, people of all faiths and spirituality, people living with disabilities, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender communities, and people of diverse ages.
- We are committed to working together towards creating a safe, supportive, and caring volunteer experience where we can learn from each other and grow in service to our communities.
- If needed, Rainier Valley Food Bank will provide a document confirming volunteer hours as community service.

#### **Volunteer Task Descriptions**

##### **Warehouse Assistant & Stocker**

Tuesdays and/or Fridays 7:00 am to 12:00 pm

In this position you move and sort boxes of food, organize and stock food on shelves. This can be heavy work and you must be able to lift 50 pounds. As a warehouse assistant, you have less public interaction, and this job tends to be more physically demanding.

##### **Distribution Helper**

Wednesdays and/or Saturdays 7:00 am to 11:30 am, 11:30 am to 2:00 pm, or all day.

In this position you prepare and distribute food to clients at the food bank. You help "bag" food (weighing and packing bulk food into smaller bags), prepare the food bank so that food is organized for distribution and then help hand out the food. You work directly with food bank clients so the ability to speak a second language is a great asset, as is personable disposition.

##### **Translator**

Wednesdays and/or Saturdays 8:30 am to 11:30 am, 11:30 am to 2:00 pm, or all day

We serve a diverse client base and hear many languages at the food bank. If you are multi-lingual, we can use your help connecting with our clients. From time to time, we also need to update or create documents in different languages in order to share information with our clients. We could use your help with translation.

##### **Receptionist/Typist**

Wednesdays and/or Saturdays 8:30 am to 11:30 am and 11:30 am to 2:00 pm, or all day

We use a computerized tracking system to keep track of the number of people we serve. The system takes about 15 minutes to learn, but this position requires accuracy, speed and friendliness. Ideally, we would love to have a pool of regular volunteers who can return often to fill this role. This is a key role, as the system helps with all of our reports. This role sets the tone and pace of service in the food bank.

**Food Drive Volunteer:** Dates/times vary. We aim to hold one drive each month.

Volunteer shifts are two hours long. During this time, you pass out flyers to people entering the store (the flyers contain a grocery list with our most needed items). People purchase items inside the store and drop them off with you. You give them a warm thank you and a smile and pack the groceries into the containers provided by RVFB. The stronger of our volunteers may wish to help load bags, boxes or barrels of food into our waiting van.



Rainier Valley  
Food Bank

## **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have received and read the Rainier  
Print Name

Valley Food Bank Volunteer Handbook. I have had the opportunity to ask any  
questions I have regarding the contents of the handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **Volunteer Confidentiality Statement**

### **Confidentiality**

I agree to hold in confidence all information I become privy to regarding clients of Rainier Valley Food Bank. I will not remove from the office of Rainier Valley Food Bank any electronic or written records, or copies thereof, without express permission of Rainier Valley Food Bank or Rainier Valley Food Bank's client. I accept full responsibility for maintaining the confidential nature of all records, client contacts and information marked confidential.

I understand that I am personally responsible and fully liable for any violation of this agreement.

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Volunteer Signature

Date

Print Name

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Rainier Valley Food Bank Representative Signature

Date

## **RAINIER VALLEY FOOD BANK DRIVER POLICY**

Volunteers assigned to driving duties ("drivers") must at all times meet the following criteria:

- drivers must have a current, valid driver's license for the state of Washington; and
- drivers must maintain a clean driving record, i.e., must remain insurable under Rainier Valley Food Bank's liability insurance policy.

Any volunteer driving a Rainier Valley Food Bank vehicle or driving on Rainier Valley Food Bank business must observe all safety, traffic, and criminal laws of this state. No driver may consume alcohol or illegal drugs while driving a Rainier Valley Food Bank vehicle, while on Rainier Valley Food Bank business, while in a Rainier Valley Food Bank vehicle, or prior to the volunteer's shift if such consumption would result in a detectable amount of alcohol or illegal drugs being present in the volunteer's system while on duty. In addition, no driver may consume or use any substance, regardless of legality or prescription status, if by so doing, the driver's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle and carry out other work-related duties would be impaired or diminished. No driver may pick up or transport other volunteers while in a Rainier Valley Food Bank vehicle or on Rainier Valley Food Bank business, unless there is a work-related need to do so. Any illegal, dangerous, or other conduct while driving that would tend to place the lives or property of others at risk is prohibited.

Anything a driver does in connection with the operation of motor vehicles can affect that driver's fitness for duty or insurability as a driver. Regardless of fault, circumstance, on- or off-duty status, time, or place, any driver who receives a traffic citation from or is arrested by a law enforcement officer, or who is involved in any kind of accident while driving, must inform the Community Engagement Coordinator or Executive Director about the incident immediately or as soon as possible thereafter. Any penalty, fine, imprisonment, fee, or other adverse action imposed by a court in connection with such an incident must be reported immediately to the Community Engagement Coordinator or Executive Director. In both of the above situations, the matter will be reported to the Rainier Valley Food Bank insurance carrier so that a prompt decision on continued coverage of the volunteer can be made. The driver involved in an accident or cited by a law enforcement official for violating a motor vehicle law must turn over any documentation relating to such incident as soon as possible to the Community Engagement Coordinator or Executive Director, and must cooperate fully with Rainier Food Bank in verifying the information with other parties involved and with law enforcement authorities. While parking tickets will not affect a driver's insurability, any parking ticket issued on a vehicle that is being used for Rainier Valley Food Bank business should be reported to the Community Engagement Coordinator or Executive Director at the earliest possible opportunity.

Any volunteer who violates any part of this policy, or who becomes uninsurable as a driver, will be subject to reassignment and/or disciplinary action, up to and possibly including termination from Rainier Valley Food Bank. All volunteers with driving duties must sign this agreement:

I have read and understand Rainier Valley Food Banks Driver Policy, and I agree, in the event that I am ever found to be uninsurable, or that I lack a clean driving record or a valid and current driver's license, that if necessary, I will accept whatever alternative assignment.

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Volunteer

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Date