



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Relieving Hunger, Nourishing Lives

PURPOSE

The Franklin Food Pantry (FFP) is a private, non-profit organization committed to meeting our community's need for hunger relief.

Mission: To alleviate food insecurity and compassionately empower our community through resources and collaboration.

Vision: To build a community in which everyone in need has an improved quality of life through nutritious food and supportive resources.

To achieve our mission and vision, we depend on the passion and expertise of our Board, employees, and volunteers. Our goal is to create a positive, productive, transparent, and satisfying experience for our volunteers. We seek to create an atmosphere of collaboration, cohesiveness, and teamwork. We believe it is through a happy, engaged team, that we will be able to provide strong positive experiences for our clients. Your interest and involvement make you an important partner in the effort to alleviate food insecurity in our community.

This handbook is intended to provide you with information and guidance about the policies that guide the FFP and its relationship with its volunteers. From time to time, the organization, may add, remove, alter or amend policies in this handbook. At all times, we are governed by federal, state and municipal regulations. In the event that any policy or practice stated in this manual is determined to contradict any law, ruling or regulation of any government authority or agency, such law, ruling or regulation will take precedence, but all other policies will remain in force.

Please take the time to review the information contained in this handbook. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask us. In addition, questions or concerns regarding the content of this handbook should be directed to the Director of Strategic Initiatives who has overall accountability for the administration of this handbook.

If you have not yet completed an application, we ask that you do so before beginning your volunteer project. A fillable application can be found here [insert link to application](#).

Thank you for volunteering!

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VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIP

Volunteers play an important role in helping the Pantry fulfill its mission. You can expect to be treated with respect and gratitude and we expect our volunteers to treat employees, donors and clients with the same respect and gratitude. Prior to your first volunteer assignment with us, we will guide you through a brief orientation and onboarding session.

As a volunteer it is understood that you will be providing services without monetary compensation. Your contribution may be in the form of assisting with food distribution, making home deliveries, pre-packing food bags, stocking shelves, picking up or unloading food deliveries, sorting, or date-checking food donations. Other event-based volunteer opportunities may also arise throughout the course of the year.

CONFIDENTIALITY

During the course of volunteering with The Franklin Food Pantry, you may come into contact with, or be exposed to, information or material proprietary to Franklin Food Pantry or designated as Confidential Information by Franklin Food Pantry or its funding agencies and not generally known to the community.

Employees and volunteers will respect the dignity and privacy of our clients by not discussing with any person any Confidential Information, including any personal information about a client, volunteer, or donor, except to the extent necessary to carry out Franklin Food Pantry's obligation with respect to Food Pantry work or except as may be expressly authorized by Franklin Food Pantry. Confidential information may include, but is not limited to:

- Personal addresses and phone numbers
- Personal information such as medical information or economic status
- Criminal history

All inquiries from the media must be referred to the Communications Manager.

As part of the application process, all volunteers will be required to agree to and sign off on a confidentiality agreement.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

At the Franklin Food Pantry, we believe in the fair and equitable treatment of all Board Members, employees, volunteers, clients, and service providers. Conflicts of Interest may be perceived to impede the fairness of treatment. Actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest include but are not limited to the following:

- An employee, Board Member, or volunteer who is also a client.
- Personal involvement or significant business relationships with an existing or potential service provider.
- Receipt of gifts from suppliers, clients, the media, etc.

In the case of a client who is also an employee, Board Member, or volunteer, this must be disclosed to the Executive Director or the Director of Strategic Initiatives. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality while also recognizing that as an employee, Board Member or volunteer they must abide by all applicable policies and the 2 relationships with the Pantry should remain separate. Activity required as a client should not be completed while on work or volunteer hours, i.e., Pantry shopping or client appointments. Questions or concerns should be directed to their manager or the Director of Strategic Initiatives.

VOLUNTEER HOURS

It is important that we track and recognize the amount of time our volunteers donate. Please sign in and out at every shift. We depend on our volunteers to ensure our clients receive the best possible service. Volunteers are expected to be reliable and to report to volunteer as scheduled. If requested, the Pantry may provide a document confirming volunteer hours as community service.

WEATHER POLICY

The Pantry follows the Town of Franklin schedule during times of extreme weather conditions. If Franklin schools close for hazardous weather, the Pantry will be closed. If Franklin schools are on a delay the pantry will still open at its regular time.

DISMISSAL

Volunteers who are not in compliance with the policies and practices outlined in this Handbook are subject to dismissal. FFP, at its sole discretion, may request that a volunteer leave immediately if warranted by the circumstance.

VOLUNTEER AND CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

As a service organization, we encourage our volunteers to maintain a friendly relationship with clients and treat our clients with the respect and dignity they deserve. The following guidelines are designed to ensure the integrity and fairness of our services:

- Treat all clients equitably.
- Do not provide a client with any special gift, additional service, or favor.
- Maintain confidentiality with and about clients.
- Do not gossip about or discuss the character of a current or former client.
- Maintain a professional relationship with clients.
- Do not loan money or borrow from clients.
- Do not accept gifts from clients.
- Do not counsel or perform case management activities with clients, refer them to the Pantry leadership so the appropriate resources can be identified.

In addition, for your privacy and safety and that of our clients, we discourage the exchange of personal details including address and contact information between clients and volunteers.

In the event, that you have a relationship with a client prior to volunteering with the Pantry, we ask that you notify a Pantry employee of the nature of that relationship.

COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

At FFP we embrace diversity and believe in diversity of thought and experience. We recognize that our volunteer base is made up of people of different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs. Respecting each person as an individual and welcoming the richness of ideas that come from such diversity and expression will enhance our ability to meet our objectives and continue our mission.

We are committed to creating and maintaining an organization which is inclusive for all. A workplace in which all employees and volunteers are treated with dignity and respect, have an opportunity to participate and contribute to the success of the organization and are valued for their skills, experience, and unique perspectives. This commitment is embodied in our policies and the way we operate and is an important principle of our success.

The Franklin Food Pantry is committed to welcoming and supporting a diverse volunteer base, providing equal opportunities to all without regard to race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, religion, age, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, service in the military or other characteristics protected by federal, state or local law.

Any questions or concerns about equal employment opportunities are encouraged and should be brought to the attention of the Director of Strategic Initiatives without fear of reprisal. If a volunteer feels he/she/they has been subjected to any such retaliation, he/she/they should bring it to the attention of the Director of Strategic Initiatives.

COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

Protecting the safety of our employees, volunteers, clients and visitors is of paramount importance to the Franklin Food Pantry. All employees and volunteers have the opportunity and responsibility to contribute to a safe work environment by using commonsense rules and safe practices and by notifying management when any health or safety issues are present. All employees are encouraged to partner with management to ensure maximum safety for all.

Volunteers who are injured on the job must report to a member of the Senior Leadership Team immediately. In addition, safety violations should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

In the event of an emergency, notify the appropriate emergency personnel by dialing 911 to activate the medical emergency services.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY

Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) and other criminal history checks are required for employment and regular volunteering at the Pantry. Regular volunteers are those who volunteer on a regular basis, as opposed to one-time group event volunteers. CORI checks will only be conducted as authorized by law and only after an authorization form has been completed. If a new CORI check is to be made within a year of his/her signing of the Acknowledgement Form, the subject shall be given seventy-two (72) hours' notice that a new CORI check will be conducted.

All CORI information obtained is confidential, and access to the information is limited to those individuals who have a "need to know". This may include, but is not limited to, managers, employees submitting the CORI requests, and employees charged with processing Cori requests.

If an authorized employee is inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of a criminal history background check, the volunteer will be notified immediately. The subject shall be provided with a copy of the organization's CORI policy and a copy of the criminal history. The source(s) of the criminal history will also be disclosed. The subject will then be provided with an opportunity to dispute the accuracy of the CORI record and provided a copy of [DCJIS' Information Concerning the Process for Correcting a Criminal Record](#).

CORI Training

An informed review of a criminal record requires training. Accordingly, all personnel authorized to conduct criminal history background checks and/or to review CORI information will review, and will be thoroughly familiar with, the educational and relevant training materials regarding CORI laws and regulations made available by the Mass. Department of Criminal Justice Information Service (DCJIS).

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT

Consistent with our belief that each volunteer should be treated with respect and dignity, and in compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended as well as state and local regulations, Franklin Food Pantry is committed to providing a work environment free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. In keeping with this commitment, we maintain a strict policy prohibiting sexual harassment and other harassment regarding any characteristic protected by anti-discrimination laws including, but not limited to race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, religion, age, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, service in the military or other characteristics protected by federal, state or local law. This policy applies to all Food Pantry employees, board members, clients, vendors, third party service providers, volunteers and interns.

Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual or other harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated. Franklin Food Pantry will take all steps necessary to prevent and eliminate unlawful harassment.

What is Unlawful Harassment

Unlawful Harassment is conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; has the purpose or effect of substantially and unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities because of the individual's membership in a protected class. Unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to, epithets; slurs; jokes; pranks; innuendo; comments; written or graphic material; stereotyping; or other threatening, hostile, or intimidating acts based on characteristics protected by state or federal law.

What is Sexual Harassment?

Government regulations define sexual harassment as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment."
- Other sexually oriented conduct, whether intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to workers.

Sexual harassment is unlawful, and the prohibited conduct exposes not only Franklin Food Pantry but also the individuals involved in that conduct to significant liability under the law. Accordingly, Franklin Food Pantry is committed to vigorously enforcing its sexual harassment policy at all levels within the Food Pantry.

Administration

Each of us is responsible for business-like conduct and for helping to create a positive work environment. A positive work environment is free from harassment, sexual harassment or intimidation. Harassment or sexual harassment in the workplace, whether committed by employees, managers, board members, volunteers, clients, vendors or any third party is not

sanctioned or tolerated.

Any volunteer who believes he/she/they has been subject to or witnessed illegal discrimination, including sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment, is requested and encouraged to make a complaint. You may complain directly to any member of the Senior Leadership Team with whom you feel comfortable bringing such a complaint or a member of the Board of Directors. Similarly, if you observe acts of discrimination toward or harassment of another employee or volunteer, you are requested and encouraged to report this to one of the individuals listed above.

All complaints will be investigated promptly and, to the extent possible, with regard for confidentiality. If the investigation confirms conduct contrary to this policy has occurred, Franklin Food Pantry will take immediate, appropriate, corrective action, including discipline, up to and including termination of the volunteer relationship.

No reprisal, retaliation, or other adverse action will be taken against a volunteer for making a complaint or report of discrimination or harassment or for assisting in the investigation of any such complaint or report. Any suspected retaliation or intimidation should be reported immediately to one of the persons identified above.

All volunteers should take special note that, as stated above, retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of sexual harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated.

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you may file a formal complaint with either or both government agencies set forth below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim (EEOC - 300 days; MCAD - 30 days).

[The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \("EEOC"\)](#)

[The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination \("MCAD"\)](#)

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Franklin Food Pantry is committed to providing a safe, violence-free workplace for our employees and volunteers. To that end, the Food Pantry has zero tolerance for domestic or other violence in any form and believes that all members of the Franklin Food Pantry community, have the right to work in a safe and comfortable environment. Accordingly, any acts of violence or threats of violence in the workplace, whether carried over from home or elsewhere will not be tolerated. Such acts will result in immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of the volunteer relationship. All employees, clients, contractors, subcontractors, volunteers, interns, vendors, third party service providers and visitors must comply with this policy.

We discourage volunteers from engaging in any physical confrontation with a violent or potentially violent individual or from behaving in a threatening or violent manner. Threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any member of the Franklin Food Pantry community will not be tolerated. A threat may include any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, attempts to intimidate others, menacing gestures, stalking, or any other hostile, aggressive, and/or destructive actions taken for the purposes of intimidation. This policy covers any violent or potentially violent behavior that occurs in the workplace or at Pantry-sponsored functions.

All volunteers bear the responsibility of keeping our work environment free from violence or

potential violence. Any volunteer who witnesses or is the recipient of violent behavior should promptly inform the Director of Strategic Initiatives. All threats will be promptly investigated. No volunteer will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or discipline as a result of reporting a threat in good faith under this guideline.

Any individual engaging in violence against the Pantry, its employees, volunteers, clients or property will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. All acts will be investigated, and the appropriate action will be taken. Any such act or threatening behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of the volunteer relationship.

The Pantry prohibits the possession of weapons on its property and at all times, including our parking lots or company vehicles. Additionally, while conducting Pantry business, whether on property or at a Pantry sponsored event, employees may not carry a weapon of any type. Weapons include, but are not limited to, handguns, rifles, automatic weapons, and knives that can be used as weapons (excluding pocketknives, utility knives, and other instruments that are used to open packages, cut string, and for other miscellaneous tasks), martial arts paraphernalia, stun guns, and tear gas. Any employee violating this policy is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal for the first offense.

We reserve the right to determine when particular conduct constitutes an act of violence or domestic violence affecting the workplace for purposes of this policy.

In the event of an emergency, notify the appropriate emergency personnel by dialing 911 to activate the emergency services.

SUBSTANCE FREE PREMISES

It is the policy of the Franklin Food Pantry to maintain a drug- and alcohol-free environment that is safe and productive for employees, volunteers and others having business with the organization. The unlawful use, possession, purchase, sale, distribution, or being under the influence of any illegal substance and/or the misuse of legal substances while on Pantry premises or while performing services for the Pantry is strictly prohibited.

SMOKE-FREE PREMISES

Smoking is not allowed in Pantry buildings or work areas at any time. "Smoking" includes the use of any tobacco products (including chewing tobacco), electronic smoking devices, and e-cigarettes.

Smoking is only permitted during break times in designated outdoor areas. Employees using these areas are expected to dispose of any smoking debris safely and properly.

FACE COVERING POLICY

In alignment with CDC guidelines, Massachusetts regulations and our commitment to safety, all employees, volunteers, clients, vendors and visitors must wear face coverings over their mouths and noses in all indoor and outdoor spaces and shared vehicles, while you are on Pantry property and at Pantry sponsored events, unless you are alone in your own workspace, vehicle or are alone outdoors.

For the purposes of this policy, a face covering must:

- Fit snugly against the sides of the face
- Completely cover the nose and mouth
- Be secured with ties, ear loops, elastic bands, or other equally effective method
- Include at least one layer of cloth, although multiple layers are strongly recommended
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be free of holes, tears or valves that have the potential to release respiratory droplets

Exceptions to the face coverings requirement will be rare, limited to individuals with a need for reasonable accommodations for documented medical conditions. Individuals seeking such an accommodation should contact the Director of Strategic Initiatives for assistance.

GENERAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

Employees and all representatives of Franklin Food Pantry should practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Board Members, employees or volunteers who have concerns regarding questionable or improper accounting or auditing matters or violations and suspected violations of applicable laws and regulations are obligated to voice their concerns. They may contact the Chair of the Board Risk Committee, Nancy Schoen via email at nschoen@franklinfoodpantry.org. In cases where the matter is being lodged against Chair of the Board Risk Committee, they may reach out to the Board Chair, James Roche via email at jroche@franklinfoodpantry.org. All complaints shall be taken seriously and treated as follows

- The person who is in receipt of a complaint must refer it to the Chair of the Risk Committee. In cases where the complaint is being lodged against the Chair, the recipient should refer the matter to the Board Chair.
- The Chair of the Risk Committee or the Board Chair will notify the full board about the complaint and convene an ad hoc committee, including at least one other board member, to investigate the complaint.
- Upon completion of the investigation, the Committee shall propose a course of action to the full board which may include, but is not limited to, making changes to operational and/or personnel policies, personnel action, and/or referrals to law enforcement.
- When determined appropriate by the Board, notice of any corrective action will be given to the person who submitted the concern or complaint if that person is known.

No director, volunteer, or employee who, in good faith, reports a Concern shall be subject to retaliation or, in the case of an employee, adverse employment consequences. Moreover, a volunteer or employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a Concern in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from the volunteer position or termination of employment.

ATTIRE AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Volunteers represent the Pantry in all their activities. The individual image that we each project impacts the public's perception of the Franklin Food Pantry. Volunteer attire should:

- Ensure safety of the volunteer. In particular, we ask that volunteers not wear open toed shoes while working in our building or at our events.
- Be appropriate for the volunteer assignment.
- Reflect positively on the Pantry.

The Pantry reserves the right to determine what constitutes appropriate workplace attire and personal appearance within the context of the volunteer's position, visibility, and interaction with the public. If you are unclear on what is appropriate, please consult a member of the FFP staff.

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

Franklin Food Pantry's Volunteer Handbook provides important guidance about Franklin Food Pantry, and I understand that I should consult a member of the Senior Leadership Team regarding anything not outlined in the handbook. I have entered into my volunteer relationship with Franklin Food Pantry voluntarily.

In addition, I acknowledge that as part of the application process I have been or will be asked to sign off on a Waiver and Release of Liability and a Confidentiality Agreement. These are in addition to the policies in this handbook and are intended to complement but not replace the policies in this handbook.

Since the information, policies, and practices described here are subject to change, I understand that the policies and practices, both in the handbook and those communicated to me in any other fashion, are subject to interpretation, review, removal, and change by management at any time without notice.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

Volunteer's Name in Print

Signature of Volunteer

Date Signed by Volunteer