

# Good Shepherd Volunteers

## Handbook



**Embrace the World**

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## **I. GOOD SHEPHERD VOLUNTEERS MISSION STATEMENT**

Good Shepherd Volunteers is a service association of women and men which exists to express the gospel values of the Good Shepherd in today's world. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd and the volunteers share the same work and values in this collaborative project.

### **The basic elements of the GSV philosophy:**

#### **Value Of The Individual**

- Through work in the field of human services, to express and experience the unique dignity and value of every human person. Our goal is to approach each person as Jesus the Good Shepherd would, awakening in them their special beauty, and empowering them and those they serve to reach their fullest potential.

#### **Social Awareness**

- Through reaching out to the disadvantaged and marginalized, to increase awareness of the effects of social neglect and to examine our own lives in this context. Our commitment is to promote justice and peace and to impact on those systems and structures, which condemn some to live a marginalized life.

#### **Community Bonds**

- Through relational and daily sharing of the human values, we deepen the bonds of our common humanity. Community members provide support and acceptance of the other members, while challenging one another to achieve their goals. Community implies simplicity of life and solidarity with the poor.

#### **Attentiveness To The Spirit**

- Through attention to the spiritual dimensions of life, we seek to strengthen our understanding of God's presence in daily activities. We schedule opportunities for personal and communal prayer, opening our hearts to the Spirit.

## **II. Criteria For Placements for Good Shepherd Volunteers**

Good Shepherd Volunteers are placed in agencies either sponsored by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, or by agencies which employ one or more of the Sisters.

Good Shepherd Volunteers are not meant to be permanent staffing at an organization. Because Good Shepherd Volunteers does not guarantee the return of a volunteer in subsequent years, organizations are expected to have a working plan to staff the position without volunteer assistance.

## **III. Specific Responsibilities Of The Placement Agencies**

- **Housing**

The placement agency will be responsible for providing the volunteers share of rent, utilities, and maintenance for the volunteers housing. This fee may also include other possible unanticipated costs.

- **Food Budget**

The placement agency will issue their volunteer \$80.00 per month towards the volunteer's food budget.

- **Personal Stipend**

The placement agency will issue their volunteer \$100.00 per month for the volunteers personal spending.

- **Placement Agency Orientation**

The placement agency should provide the GSV with a local orientation upon his/her arrival. This should include sharing the philosophy and goals of the agency with the volunteer, introducing the volunteer to the rest of the staff, and introduce the resources and services in the area relating to the work the volunteer will be doing. The orientation should also include a review of all financial arrangements including taxes, medical benefits, and other pertinent information.

- **Job Description**

Each volunteer is to have a written job description with clearly defined expectations, responsibilities, and hours. The job description should cover a twelve-month period. Agencies that have years which end earlier (such as schools) should have concrete suggestions for summer work for the volunteer, and are expected to pay expenses for the volunteer through the summer.

- **Taxes**

The placement agency will be responsible for administering all state and federal taxes for the volunteer while on the placement agencies pay roll. Completing all

necessary tax forms and tax procedures should be included in the volunteer's placement orientation.

- **Health and Dental Insurance**

The placement agency is responsible for the volunteers' health and dental insurance from the volunteers first day of work through the month of the GSV Re-Orientation.

The Good Shepherd Volunteers office must be informed of the plans under which the volunteer is insured. If a volunteer chooses to remain on his/her previous insurance plan, the site must reimburse the volunteer for those premiums up to the amount of the premiums charged for the site's own plan. This plan must be comparable to the site's plan and approved by all parties involved.

If the placement agency does not have an available health or dental insurance plan, and the volunteer does not choose to continue any previous health or dental plan, the placement agency is responsible for any incurred health or dental costs the volunteer may accrue during their year of service.

It is the responsibility of the agency, specifically the volunteer's supervisor, to assist, when possible, the volunteer in finding the proper in-network care for any health or dental needs. Any out-of-network services must receive prior approval from the placement agency supervisor and the GSV office.

The placement agency is responsible for any health or dental cost over \$25 per month, if the volunteer uses only in-network care.

If the volunteer requires out-of-network health or dental care which would cause heavy financial burdens, the Good Shepherd Volunteers Director needs to be informed immediately, and if possible, prior to any health or dental appointments where these costs would be incurred.

In the case of any pre-existing health condition, mental health need, or dental consideration that is not covered by a site's medical plan, which requires prescriptive medicine, surgery, or any other form of care and that was not made known to the placement agency prior to the beginning of the year of service, the placement agency is not responsible for the costs of the health or dental care, procedures, prescription(s) or appointments.

All emergency health or dental services, including hospital emergencies, must be reported to the GSV office immediately by the placement agency supervisor.

If any of the above statements do not cover a given situation, please talk with the GSV office, as we want to work with each placement agency to ensure a smooth and successful year.

- **Supervision**

The placement agency, in conjunction with GSV staff, must designate a specific staff member as the volunteer's professional supervisor. Regularly scheduled meetings should be held between the supervisor and the volunteer to discuss the progress of the volunteer and the program and to provide guidance and support. The volunteer supervisor will meet with the Good Shepherd Volunteers staff twice a year to review the volunteer's evaluations. Additionally the supervisor is expected to meet with the volunteer at the end of their year for an exit interview to determine what measures could assist future volunteers experiences at the placement agency.

- **Evaluations**

The placement agency is expected to complete a written evaluation of the volunteer in February and August. The evaluation is to be signed by the supervisor and by the volunteer and returned to the Good Shepherd Volunteers office. A copy will be kept on file for reference.

- **Work Schedule**

The Good Shepherd Volunteers' work schedule must be balanced. They should be given time for personal and communal needs. Volunteers must also be able to attend weekly "community night" commitments at their communities where they are living. The volunteer should be working no less than 35 hours/week minimum and no more than 40 hours/week maximum. GSV staff may ask agencies to conform work schedules to certain hours.

- **Travel Costs and Retreats**

Agencies are expected to allow time for the volunteers to attend retreats and other GSV related gatherings. It will be necessary for the volunteers to take all Fridays before retreat weekends off for travel time to the retreats. Time that the volunteer needs in order to attend Good Shepherd Volunteers sponsored events is not to be considered vacation time.

Volunteers' work related travel and commuting expenses are to be included in their paycheck.

In certain instances volunteers may require the use of an agency vehicle. Work sites are not to use a volunteer's personal car for agency use.

The placement agency may be asked to cover travel related costs for volunteers to attend additional Good Shepherd Volunteer gatherings throughout the year.

- **Vacations**

Volunteers should have vacation time equivalent to that of other employees of similar status in the agency (ordinarily 2 weeks). No compensation is asked of the agency over and above the monthly allowance. Vacations should be scheduled with the volunteers' supervisor.

- **Transportation Expense**

The placement agency will issue the volunteer a relocation fee at the end of their service term. This money is intended to cover the cost of transportation home (after the year of service) from the Good Shepherd Volunteers program. This will be based on the cost of travel from the volunteers' current home to the GSV orientation in New York. Good Shepherd Volunteers who are Non-US citizens will receive a maximum \$500. Good Shepherd Volunteers who are US citizens will receive a maximum of \$375.

#### **IV. Responsibilities of the Volunteer**

- **Health and Dental Insurance**

It is the responsibility of applicants to disclose any medical information that may effect the volunteer's term of service prior to placement in an agency.

In the case of a pre-existing medical condition, mental health need, or dental consideration that is not covered by a site's medical plan, and that was not made known to the placement agency prior to the beginning of the year of service, which requires prescriptive medicine, surgery, or any other form of care, the volunteer is responsible for the costs of the prescription(s) or appointments.

Out of network

When using in-network care the volunteer is responsible for co-payments, medical and dental, up to \$25 per month. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to coordinate with their supervisor, human resources, or relevant parties any refunds for medical purposes owed to the volunteer.

- **Living Within Stipend**

Good Shepherd Volunteers is an organization working among the poor, as well as among churches and other organizations struggling for social justice. The volunteer's conduct and lifestyle are expected to reflect this mission. The volunteer is expected to observe this principle within their community life, within the community of the agency where the volunteer is placed, with the individuals they are serving. All Good Shepherd Volunteers are expected to remain within the boundaries of the stipend provided for them by their placement agencies for the duration of their volunteer tenure. Volunteers are expected to notify their supervisors and GSV staff if they receive any funds in addition to the agreed upon stipend.

- **Additional Jobs plus Continued Education**

Salaried part-time jobs and additional education, aside from relevant trainings to aid the volunteer in their placement, as approved by their supervisor, are not permitted.

- **Pets**

Pets are not permitted in Good Shepherd Volunteer communities.

- **Personal Belongings**

The volunteers are responsible to secure their personal items. Good Shepherd Volunteers is not liable for loss, theft or damage of personal items.

- **GSV Rules of Conduct**

All Good Shepherd Volunteers are expected to, at all times, while acting as a member of the Good Shepherd Volunteers, demonstrate mutual respect towards others, and act in a manner which is compatible with the values promoted by the Good Shepherd Volunteers. GSV reserves the right to release the volunteer for cause if, in the opinion of the director, the volunteers conduct undermines the effectiveness of the program, site placement or community to which the volunteer is assigned.

- **Participation through Duration of Program**

All Good Shepherd Volunteers are expected to commit to GSV for the full duration of the program, which is from Orientation to Re-Orientation.

- **Loan Deferment/Forbearance**

All Good Shepherd Volunteers interested in Loan Deferment/Forbearance must submit the Loan Deferment/Forbearance Form to the GSV office prior to Orientation.

## **V. Termination**

The GSV staff retains the right to release a volunteer from their term of service at any time.

What about when the volunteer wants to be terminated from a site but not participation with the program?

If a Volunteer chooses to leave GSV prior to Re-Orientation, whether by the volunteer's initiative, the site placement initiative, or by the initiative of the GSV staff, the volunteer forfeits their entitlement to Loan Deferment/Forbearance status.

Two weeks notice must be given to all parties involved prior to termination.

The volunteer is responsible for notifying the Good Shepherd Volunteers staff of anticipated situations that significantly change at work or in community that would result in an early termination.

In the case where the volunteer is considering leaving their placement agency and the GSV program at any time prior to the completion of the service year, the volunteer must first discuss this with Good Shepherd Volunteers staff and their agency supervisor, and as stated above provide two weeks notice. The volunteer is expected to discuss and explore any and all ways of improving or resolving the existing situation prior to termination. If the volunteer does choose to leave the placement and GSV program he/she forfeits all entitlement to the relocation fee as described in section III.

Is it fair to threaten that a volunteer may be asked to contribute to the monthly expenses of the volunteer community if they terminate and refuse to consider reconciliation of some sort?

In the case where the volunteer is terminated by the site placement, the placement is responsible for one month's prorated share of the volunteer's community expenses to be paid to the Good Shepherd Volunteers Staff. The agency will also be responsible for transportation costs for relocation of the volunteer in accordance with the "Relocation Fee" guideline provided within section III of this document. This fee is also to be paid to the Good Shepherd Volunteers Staff who will make all travel arrangements with the volunteer. The agency is additionally responsible for providing the volunteer with their full stipend until the effective termination date.

### **VIII. Drug and Alcohol abuse policy For the Good Shepherd Volunteers**

Pursuant to the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, volunteers are prohibited from unlawfully manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing or using a controlled substance in the site placement.

As further required under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, a volunteer, as a condition of employment with GSV, must notify GSV if he or she is convicted of any criminal drug statute violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after the conviction.

Consumption of alcoholic beverages on the site placement property is prohibited.

Unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance, and excessive use of alcohol, that may adversely affect a volunteers site placement performance, community life, or that may reflect unfavorably upon public or governmental confidence in the manner in which GSV carries out its activities is prohibited.

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination from the GSV program.