



## Volunteer Handbook

Updated January 2022

Welcome to Share, where we believe every person counts. Together we pursue a stronger community by building relationships, advocating for equitable access to housing and food stability while empowering every individual to grow and thrive.

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## Thank you for volunteering with Share!

### A Message from the Executive Director

Share was founded in 1979 by a group of volunteers whose compassion inspired them to take action to create this organization and help those in need in Clark County. Over the years, Share programs have expanded to meet the needs of a growing community and we have added programs to respond to gaps in services. As our services increase, so does our need for assistance from volunteers like you!

***Share believes every person counts. Together we pursue a stronger community by building relationships, advocating for equitable access to housing and food stability while empowering every individual to grow and thrive.***

Share envisions a community without hunger, where all people have safe and adequate housing and the skills to enhance their quality of life.

We value a community where diversity of people and ideas are respected, with equity, inclusion, and dignity for all.

Share strives to provide a positive work environment for both employees and volunteers. It is our desire to create a place that promotes professional growth and encourages each person to achieve his or her highest potential. We encourage individual creativity within a framework of equal opportunity and affirmative action.

Volunteers show us that people care – to do something without expectation because they want to help make a difference. Each volunteer has their own story and journey as to why they are here with Share.

We recognize and appreciate your willingness and dedication to fulfilling our mission. On behalf of Share's staff, clients, and Board of Directors, we welcome you to our team.

Sincerely,

Diane McWithey, Executive Director

## **Introduction**

Every year Share touches the lives of thousands of families and individuals in Clark County. We could never accomplish this without the caring and compassionate support of our community. From Share's very beginnings, volunteers have played an important role in its development. We need our volunteers not only to supplement our paid staff, but also to bring the creativity and vitality that is necessary for the continued growth of our organization. The ability to willingly work together for the betterment of our community is a truly wonderful thing.

Volunteers assist at Share in a variety of ways: preparing and serving meals through our Hot Meals Program and at our two family shelters, organizing the donation warehouse, yard maintenance at our three shelters, painting, data entry, helping with our holiday cheer program, volunteering at our fundraising events, hosting children's activities at our shelters, putting together Easter baskets and backpacks with school supplies, and much, much more.

While our clients will directly benefit from your time and talents, we hope that your association with Share will be a mutually satisfying experience as well. A staff member will provide training, guidance, and answers to your questions.

Share provides services to individuals and families and prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, economic status, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation and marital or family status.

At Share, we provide a spectrum of services – the Outreach team on the streets, emergency shelters and free nutritious meals, to the Backpack program feeding hungry children, subsidized housing for low-income individuals and families, to permanent housing, and so much more.

## **History of Share**

Share began in 1979 when a group of compassionate individuals began serving the homeless and hungry of our community.

A formal Board of Directors was developed in 1982. The Board began looking for a permanent home in 1985 and purchased a building at 1115 West 13th Street with 40 loans of \$1,000 each—this became Share House.

With the success of Share House, Share was able to expand services. In August of 1993, a Resource Center opened to address the needs of individuals living on the streets. Now called

Share Outreach, this vital resource serves those who are hardest to reach by going into the community and bringing services to them. The Outreach team provides a client-centered approach and offers benefits assistance, housing assistance, basic supplies and more. a mailing address, use of a telephone, meals, and the opportunity to work with a case manager.

In 1996, Share expanded its shelter operations with the addition of Share Homestead and Share Orchards Inn, which both provide shelter to families and single women.

Tragedy also struck in 1996, when fire destroyed Share House. The local community answered the call for help, raising money, volunteering time and resources, resulting in the opening of the current Share House on January 4, 1999.

In 2000, Share began providing transitional and permanent housing for ten households through Share ASPIRE—now called the Affordable Housing and Stability Program and serving over 400 households.

Share once again expanded its shelter operations in 2003, when Share Homes was opened to provide emergency shelter for up to 13 women. This program worked in partnership with other agencies to provide emergency rental assistance, serving an average of 25 women each month. *Due to funding cuts, Share Homes was closed in Jan. 2011, however Share reopened a shelter for women in partnership with St. Luke's Episcopal Church which today serves 18 women.*

In 2004, Share reached out to hungry children in our community with the Summer Meals and Backpack Programs. Today, these programs are operated in partnership with eight school districts (Vancouver, Evergreen, Woodland, Ridgefield, Battle Ground, La Center, Camas and Washougal) to provide meals for children in need when school is operating as well as when their doors are closed.

In June 2007, Share began a public outreach process to share our Facility Improvement Plan and seek community feedback about how our organization should grow to meet the ongoing needs of the hungry, homeless and low-income in our community.

In 2009, Share purchased a building on Andresen Road that, once remodeled, became the Share Fromhold Service Center. Share hosted an open house in November 2011 to mark Phase 2 of our capital campaign process, with a portion of the Share Fromhold Service Center's renovations completed, including the Northwest Natural Products/Gummy Vites Backpack Building Area. The event kicked-off Share's 3rd and final phase of the capital campaign to complete the remodel.

In February 2013, Share officially moved into the Share Fromhold Service Center, the new home to: Affordable Housing and Stability Program staff offices, the Share Volunteer Center, administrative offices and warehouse for Share's Backpack & Holiday Cheer Programs, plus storage space for donations. Share leases space to our partners Council for the Homeless and Community Services Northwest.

In 2015, Lincoln Place, a 30-unit Housing First apartment complex, opened. The building is owned by Vancouver Housing Authority and managed by Key Properties; Share manages programs offered to the residents and Community Services Northwest provides on-site mental health and substance abuse services. Lincoln Place is permanent supportive housing so people can live there indefinitely and receive on-going services.

In 2018, Women's Housing and Transition (WHAT) was created in partnership with St. Luke's/San Lucas Episcopal Church to provide 18 beds for women experiencing homelessness. Originally an overnight shelter, during the pandemic it transitioned to a 24/7 facility to ensure that the women had a safe place to stay during the day as well.

In 2020, Share Orchards Inn and Share Homestead were remodeled. Both of these facilities are shelters for families and single women, which are owned by Vancouver Housing Authority and operated with care by Share.

COVID brought many challenges for Share as we implemented new policies to ensure safety for our staff and clients, and rose to the challenge of providing prevention funding to hundreds of households that were at risk for eviction.

To learn more about Share: [sharevancouver.org](https://sharevancouver.org) | [facebook.com/ShareVancouver](https://facebook.com/ShareVancouver)

## **Statement on Equity**

Share wants to be part of a community that brings about change. We are committed to actively working to dismantle racist systems, focusing on sustainable solutions to structural racism, police violence, and inequitable economic, health care, and education systems. It requires all institutions, including ours, to ask what more we can and should do to live our commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion – and we must be brave enough to make changes.

The vast racial disparities in those experiencing homelessness and poverty are also stark examples of historic inequity, reflecting an unacceptable indifference to the humanity of Black Americans. Too often being homeless is considered a personal or a moral failing. However, homelessness should be understood as a failure of our system to implement the right to affordable housing and to restore justice and dignity to those for whom it matters most.

Share continues to work with the Vancouver Police Department and the Clark County Sheriff's Office to seek positive responses to incidents within our community. Most often, we've worked directly with those involved as opposed to making public statements. However, we have come to acknowledge that silence on inequity is complicity and a public response is both responsible and required.

Over the past year, our country, our community and Share as an agency have had an opportunity to take a hard look at our practices through a diversity, equity and inclusion lens. For Share that has meant strengthening our Share E-team, focusing on how we can improve our internal policies, re-working our mission statement and most recently applying for funds to better serve our families of color living in Share Homestead and Share Orchards Inn.

At Share, we recognize that we are part of this problem, as structural racism in the U.S. housing and social services systems have contributed to stark and persistent racial disparities. We must continue to develop the flexibility to adapt our programs with a focus on meeting the specific needs of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). We expect the families whom we serve to be experts on their own lives. Our Share E-team is part of this process, as we seek help from community experts to grow and improve our services for the diverse people we serve.

Through respectful, constructive and honest conversations, together we can build safer, unified communities to call home.

## **Volunteer Application**

All volunteers for Share are required to complete an online volunteer profile & application. If you are in need of a paper application, or if you would like to complete it over the phone, please contact our Director of Volunteers at 360-952-8228. Once your application is submitted, it will be reviewed by our volunteer office. You will receive an email notification once it has been processed.

## **Background Checks**

Share processes all applications through the Washington State Patrol Access to Criminal History (WATCH) and the U.S. Department of Justice Sex Offender web site (SMART) for background information. Background checks are required for all volunteers since our programs serve vulnerable populations of adults and children. Having an infraction on your record may not prevent you from volunteering. Please call the Director of Volunteers with any questions or concerns that you may have. You may request a copy of your background check, but they are not automatically sent to applicants.

## **Online Registration & Placement**

You may sign up online for available volunteer opportunities, or submit an application for available project assignments. If it is your first time signing up for a particular event, the volunteer department will first review your profile before approving your registration request. Once approved you will receive an email with confirmation details for the opportunity.

## **Attendance**

If you are unable to attend your scheduled opportunity, we appreciate notice 48 hours in advance when possible to allow us to schedule others to fill in for your shifts. You may cancel your registration through your online profile or confirmation email. The volunteer office staff is available most days Monday – Friday, 9am to 5pm if you would like to call in or email your cancellation notice. If you need to cancel on an evening or weekend when the office is closed, please call the shelters directly.

## **Health & Safety Guidelines**

- Please do not volunteer if you are ill.
- Masks are required for all staff and volunteers at our indoor programs.
- Please be aware of the space and give others room to work without feeling crowded. Leave 6' of distance between you and others when possible.

- Please view the Food Safety videos, both parts one and two that have been produced by the Oregon Food Bank. You can find them in your confirmation email or on our website, [sharevancouver.org](http://sharevancouver.org), under the Volunteer tab.
- Please wash your hands both prior to and after handling all food, after all breaks, cleaning of dishes, counters, and tables. You are required to wear gloves for all food preparation. Gloves are considered a one use item and should be changed when you leave and return to the kitchen or when changing from preparing meats and fish to any other food type.
- Please ask for help in lifting any item that you consider too heavy, or any item that is over 25 pounds. If you are in need of help for any kitchen activity, please ask the onsite supervisor.
- Feel free to take breaks to stretch and drink water as needed during your shift.
- If you encounter any hazardous situations or unsafe activity in the kitchen or elsewhere on any of Share's premises, please let a staff member know so that it may be corrected.

## **Confidentiality and Boundaries**

It is expected that all Share volunteers will conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. This does not imply, nor do we expect that this will result in a standoffish or distant manner with the clients. All clients should be treated equally and respectfully and in a friendly manner. As volunteers, there is a great deal of interaction that occurs with clients. However, entering a relationship outside of a volunteer role such as a personal friendship, roommate, or landlord or engaging in sexual or romantic liaisons with either a current client or a client that has been out of our system less than one year is considered unethical and is prohibited.

It is also expected that all volunteers will maintain strict confidentiality regarding clients, donors, and other volunteers should you be in the position to access records of any type.

Volunteers should not engage in conversations that are considered sensitive in nature in public areas where others can overhear, nor in discussions with clients, other volunteers, or others that are not involved in a professional relationship with the clients.

In addition:

- Volunteers shall request a person's permission prior to hugging them. Making clients or others feel in any way obligated to accept touching and hugging is unethical. Victims of sexual abuse, adolescents, older adults, and some dual-diagnosed persons may be particularly sensitive and vulnerable to negative reactions or misinterpretations of touching or hugging.
- You may not accept gifts from a current or former client. By the nature of our work, our clients are low income, their funds should be used for the benefit of their families.

Generally, a gift from a child is acceptable when turning the gift down would be considered rude, or unreasonable.

- You must keep your private life separate from your volunteer work environment.
- Transportation of clients in personal vehicles is prohibited.
- You must not give, receive or exchange personal phone numbers, email addresses, or social media contacts with a client.
- You must not make personal purchases of items for clients.
- You must not give or make loans to a client.
- You must not accept or offer favors.

## **Alcohol, Drugs, Firearms**

The unauthorized possession, use, distribution, or sale of drugs or alcohol on company premises, on company time, or in connection with Share is strictly prohibited. Coming to volunteer under the influence of either drugs or alcohol is forbidden and may lead to disciplinary action up to termination. Management will take appropriate action to prohibit any individual whose behavior, judgment or performance is impaired by drugs or alcohol from entering any of Share's programs. The possession or use of alcohol or drugs during the work day will result in immediate termination. The same applies to individuals who come to volunteer under the influence of either drugs or alcohol.

For health and safety related reasons, anyone taking prescription drugs as medication for an illness or control of a health condition should inform his/her supervisor.

The Washington State Health Department has mandated that all public facilities are nonsmoking environments. Further, while the health department rules allow for smoking 25' or further from the doors, we ask that you refrain from smoking on any of our premises.

Carrying or possession of weapons on the premises of any Share facility is not allowed.

Engagement in any of the activities described above, may be basis for immediate termination.

## **Harassment / Sexual Harassment**

Harassment of employees, volunteers, or clients is unacceptable conduct which will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, verbal abuse of a sexual nature, subtle pressure or requests for sexual activities, unnecessary touching, graphic verbal commentaries, degrading words used to describe an individual, a display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, offensive jokes, physical

assault, or other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature. No person will be subject to retaliation for any report of harassment or refusal to submit to harassment.

Other prohibited forms of harassment include unwelcome and offensive behavior or treatment based on factors such as a person's race, religion, disability, age, creed, sexual orientation, national origin, or any other basis protected by law.

Any volunteer who feels that they are a victim of prohibited harassment or retaliation for complaints of harassment should bring the matter to the immediate attention of the case manager/supervisor on duty. Any volunteer who is uncomfortable for any reason in bringing such matter to the attention of the person in charge should report the matter to the Director of Volunteers, the Executive Director or the President of the Board of Directors. Share will promptly investigate all allegations of harassment/ sexual harassment in as confidential a manner as possible and take appropriate corrective action if warranted.

After an investigation any volunteer who is determined to have engaged in harassment in violation of this policy will be subject to immediate termination.

## **Community Service**

We are happy to work with many programs that require community service, including school requirements, service organizations, and employer based service. Both groups and individuals can participate in many of our volunteer activities and we can generally accommodate place and time. Please plan ahead as it does take time to process applications and scheduling needs.

**Court-Ordered Community Service:** If you are in need of court ordered community service, you will be placed on a case by case basis. Please submit your volunteer application online if you are able to do so. Your volunteer profile and background check will be reviewed, then you will be emailed options for scheduling at one of our shelters or programs. You must plan ahead in order to complete the required number of hours in your time allotted. You should also track your hours and you must sign in at the various locations as any unlogged hours that cannot be verified by staff will not be included in reports to the appropriate authorities.

## Staff Contact Information

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