



Volunteer Handbook

(Updated August 2022)

Purpose for Volunteering at Beth-El Center, Inc.

Beth-El Center, Inc. greatly values the volunteers who commit their time to assisting the organization in the services delivery to those in need throughout the greater Milford area. We understand that you have other obligations and commitments, and we are grateful for your desire to commit some of your time to Beth-El Center, Inc. Our goal is to provide opportunity for you to use your talents and skills in a way that benefits the agency and provides you with a satisfying experience during the time you have available. You determine the time you can and want to commit to the organization, and we will work with you to identify tasks that fit your interest and accommodate your schedule.

We welcome your volunteer involvement with Beth-El Center, Inc. and look forward to working side by side with you as the organization strives to provide high quality effective services and programs to the Milford and Greater New Haven community.

About Beth-El Center

Beth-El Center, Inc. is a recognized leader in caring for and meeting the needs of the hungry and the homeless. We serve a variety of people, from all walks of life, providing emergency shelter, food programs and case management of our Supportive Housing program. We also offer community outreach and engagement, mobile case management services and homelessness diversion programs for individuals and families who are unsheltered and/or at risk of homelessness.

Contributing factors to homelessness are complex and widely variable, meaning that there is no one solution to this massive social problem. Further, the face of homelessness continues to evolve, with growing numbers of parents with children in need of emergency shelter or even a simple meal or a bed for the night.

We seek not only to shelter and feed people but, with community collaborators and partners, to find long-term solutions that will end homelessness and hunger in our region.

Mission Statement

Beth-El extends dignity and respect to all individuals and families while connecting them to housing, food and services within their communities.

Vision Statement

Everyone is home and all are fed.

Volunteering at Beth-El Center, Inc.

Beth-El Center, Inc. is committed to creating the best possible relationship with our volunteers. Part of that commitment involves establishing a clear understanding of expectations for volunteers.

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is an individual who, beyond the confines of paid employment and normal responsibilities, contributes time, talent and service to assist the Beth-El Center, Inc. in the accomplishment of its mission to provide high-quality service.

Importance of Volunteers

Volunteers play an important part in the success of Beth-El Center, Inc.

- Bring new ideas and energy

- Complement and expand the services of staff by sharing their unique skills and abilities.
- Relieve staff of duties that can be delegated.
- Enrich and increase the quality of programs.
- Offer additional services to clients and residents.
- Bring diversity of backgrounds and experience.
- Provide opportunities for community members to be involved.
- Promote community support and increase community knowledge.

Becoming a Volunteer

Application

Interested individuals will be asked to apply via Beth-El Center, Inc.'s website. Hard copies of the applications are available onsite.

Background and Reference Checks

The screening and background check process is essential to maintain the integrity of the organization, and ensure the safety of the clients we serve. Beth-El Center, Inc. reserves the right to decline a volunteer's service based on the results of the background and reference check.

Orientation

All volunteers require to attend a volunteer orientation. Following the orientation, volunteers will be scheduled to come in for their first shift. Volunteers will receive a description of duties and expectation for their assigned positions.

Training

Beth-El Center, Inc. trainings are conducted to enhance your volunteer services. Position-specific training will be led by the volunteer's supervisor and department manager. Trainings are offered at times that are convenient for the volunteer.

Time Records

Volunteers are responsible for keeping track of their hours by signing in the log book.

Scheduling

Volunteers are typically assigned duties that require a regular schedule. If volunteer is expecting to be absent from scheduled assignment, please notify your supervisor in advance as possible. If you are taking a vacation, your supervisor will need to make arrangements to cover the loss of your services.

Hours of Operation

Operating hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. EST

Holiday Closure Schedule

- **New Year's Day** (January 1st);
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Day** (3rd Monday in January)
- **President's Day** (3rd Monday in February);
- **Memorial Day** (last Monday in May)
- **Independent Day** (July 4th);
- **Labor Day** (1st Monday in September)
- **Veteran's Day** (November 11th)
- **Thanksgiving** (4th Thursday in November);
- **Day after Thanksgiving**

- **Christmas Day** (December 25th)*
- **Floating Holiday** (Can be taken at any time, following PTO approval policy)

Rights and Responsibilities

Beth-El Center, Inc. believes volunteers are a vital resource and commit to appropriate infrastructure to support volunteer engagement.

Volunteers have the right to:

- Work in a healthy and safe environment.
- Receive a clear description of duties and agreed upon hours of contribution.
- Receive orientation to the organization and your individual volunteer role.
- Have your confidential and personal information protected in accordance with organization policy.
- Receive appropriate training and support to carry out your role.
- Share any concerns and deal with conflicts or difficulties in an appropriate manner with your supervisor.
- Receive regular feedback from designated Beth-El Center, Inc. staff members.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries between you and clients.

Volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Be reliable.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Be courteous and friendly to clients, staff and other volunteers.
- Carry out responsibilities of your volunteer role listed in the job description.
- Adhere to the mission of the organization during your volunteer time.
- Treat clients, staff, other volunteers and the public fairly and without discrimination.
- Be accountable for your actions.
- Be committed to the organization.
- Undertake training as required by the organization.
- Ask for support when you need it.
- Offer feedback.
- Let your supervisor know as early as possible if you are unable to report as scheduled.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries between you and clients.

Harassment

Beth-El Center, Inc. intends to provide a volunteer environment that is pleasant, healthy, comfortable and free of intimidation, hostility, or other offenses which might interfere with volunteer performance. Harassment of any sort –verbal, physical, visual—will not be tolerated.

Harassment can take many forms, including: words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation, physical contact or violence.

All reports of alleged harassment, sexual harassment, or discrimination will be treated seriously. As reasonable, reports will be kept confidential.

Confidentiality

Clients, employees and volunteer have a right to confidentiality. Any discussions regarding clients, employees, or volunteers will be professional and pertain only to the issues at hand. Volunteers are not allowed to discuss confidential issues in public places or to any person, except a qualified staff member. Volunteers have the right to review their files. No file or information will be sent to any other source unless a release form has been signed by the volunteer.

Conflict of Interest

Volunteers shall not own or be involved in any business, occupation, organization or activity that would represent a potential or direct conflict of interest.

Volunteers shall not accept gifts from employees, outside vendors and another company or organization, which would represent a potential or direct conflict of interest with Beth-El Center, Inc.

Volunteers should notify their on-site supervisor of any activity that violates the above standard regarding conflict of interest.

Workplace Violence

Beth-El Center, Inc. has a zero-tolerance policy concerning threats, intimidation and violence of any kind in the workplace either committed by or directed toward our volunteers and employees. Volunteers who engage in such conduct will be dismissed from volunteer service.

If a volunteer feels that he or she has been subjected to threats or threatening conduct by fellow volunteers, employees of the Agency, vendors, or clients, the volunteer should notify his or her volunteer program supervisor or another member of management immediately. Volunteers will not be penalized for reporting such concerns.

Incident Reporting

If an accident or injury occurs while volunteering, it must be reported immediately to your supervisor. The supervisor will complete report with all the known details and circumstances related to the accident or injury.

If the volunteer-related injury requires medical treatment, the volunteer will be directed to seek medical attention at a provider of their choosing. In the event of medical emergency, the volunteer should seek treatment immediately at the nearest and most appropriate medical center.

Smoking

In accordance with Connecticut state law, Beth-El Center has declared itself and its entire facility/property as "Smoke Free." This means that the burning of tobacco products of any kind is expressly prohibited in or around the facility, except at the designated smoking area in the rear of the building. Volunteers who choose to smoke may do so only during their allotted break time and only in the designated smoking area.