

# Volunteer Handbook



*Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People*

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Welcome to VEAP!

We understand your time is precious and we're so happy you've chosen to spend some of it with us. Every day, VEAP serves upwards of 125 visitors through our basic needs and social services departments and we could not do so without you and your support. By beginning your journey here with us you are joining a dedicated team of volunteers and staff devoted to creating pathways to stronger, more hopeful communities through access to healthy food, housing stability, and supportive services.

The Volunteer Department is here to support you as you navigate our organization and find your best fit. We are always here to answer any questions you may have concerning your role here at VEAP. This handbook is designed to introduce you to our organization, our department, as well as your role as a volunteer. We hope your experience here with us will be a rewarding one!

With many thanks and appreciation,



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**Attachments:** Organization Chart, Code of Conduct, Criminal Background Check Policy, Civil Rights Form, Handbook Acknowledgement

**Want to learn more? Visit your Volgistics home page! You will find:**

- Participation Guidelines & Policies
- Building Information
- Safety Information
- Code of Conduct
- Criminal Background Check Policy



## ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

### ***Who We Are***

VEAP is a basic needs organization whose programs include access to healthy foods, social services, housing stability, and supportive services.

### ***Our History***

In the early 1970s, a small group of 13 churches in Richfield and South Minneapolis became increasingly concerned about the state of their community and the living conditions of seniors. This, along with other societal issues, mobilized a group of volunteers from these churches to band together and form VEAP in 1973. In the beginning, programming focused on the needs of the elderly but has since expanded to meet the ever-changing needs of our community. Today, our programs have evolved to focus on both basic needs and social services. We continue to do our best to work with the community to develop programming that matches their biggest needs and concerns.

### ***Our Vision***

A thriving community where all are free to pursue their dreams!

### ***Our Mission***

Together we create pathways to stronger, more hopeful communities through access to healthy food, housing stability, and supportive services.

### ***Our Values***

- **Compassion** - *We support and care for each other*
- **Collaboration** - *We are most effective when we work together*
- **Inclusion** - *We are stronger when we embody and empower all voices*
- **Innovation** - *We are bold and creative and maximize all resources available*
- **Responsiveness** - *We are proactive and adapt to meet changing needs*
- **Integrity** - *We are authentic and trustworthy at all times*

### ***Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion***

VEAP embraces diversity and is committed to pursuing a more just, equitable and inclusive society for all people.



## ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

### ***Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (continued)***

We respect and value all dimensions of diversity including differences of preference, perspective, race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, sexual orientation, economic status, religious or non-religious background, ability and all other visible and nonvisible differences.

As a community based nonprofit, we have a responsibility to break down barriers, address historical and current inequities and injustices, as well as proactively engage all people in our community. We strive to create a space where all people are welcome and seek to foster a culture of respect, human dignity, learning, openness and integrity. Our mission calls us to work together and our vision challenges us to embrace all. All means all at VEAP. We can accomplish more in partnership with others.

When our entire community is reflected in our volunteers, staff and leadership, and we enable all voices to be heard, then our services will be stronger, we will be more effective and we will advance our vision: A thriving community where all are free to pursue their dreams!

### ***VEAP's Equity Statement***

We recognize that both advantages and barriers exist and that not all people start from the same place. We strive to identify and eliminate the barriers that prevent all people from pursuing their dreams and thriving in our community. We believe in fair treatment, access, opportunity and resources for all people.

### ***What do we mean when we say DEI?***

- **DIVERSITY** is the representation of all our varied identities and differences, both visible and invisible. We believe the solution to the problems we hope to address through our services can be found by affirming our similarities, as well as by finding value in our differences. We seek to proactively engage, understand, and draw on a variety of life experiences and perspectives.
- **EQUITY** seeks to ensure fair treatment, equality of opportunity, and fairness in access to information and resources for all by identifying and eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. We believe equity is only possible in an environment built on respect and dignity. We seek to provide dignified services that are accessible to all in our community.
- **INCLUSION** builds a culture of belonging and understanding by actively inviting the contribution, participation and leadership of all people. We believe every person's voice adds value, and we strive to create balance in the face of power and privilege differences. We believe an inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. We seek to be accountable to the most marginalized in our community and commit to serving with compassion, curiosity and self-reflection.



## VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

### ***Volunteer Department Vision***

A community engaged in positive change and connected by service to one another.

### ***Volunteer Department Mission***

Food and shelter are our two most basic needs. If we cannot satisfy these two needs all else - our safety, sense of belonging, freedom, and ability to follow our dreams - becomes nearly impossible to accomplish. At VEAP, we connect neighbors with opportunities to serve their communities so no one has to struggle to keep food on the table and a roof over their head.

### ***Volunteer Department Staff***

Courtney Flug, Volunteer Director (she/her/hers)

- **Email:** [courtneyf@veap.org](mailto:courtneyf@veap.org)
- **Phone:** 952.955.8325
- **About:** VEAP’s Volunteer Director is responsible for all aspects of our volunteer program. She also works to develop relationships within the community as well as guides our organization and staff in the retention of volunteers.

Ree Ford, Volunteer Engagement Coordinator (she/her/hers)

- **Email:** [reef@veap.org](mailto:reef@veap.org)
- **Phone:** 952.388.6409
- **About:** VEAP’s Volunteer Engagement Coordinator supports initial screening, interviewing, scheduling and placement of volunteers in addition to greeting and orienting new volunteers and supporting volunteer staffing needs throughout the organization.

<b>What You Can Expect From Us</b>	<b>What We Expect From You</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The right to say no to projects and tasks that make you uncomfortable.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recognition and appreciation of your work and individual efforts.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Respectfulness of your commitment, time and confidentiality.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing support from everyone on the VEAP staff.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Timely feedback on performance concerns.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> An inclusive, welcoming culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be punctual and considerate of the shift times you have chosen. Volunteers should arrive 15 minutes prior to their shift and stay until the end.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be friendly, respectful, and welcoming to all visitors, staff, and fellow volunteers.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be fully engaged in your chosen way to partner with us.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Respect and adhere to participant confidentiality.</li> </ul>

*For more information on job performance turn to page 10.*



## HELPFUL INFORMATION

### ***Dress Code***

We encourage volunteers to dress comfortably. Volunteers in warehouse, distribution, transportation, and mobile pantry are required to wear close toed shoes such as tennis shoes while volunteering.

### ***Name Tag***

We want to get to know you by name! We will prepare a name tag for you and have it ready at the volunteer check-in desk. You also have the option to include your personal pronouns on your nametag. If you wish to take this option, please let us know at your interview or email us at any time. If you lose your nametag, or choose to include your pronouns at a later time, contact the Volunteer Department to let us know.

### ***Breaks & Gathering Area***

You are welcome to take a break and enjoy a snack and/or beverage in our volunteer gathering area before, during or after a volunteer shift. Some volunteers enjoy taking a break with their colleagues; if you chose to do so, we encourage you to coordinate with your fellow volunteers and supervisor to ensure adequate coverage for your work area. Also, if you'd prefer not to take a break and work through your volunteer shift that is A-Okay with us as well!

### ***Beverages***

You are welcome to bring a beverage with you to your work area however we do ask that it is covered by a lid or cap. You will find cups and lids in the volunteer gathering area near the refrigerator.

### ***Lockers & Cell Phones***

You are welcome to store personal belongings while you are volunteering in any locker with a key in the gathering area. You may also choose to bring your personal cell phone with you to your work area; if you do so, please be keep use to a minimum. You are always welcome to utilize the volunteer gathering area for extended phone use. Additionally, any pictures or video of participants is strictly prohibited on VEAP premises.

### ***Key Cards***

VEAP utilizes a security system which requires key cards to access some portions of the building. The volunteer greeter at Door A/2 will supply volunteers with a key card should one be required for your volunteer role.



## HELPFUL INFORMATION

### ***Self-Scheduling & Schedule Viewing***

You are encouraged and empowered to choose a shift schedule that best fits your lifestyle. You can log into your Volgistics account to view your schedule, cancel or sign up for individual shifts, reserve your spot for events, and view other volunteer-related information.

- **In order to log in, follow these steps:**
  - Go to our homepage at [www.veap.org](http://www.veap.org)
  - Click on VOLUNTEER, scroll to the top of the screen, and press the Volgistics log-in button.
  - **Username:** Your email address on file with us. **Password:** Volgistics ID # (temporary).
  - If you need help resetting your password, please contact the Volunteer Department for assistance.

### ***Schedule Changes***

We completely understand that life can be unpredictable and sometimes changes to your schedule must be made. That said, please provide as much notice as possible in order to prevent an interruption of quality service to our visitors.

There are four ways to update us on a schedule change:

1. **Add Shifts:**
  - a. Shift substitutions can be done up to 1 minute before its start time through Volgistics. Please note, no need to inform us when you pick up shifts.
2. **Cancelations:**
  - a. **If 5 or more days ahead**, cancelations can be made through Volgistics.
  - b. **If less than 5 days before your shift**, notice should be done via email or phone to the volunteer department at [volunteerdept@veap.org](mailto:volunteerdept@veap.org) or 952.955.8323.
  - c. **If it is the day of your shift**, notice should be done by calling the volunteer check-in desk at 952.955.8331 to ensure staff are informed in a timely manner.

**Note:** Finding you a last minute substitute is difficult. If possible, please try to give us 5 or more days of notice before canceling your scheduled shift.

### ***Volunteer Hours***

You should record your hours of service by signing in and out at the Volunteer Check-In Desk. A fellow volunteer is always stationed at this desk in order to assist with questions and technological difficulties. If you are working on committees or at an off-site location you can speak to your supervisor as to how your hours should be tracked.





## HELPFUL INFORMATION

### ***Leave of Absence/Vacations***

You should inform the volunteer department with as much notice as possible if you are going on vacation or expect a long period of absence from your position. This helps us ensure a replacement can be found to continue quality services for our visitors.

### ***References***

We are able to provide references to prospective employers and volunteer organizations upon request. You should provide a description of the position you are seeking and what you hope to emphasize about yourself to prospective employers or organizations.

### ***Volunteer Recognition & Appreciation***

We routinely invite our volunteers to participate in recognition and appreciation activities. Our annual Volunteer Appreciation Week takes place every November. Other forms of recognition and appreciation will be offered throughout the year. Your preferred method of recognition can also be expressed to your supervisor as well as the Volunteer Department.

### ***Volunteer Education***

VEAP puts together education events based on your feedback and interest. All volunteers are welcome to attend these events for free. You will find invitations to these events on Volgistics, via email, as well as posted on our community board.

### ***End of Service***

If possible, please provide a two weeks' notice prior to your last day of service with VEAP. Your service, time, and talents given while serving at VEAP is greatly appreciated by both staff and fellow volunteers alike. Two weeks of notice gives time for closure and good-byes between you, your fellow volunteers, your direct supervisor, as well as other staff. Upon completing your service with VEAP we will invite you to complete an exit interview either in-person, via phone or in writing.

### ***Volunteer Safety***

You are responsible for:

- Knowing and following the safety rules as explained by your direct supervisor.
- Supporting efforts to promote safe working conditions and habits.
- Making full use of safety equipment and safeguards provided for assigned tasks.
- Reporting all unsafe work conditions to your direct supervisor immediately.



## HELPFUL INFORMATION

### ***Volunteer Safety (Continued)***

For All Emergencies Call

- Any Phone: 612-348-5111
- Internal VEAP Phone: press #00 DIAL
- NOTE: While Hennepin County staff are offsite during the COVID-19 pandemic, please call 911.

There is on-site security for both VEAP and Hennepin County. They are here for our safety and will respond to any accidents, injuries, or other concerns.

*For more information on safety, visit the safety information page on Volgistics.*

### ***Volunteer Job Performance***

Performance concerns may be the result of an inappropriate placement. In those cases, we will make every attempt to help you find and train for another volunteer position at VEAP.

Your supervisor will privately approach you if inappropriate behavior is displayed or a serious violation occurs. There are three levels of action that could be taken due to serious performance concerns:

1. **First Incident:** Volunteer will be notified of the problem and the changes required.
2. **Second Incident:** Volunteer will be issued a written warning.
3. **Third Incident:** An evaluation will be done to determine if continued volunteering will benefit the individual/group and agency. The direct supervisor will meet with the person to provide feedback.

***If the problem is not corrected following this process, a dismissal notice will be given.***

For serious violations, immediate termination may be carried out immediately. Actions taken will be up to the discretion of the Volunteer Director.

*For more information on job performance and what is considered unacceptable behavior, visit the Participation Guidelines and Policies pages on Volgistics.*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **What if I want to change positions?** Volunteers looking to change volunteer positions or increase their involvement should contact the Volunteer Department to discuss opportunities, scheduling options and training next steps.
- **How do I become a substitute for shifts?** We welcome all volunteers to substitute in areas they are assigned. Please follow Volgistics self-scheduling instructions.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **I would like to share a specialized skill or talent with VEAP, how do I do this?** Please contact the Volunteer Director to explore opportunities at VEAP. Volunteers have shared skills such as photography, IT support, finance, communications and more.
- **Can I be cross-trained in multiple volunteer roles?** Yes! Volunteers are welcome to volunteer in multiple roles throughout the organization. Please contact the Volunteer Department to discuss opportunities, scheduling options and training next steps.
- **What leadership opportunities are available? Am I able to serve in these roles?** Volunteer shift leader roles are available in multiple areas including intake, distribution, and warehouse. If you are interested in a leadership role, please contact the Volunteer Department to discuss next steps.
- **Who can I talk with if I have specific questions or concerns about volunteering?** Please contact the Volunteer Department at any time if you have questions or concerns about volunteering. If you have questions or concerns about your specific role, please contact your direct supervisor.
- **Do you require a criminal background check in order to volunteer?** Yes, we require a criminal background check in order to protect VEAP, its participants, staff, and volunteers from suffering physical, emotional or financial harm while also protecting the privacy of individuals who volunteer at VEAP. All volunteers 18 years and older will be subject to a criminal background on an annual basis. Continuing volunteers whose records become “not acceptable” in the course of volunteer participation will be subject to possible dismissal of volunteer participation with VEAP or offered placement in a different volunteer position.
- **Are there opportunities to socialize with other volunteers?** We are unable to offer socializing opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic however we hope to reinstitute regular volunteer potlucks and gatherings once it is safe to do so.
- **How can I learn more about the issues impacting our community?** We encourage you to participate in VEAP volunteer education events. In addition, please consult monthly volunteer e-newsletters for additional resources related to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- **What types of volunteer opportunities do you offer for groups?** Group volunteer opportunities include sorting food donations and stocking shelves with healthy food; assisting with mobile food pantry distributions; collecting toilet paper and diapers and then repacking at your location; special projects and more. Please contact the Volunteer Director to discuss opportunities and schedule options for your group. Please note opportunities are limited during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the health and safety of all.

### Please visit the VEAP website for additional information:

- <https://veap.org/about/> for answers to general frequently asked questions such as: “Who started VEAP?”, “Are people really going hungry in the suburbs?”, “I see nice cars in VEAP’s parking lot...why?”, and more.
- <https://veap.org/get-help/> for information about VEAP services and how to access them.