



# VEAP Volunteer Code of Conduct

At VEAP, we aspire to live by [our values](#) and in order to create an inclusive organization we must turn these values into behaviors that positively impact how we treat and interact with each other. So to complement our values and commitment to [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) we've created a code of conduct that serves as an official commitment to everyone in our community about the behaviors we expect (as well as the behaviors we discourage) at VEAP.

We put forth this code of conduct not because we anticipate bad behavior, but because we believe in the already exceptional level of respect among our team. We believe that articulating our values and accountabilities to one another reinforces that respect and provides us with clear avenues to correct our culture should it stray. We are committed to enforcing and evolving this code as our team grows.

## Expected Behaviors

Every member of VEAP's volunteer team is expected to be compassionate, collaborative, inclusive, responsible, responsive, and act with integrity when it comes to all aspects of their role within VEAP. Specifically, we expect volunteers to...

- **Be compassionate.** At VEAP, we support and care for each other while always remembering to respect the inherent dignity of all people in our community. VEAP participants use our services for a variety of reasons, and we expect you to interact with them with respect and without judgment. This includes welcoming those who arrive for services, being polite and friendly at all times, erring on the side of generosity and remembering to practice empathy for everyone in our community. We expect this same level of respect and friendliness to extend to your fellow volunteers, staff, and other visitors.
- **Be collaborative.** At VEAP, we are most effective when we work together. We expect you to offer help if you see someone struggling or otherwise in need of assistance. If someone approaches you looking for help try to be generous with your time or politely direct them to someone else who may be of assistance. Similarly, we expect you to know your limits and role, ask for help if needed and remember it is always okay to ask for staff assistance. We are a team.
- **Be inclusive.** At VEAP, we are stronger when we embody and empower all voices and understand the importance of making sure all people, regardless of their identity or background, feel welcomed. We expect you to keep an attitude of open-mindedness and acceptance as well as to be aware of and maintain your own values and beliefs without imposing them on others. It's also important to remember to try your best to include others when doing group activities. If you see a fellow volunteer alone, invite them to come join your team.
- **Be responsible and act with integrity.** At VEAP, we are authentic and trustworthy at all times. We expect you to abide by all policies and procedures of VEAP, to fulfill all duties as outlined in your volunteer position description while also remembering to stay within the scope of those duties, and to respect the confidentiality and privacy of participants, volunteers, and donors. Confidential information should not be discussed, shared or stored by any non-authorized users. This includes not sharing confidential information with anyone except a VEAP staff member or fellow volunteer when instructed to by a staff supervisor.
- **Be responsive and innovative.** We are proactive and adapt to meet changing needs. In doing so, we aim to be bold, creative and maximize all resources available. We rely on input from volunteers to strengthen our work and value your ideas and insights. When you identify opportunities to strengthen our work we expect to hear from you and we depend on your support to implement program changes. Our best ideas come from listening to our participants and each other, while continually learning and striving to do our work even better.

## Unacceptable Behaviors

VEAP is committed to providing a welcoming and safe environment for all. Discrimination and harassment are expressly prohibited. Furthermore, any behavior or language that is unwelcoming (whether or not it rises to the level of harassment) is also strongly discouraged. Please turn to the back of this page to read more about what types of behaviors are considered unacceptable here at VEAP.



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## Unacceptable Behaviors (Continued)

Harassment may include, but is not limited to, intimidation; stalking; unwanted recording or photography; inappropriate physical contact; use of sexual or discriminatory imagery, comments, or jokes; intentional or repeated mis-gendering; sexist, racist, ableist, or otherwise discriminatory or derogatory language; and unwelcome sexual attention. Below you can read about other behaviors that are considered unacceptable and why:

- **Micro-aggressions:** Many exclusionary behaviors take the form of micro-aggressions, or subtle put-downs which may be unconsciously delivered (examples include: “Where are you actually from?” “Your English is very good.” “Is that your real hair?” “Why do you wear that?”). *Why? Regardless of intent, micro-aggressions can have a significant negative impact on victims and have no place on our team.*
- **Under the influence of drugs or alcohol or use on site.** *Why? To demonstrate respect for our participants and our team by being of sound mind and able to make clear judgments.*
- **Using VEAP supplies, donated food, or goods for personal use.** *Why? To respect donor intent and direct supplies, food and goods to participants.*
- **Accepting gifts of any kind from participants or giving money to participants.** *Why? To maintain clear boundaries with participants and deliver services that are fair and equitable to all.*
- **Transporting VEAP participants unless I have been assigned, received proper training and assignment to do so.** *Why? To maintain clear boundaries with participants and to mitigate risk for VEAP and myself.*
- **Having social contact with participants outside of VEAP if my relationship with the participant began as a result of my volunteering.** *Why? To maintain clear boundaries with participants and deliver services that are fair and equitable to all.*
- **Initiating physical contact with participants.** *Why? To maintain clear boundaries with participants and mitigate risk for VEAP and myself.*

## Culture of Learning & Self-Improvement

We understand that none of us are perfect: It’s expected that all of us, regardless of our backgrounds, will from time to time fail to live up to our standards. What matters isn’t having a perfect track record, but owning up to your mistakes and making a clear and persistent effort to improve. If you are approached as having (consciously or otherwise) acted in a way that might make your colleagues feel unwelcome, refrain from being defensive; remember that if someone calls you out, it likely took a great deal of courage for them to do so. The best way to respect that courage is to acknowledge your mistake, apologize, and move on—with a renewed commitment to do better. ***That said, repeated or severe violations of this code can and will be addressed, and can lead to disciplinary actions, including volunteer termination.***

## Taking Care of Each Other & Reporting a Problem

If you ever witness something that seems like it isn’t aligned with our values or these standards, err on the side of caring for your colleagues. Even if an incident seems minor, reach out to the person impacted by it to check in. These guidelines are ambitious, and we’re not always going to succeed in meeting them. When something goes wrong—whether it’s a micro aggression or an instance of harassment—there are a number of things you can do to make sure the situation is addressed. **Please seek out your direct supervisor, a member of the Volunteer Department, or any VEAP staff person to report your concern.**

I have read, acknowledge and accept that by signing this form that as a VEAP volunteer I represent VEAP. I have an obligation to my work, to participants, co-workers and the public in upholding these standards and VEAP values.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_