



# Volunteer Handbook

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# Essential Rules

1. Represent Soul Supplies with professionalism, dignity and pride.
2. Display respect and courtesy for Soul Supplies employees, other volunteers, guests, visitors, clients and property.
3. Respect the privacy of persons served by Soul Supplies and hold in confidence sensitive, private, and personal information. Remember that client stories are theirs to tell, not yours to tell.
4. Follow through and complete accepted tasks, dress in attire that follows the volunteer dress code, and be prepared for your shift.
5. Report any emergencies or unsafe conditions to an appropriate staff member.
6. Keep personal opinions and actions separate from those made as a representative of this organization.
7. Be neutral on matters of religion and refrain from promoting religious or political viewpoints in interacting with clients, other volunteers and staff.
8. Maintain appropriate boundaries with clients, staff and other volunteers.
9. Soul Supplies maintains a drug-free workplace and volunteer environment.
10. Some people we serve will be eager to have a conversation with you and share their story, while others will not. Please do not take a refusal to speak with you personally - oftentimes the people we serve have been sleeping on the streets and are in constant struggle so they do not have the energy to hold a conversation.

# Dress Code

Soul Supplies is a professional institution and as such must project a professional image and manner. Neatness and good taste in dress and manner significantly affect the perceptions and credibility of employees and the agency to clients, co-workers, volunteers, donors, vendors and the general public. Personal hygiene, cleanliness and neatness are essential.

Please do not carry cash or any expensive jewelry or items on your person.

# Absence and Punctuality

The positions that volunteers fill are critical to Soul Supplies. If you are unable to attend a scheduled volunteer day, or if you will arrive late, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator (through phone or email) or the director (through phone or email) in advance so your position can be covered.



# Harassment and Discrimination Policy

Soul Supplies has a longstanding commitment to a work environment that respects the dignity and worth of each individual. Inappropriate workplace behavior and unlawful harassment create conditions that are wholly inconsistent with this commitment. The purpose of the policy is to foster a work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful harassment, whether that harassment is because of race, color, religious creed, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, physical or mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation, medical condition or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law.

## Questions or Concerns

If a volunteer has any problems or concerns related to his or her volunteer position or to other Soul Supplies employees or volunteers, he/she/they should speak with his/her/their supervising staff or volunteer coordinator. If the issue is not resolved, the volunteer should speak with the director.

## Confidentiality Policy

Volunteers understand the importance of communicating information with others as needed to support smooth and efficient operation of Soul Supplies and its programs and to guarantee the safety and welfare of all Soul Supplies program participants, residents, staff, and other volunteers.

Volunteers will not discuss any actions/incidents or use anyone's name(s) with anyone outside the agency without first discussing and obtaining approval from the Director.

## Safety Policy

You and Soul Supplies share the responsibility of establishing and maintaining a safe work environment. Soul Supplies will attempt to ensure a safe work environment that complies with federal, state, and local safety regulations. In turn, you are expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all of your work.

## Incident Reporting

Any incident in which you may be harmed or injured should be immediately reported to the volunteer coordinator via email.



## At-will Volunteering

Volunteering with Soul Supplies is an at-will opportunity. We will do our best to meet your expectations by matching your skills and desire with the best volunteer opportunity available. If at any time, you are not satisfied with your volunteer experience, we will attempt to match you with another opportunity. Likewise, If Soul Supplies determines that we have inappropriately placed you, we may recommend a different volunteer opportunity for you.

## Conflict of Interest

Soul Supplies expects volunteers to support and adhere to the high standards of the business ethics that we have sought to develop and maintain. Soul Supplies wants to make it clear that no conflict of interest should exist that could conceivably influence volunteers' judgment in handling Soul Supplies business or that might present an unfair advantage to suppliers, vendors, clients, or contractors.

## Gifts and Favors

Soul Supplies volunteers may not give or accept gifts, payments, fees or services or other favors that influence, or appear to influence, the performance of their duties. In particular, volunteers should never directly offer financial or other personal assistance to individual clients. If an individual experiencing homelessness asks you for money, either tell them you are not carrying money on you or refer them to the Soul Supplies Staff Member present.

All in-kind and financial donations must be received by Soul Supplies staff or volunteers under the direction of staff.

## Client Relations

It is the policy of Soul Supplies that clients be treated with dignity and respect. Volunteers must maintain a professional attitude in all dealings with clients and their families. Corporal punishment of a client by anyone is prohibited. No volunteer shall strike, abuse, use threatening or intimidating language or inflict cruelty by physical, psychological or any means upon a client.

Additionally, in order to protect clients, to insure fair and impartial treatment of clients, and to support Soul Supplies's mission, the following conduct is prohibited:



1. Volunteers are prohibited from dating or pursuing social, romantic or sexual relationships with clients.
2. Volunteers must not hire to work, meet socially, trade, barter, or otherwise engage in any non-professional transactions with clients.
3. Volunteers must not lend or give money at any time to clients.
4. Volunteers must not directly or indirectly accept from any client or member of a client's family anything in the nature of a tip, gift or the promise of a gift.
5. Volunteers are prohibited from engaging in undue familiarity with clients or their families.
6. Volunteers must not discuss client business with the client's family or friends.
7. Volunteers are prohibited from transporting clients in their personal vehicles.
8. Volunteers must not escort clients at any time, unless it has been approved by a Soul Supplies staff member.

If any volunteer becomes aware of any violation, the volunteer must immediately report the matter to their supervising staff so that it can be investigated promptly. Volunteers should feel free to report, in good faith, any violation without fear of reprisal or retaliation of any kind. Soul Supplies will treat such information as confidential to the extent it can do so without failing to fulfill its legal obligations. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, termination of volunteer.

## A Positive Volunteer Experience

Your volunteer time, talent and commitment are valuable to Soul Supplies and to the families we serve and we fully anticipate that your volunteer experience with us will be both fulfilling and meaningful for you. Please know that you are making a difference in the lives of those you are helping. Depending on your volunteer duties and length of service, you may or may not personally observe the direct impact of your efforts on the families served.

If you are in direct contact with clients, we ask you to keep in mind that families seeking services or housing with Soul Supplies come to us in their time of need, often in crisis and desperation. Know that clients may not all react in a manner that you might anticipate and you may hear comments or observe behaviors that seem inappropriate. Many of the families find it difficult to graciously accept the caring and kindness of strangers. Given their state of crisis, this can be normal. In the process of working with a Soul Supplies case manager, challenging behaviors will be addressed as appropriate

**Thank you for volunteering with Soul Supplies!**



# Contact Information

## **Founder and President**

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\*This handbook is in large part recycled from SHELTER, Inc.'s volunteer guide.

