

Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland

Volunteer Handbook



Our Mission: To enable people to live independently at home through the provision of nutritious meals, personal contact and related services.

In Service we CARE:

Creativity: we are committed to finding new and innovative ways to meet or exceed the expectations of our clients, donors, partners, volunteers, and staff.

Accountability: we are accountable for our work by striving to work within the scope and budget of assigned tasks while fulfilling the mission of Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland.

Responsiveness: we deliver prompt and responsive service to all clients and stakeholders.

Energy: we are dedicated to supporting and energizing our staff who strive for excellence, enthusiasm and appreciation in service to our clients, volunteers, and partners.

IN ALL THAT WE DO, WE DEMONSTRATE CARE.



MEALS ON WHEELS OF CENTRAL MARYLAND, INC.

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www.mealsonwheelsmd.org

Dear Meals on Wheels Volunteer,

Thank you for your commitment of time and talent by volunteering to support the mission of Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland. Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland began more than 50 years ago with a thought, and a common conviction that nutritious meals for the aging, convalescent, and handicapped were a genuine need in the Baltimore area. Two Baltimore women, Mrs. Ernestine McCollum and Mrs. Beatrice Strouse were committed to filling that need. In 1960, they replicated a meal preparation and delivery program that originated in England during the World War II London Blitz. On October 3, 1960, the first 10 Meals on Wheels clients were served a hot meal lovingly prepared and delivered by dedicated volunteers.

Today, Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland (MOWCM) is one of the largest and oldest continuously operating, non-profit, home-delivered meal programs in the United States. Our approach, to provide nutritious meals, personal contact, and community connections, separates us from other home delivered programs. Volunteers founded Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland in 1960, and today remain the cornerstone of our organization's success. More than 2,000 volunteers in 6 different regions throughout Central Maryland deliver meals and so much more to over 1,400 homebound individuals each day; individuals who might otherwise be left alone and hungry.

Our program and the policies that follow in this handbook are designed to create a safe and rewarding volunteer experience for all, one that is complete with the mutual reward and fulfillment inherent in service to others. Again, thank you for supporting Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland. Because of you, thousands of seniors in Maryland can continue to live independently and age in place with grace and dignity.

Gratefully Yours,

Stephanie Archer-Smith
Executive Director

Section I: Introduction

Definition of a volunteer: A volunteer is anyone who, without compensation or the expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the organization in support of the organization's goals and mission.

A volunteer at Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland is anyone who has completed the volunteer application, screening process, and has an assigned volunteer role.

Equal Opportunity Policy: Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland (MOWCM) maintains a strong policy of equal volunteer opportunity. We recruit, accept, train, promote and dismiss volunteers on the basis of personal competence and position performance, without regard to race, creed, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status or handicap.

Section II: Volunteer Screening, Recruitment, and Training

Registration and Screening: All Meals on Wheels volunteers must submit a Volunteer Application Form and permission for a criminal background check. Because we serve a vulnerable population we ensure that our volunteers have a clean record before sending them out to meet our clients. The application can be submitted via our website or obtained from the Volunteer Department or the Site Coordinator.

Volunteer Requirements: To be considered an active volunteer, all volunteers must volunteer at least 1 shift every three months. Active volunteers are invited to Volunteer Recognition events throughout the year. If you do not volunteer in the given time your volunteer status will freeze, however, you will be very welcome to rejoin us in volunteering whenever you choose to.

Volunteers may not begin service until all forms are completed and are approved by the Director of Volunteer Services, and participation in volunteer orientation has occurred.

Volunteer Recruitment: Volunteers are recruited to fill identified volunteer positions within the organization. Every volunteer position has a written volunteer position description. These position descriptions outline the task required, any qualifications needed, who serves as the volunteer supervisor, when volunteers are needed and any other requirements.

Volunteers are recruited from the community through various recruitment tools including but not limited to: MOWCM website; flyers; volunteer recruitment websites; and MOWCM publications. Recruitment is geared towards people who have the availability and skills to fulfill needed volunteer positions.

Orientation and Training: All volunteers must attend a volunteer orientation prior to their volunteer service. Volunteer orientation includes a general overview of MOWCM. Volunteers are given the Volunteer Handbook and have the opportunity to ask questions regarding its content. Orientation for one time service events is provided at the time of service.

Volunteers are provided with all training needed to be able to perform their volunteer duties. Training is provided at the start of their volunteer service and continues as needed. A Volunteer Training Manual is received at the first training session.

Section III: Volunteer Management

Scheduling: Volunteers may not “drop in” for volunteer service. All volunteers are scheduled in advance to ensure that the proper screening and orientation has been completed. Volunteers schedule dates with the site coordinator at each site. All other volunteers schedule their service dates with their regional manager.

Supervision: Every volunteer has a clearly identified supervisor(s) who is responsible for providing support and direction. The supervisor will be responsible for the management and guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance. Every MOWCM staff person receives training on working with volunteers during their staff orientation. Additional training is provided to volunteer supervisors as needed.

Feedback and Evaluation: Volunteers are offered opportunities to review their work and the contribution they are making to the program as necessary and appropriate. The identified supervisor or the volunteer at any time may request a meeting to discuss any issues, concerns, or ideas.

Did you know?:
The average age of our volunteers is 74.

Volunteer Groups: Volunteer groups must comply with all volunteer procedures as well as the following requirements. Volunteer groups must identify the organization or institution they are representing when scheduling a volunteer service date. A group leader who is over the age of 18 must be designated for each group and must be present on the day of service. The group leader is responsible for sufficient adult supervision for any group containing minors. The group leader must provide the Volunteer Department with a list of all members of the group containing names, addresses, phone numbers & emergency contact information. All group members must sign-in on an attendance sheet.

Recognition: Volunteer service is very important to MOWCM and we recognize volunteers on both an informal and formal level. Annually, a volunteer recognition event is conducted to highlight and reward the contribution of volunteers to our organization.

Harassment Policy: Volunteering should be an enjoyable experience. Harassment is not only illegal, but it also creates uncomfortable conditions and an unpleasant experience for everyone involved. Any volunteer who feels harassed should speak to his/her supervisor, Director of Volunteer Services or the Executive Director immediately in an attempt to reach a solution.

Section IV: Volunteer Documentation

Volunteer Records: A system of records is maintained on each volunteer within the organization. A database of volunteer information is also kept which includes dates, hours of service and mileage. Every effort is made to keep volunteer information private and confidential.

All volunteer contact information is entered into the volunteer database. Volunteer documents are filed in a secure location at MOWCM main office. Volunteer records are destroyed one year after the volunteer has ended volunteer service. Volunteer cards or sign in sheets for one time or special event volunteers are kept at the main office. All volunteer contact information is entered into the volunteer database. Volunteer cards are shredded every three years.

Section V: Volunteer Conduct

Volunteer Expectations & Responsibilities: Volunteers are viewed as an essential resource to this agency, its staff and its clients. As such, volunteers are extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated fairly, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation, and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and adhere to the goals and procedures of the agency.

Did you know?:
20% of current volunteers began volunteering
because a friend invited them.

Standard of Conduct: The lasting impression that volunteers make on those they serve reflects directly on all of MOWCM staff, donors and board members.

Confidentiality: It frequently happens that volunteers have access to confidential information about our clients, other volunteers or a staff member, which has been communicated directly or learned through one's job. This pertains to any information obtained viewing clients records or simply through speaking with clients or staff.

Every volunteer, regardless of his or her position, must consider such information confidential. Breach of confidentiality may be considered grounds for immediate termination, as we are bound by very strict laws on how to respect and protect confidentiality.

Volunteer Appearance: Volunteers of MOWCM must maintain a neat and clean appearance and wear a MOWCM lanyard.

Client Relationships: Volunteers are expected to maintain professional boundaries in their interactions and relationships with MOWCM clients. Volunteers are not allowed to take client's to the grocery store or to doctor's appointments, or to bring the client to visit their family.

Attendance & Absenteeism: Volunteers should do their best to be on time for each day they are scheduled to volunteer. If the volunteer knows they will be late or absent, they are expected to contact their direct supervisor. Volunteers who do not appear for scheduled volunteer dates, do not give advance notice of absences and/or have repeated absences may be terminated from volunteer service.

Grievance Procedure: Volunteers are expected to act professionally and in accordance with their position descriptions, and are expected to be treated professionally. Should a volunteer have a grievance concerning his/her work environment, the clients served or the staff or other volunteers, he/she should report it directly to the Director of Volunteer Services or Executive Director. Every effort is made to achieve speedy and effective resolution, and all complaints are treated confidentially.

Discontinuation of Volunteer Service: If a volunteer wishes to leave his or her volunteer service for any reason, they should contact their supervisor. Volunteers have the right to terminate their volunteer service for any reason, at any time. MOWCM reserves that same right.

Dismissal: Though unusual, at times it may be necessary to ask a volunteer to resign their position. Possible reasons for this may include such things as gross misconduct or insubordination; being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while volunteering; theft or misuse of agency property, equipment, or materials; abuse or mistreatment of clients, staff or other volunteers; and breach of confidentiality and/or failure to follow agency policies and procedures.

Section VI: Safety & Liability

Safety: If during the course of your volunteering (i.e. while delivering a meal, visiting a client as a volunteer companion, etc.) you encounter an emergency situation (a client has fallen and can't get up, they appear unresponsive, they seem to have had a medical emergency) please: Remain calm, call 911 and follow the 911 instructions. Then call the site coordinator, the regional office, or your contact at Meals on Wheels. Remain with the client until help arrives. If this means you will be late to your next scheduled delivery, please let us know, so we can call ahead or make alternate arrangements. If you are ever in doubt, call your site coordinator or contact MOWCM. Please use the client concern sheet to report anything that you feel would put the client's safety at risk.

Legal Liability: Volunteers agree to assume the risk of any accident or injury to person which may be sustained in connection with their participation with MOWCM. In addition, volunteers agree to release and discharge MOWCM and any of its directors, officers, employees, partners, and successors from any and all liability or responsibility for any such accident or injury.

MOWCM provides commercial general liability insurance to volunteers while they serve as volunteers of the MOWCM program. Volunteers must be working under the supervision and direction of MOWCM staff in order to be covered.

Did you know?:
Volunteering can strengthen your immune system and lower your blood pressure.

Section VII: Community Service

Volunteers completing required community service must comply with all volunteer procedures as well as the following:

Individuals volunteering for the purpose of obtaining community service hours must inform the Volunteer Department that the community service is a requirement.

All forms required by the school mandating the service must be presented to the Volunteer Department.

Community Service Volunteers are required to keep accurate records of their service and present forms requiring signatures at the time the service is conducted. MOWCM staff cannot guarantee that documentation of service can be provided after a volunteer has completed their service.

Section VIII: Code of Ethics

Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland, Inc. is aware of the bountiful contributions of time and compassion that our volunteers give to ensure the success of our program. In continuing to meet the daily obligations of delivering meals to the homebound, we feel it is necessary for our volunteers to adhere to certain standards of conduct.

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We therefore ask you to:

Fulfill the duties of your position description to the best of your ability with the client's well being as your primary concern.

Recognize that no degree of inappropriate behavior whether sexual, verbal, or physical will be tolerated.

Be aware that our client's confidentiality (any information that identifies them) and any proprietary information about staff or volunteers are extremely important and cannot be breached for any reason.

Avoid any activity that could be construed as a conflict of interest. A volunteer should not offer any gifts or receive any from clients. Also, sharing medical, legal and/or financial advice is prohibited.

Respect the client's religious, cultural, or political views and do not impose your views on others.

-----cut here and sign below-----

I have received and read the Volunteer Handbook and fully understand the contents.

Volunteer Name

Director of Volunteer Services

Date

Date

If you have any questions or concern while performing your volunteer duties, please contact your program coordinator. Furthermore, please record your area's Regional office information in case it becomes pertinent to contact them:

Coordinator: _____

Coordinator Phone: _____

Regional Manager: _____

Regional Office Phone: _____

Director of Volunteer Services
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For more information about Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland including:

Our Mission
Client services
Volunteer Opportunities
Donations

Visit www.mealsonwheelsmd.org

OUR IMPACT

-  95% of our clients are able to remain living independently at home
-  95% of our clients are satisfied with our programs and services
-  91% of our clients have reported improved nutrition
-  90% of our clients have reported improved quality of life
-  75% of our clients report decreased isolation



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