



# The One World Center for Autism, Inc. Volunteer Handbook

*"Linking those living with autism to their world"*

[www.worldforautism.info](http://www.worldforautism.info)

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Organization's Mission

The One World Center for Autism, Inc.'s is a 501c3 federally tax-exempt organization incorporated and registered in the State of Maryland. Our mission is to link those living with autism in Prince Georges County, Maryland to their world through family support, informational resources, community awareness, and coordinated, affordable healthcare.

### B. Volunteer/ Staff Relations

Volunteers are critical to the success of The One World Center for Autism, Inc. and are essential to the organization's day-to-day operations. Volunteers and paid staff are considered partners in implementing the mission and programs of the organization, each with complementary roles to play. Designated staff can be expected to provide orientation, training, supervision, and feedback to volunteers.

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.

### C. Equal Opportunity Policy

The One World Center for Autism, Inc. 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 disability.

## II. VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to this organization, its staff, and its clients. Volunteers shall be 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 to remain loyal to the goals and procedures of the agency.

### **III. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM PROCEDURES/ DEVELOPMENT**

#### **A. Application Form**

Prospective volunteers are required to complete an application form for consideration in the volunteer program.

#### **B. Interviewing/Screening**

Prior to being assigned or appointed to a position, all volunteers will be interviewed to ascertain their suitability for, and interest in, a position. The interview will offer the opportunity to learn more about the prospective volunteer, and give the prospective volunteer the opportunity to learn more about the organization. Volunteers will also be given the opportunity to ask any questions they may have about the position. Background and reference checks may also be required for volunteer positions within The One World Center for Autism, Inc.

#### **C. Orientation and Training**

All volunteers will receive a general orientation on the nature and purpose of the agency, all pertinent policies and procedures, and to the work to which the volunteer has been assigned. Volunteers will receive specific training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. The One World Center for Autism, Inc will require mandatory training of volunteers (semi-annually).

All volunteers will have a position description for the work they perform on behalf of The One World Center for Autism, Inc.

#### **D. Supervision**

Every volunteer will have a clearly identified supervisor who will be responsible for 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.

#### **E. Feedback and Evaluation**

Volunteers shall receive periodic evaluations to review their work and progress. Evaluations will include an examination of the volunteer's performance of position responsibilities and a discussion of any suggestions the volunteer may have concerning the position or volunteer program.

#### F. Recognition and Opportunities for Advancement

Volunteer service is very valuable to The One World Center for Autism, Inc. and we will recognize volunteers on both an informal and formal level. An annual volunteer recognition event will be conducted to highlight and reward the contribution of volunteers to the organization.

Exemplary volunteers will be made aware of other volunteer opportunities available for which they may be interested in participating, and will be given opportunity for advancement for other volunteer positions.

#### G. Volunteer Record Keeping System

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer with the organization. The record will include volunteer application, volunteer agreement, emergency information, immunization record (where applicable), dates of services, position held, duties performed and evaluation of work.

#### H. Scheduled Volunteer Time/ Record of Volunteer Hours

A volunteer sign-in form will be present at each volunteer program or event, and volunteers should sign in and out each time they work on any project.

Volunteers must be accountable to uphold their commitments to volunteer at established times/places.

### **IV. VOLUNTEER CONDUCT**

#### A. Job Description

A position description will be specifically defined for each volunteer or group of volunteers. Each volunteer will receive a copy his/her position description during the orientation program.

#### B. Standard of Conduct

The lasting impression that volunteers make on those they serve and work with reflects directly on all staff, volunteers and board members of The One World Center for Autism, Inc. All words and deeds should help build our volunteer program and its reputation for quality.

#### C. Absenteeism

Volunteers should do their best to be present and on time for each event or activity for which they are scheduled. If you know that you will be late or absent, please contact the

person in charge of the event or your supervisor at least 24 hours before you are expected to come or as soon as possible so that alternate plans can be made.<sup>1</sup>

#### D. Grievance Procedure

Volunteers and staff are expected to act professionally and in accordance with their position descriptions. Should a volunteer have a grievance concerning their work environment, they should report it promptly to the Volunteer Coordinator or the Executive Director. Every effort will be made to achieve speedy and effective resolution, and all complaints will be treated confidentially (Confidentiality may not be guaranteed for complaints involving sexual harassment or child abuse).

#### E. Discontinuation of Volunteer Service

If you wish to leave your volunteer service for any reason, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator so that appropriate arrangements can be made. As a volunteer, you have the right to terminate your volunteer service for any reason. The One World Center for Autism, Inc. reserves the same right.

#### F. Media Conduct

Please be careful not to represent yourself as a spokesperson or representative for the organization under any circumstances without prior approval. Only the board president and executive director serve as spokes people for The One World Center for Autism, Inc. Volunteers are not to take any photographs of the children without prior permission from staff and parents.

#### G. Alcohol/Drugs

When participating in The One World Center for Autism, Inc. activities, volunteers are prohibited from purchasing, transferring, using or possessing illicit drugs, alcohol, or prescription drugs in any way that is illegal. Implementing this policy provides a drug and alcohol free work place in order to ensure a safe, healthy, and productive environment for all volunteers and employees. If caught or suspected of breaking this policy, disciplinary actions up to and including termination will result.

#### H. Harassment Policy

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

#### I. Dress Code

When volunteers are working on behalf of The One World Center for Autism, Inc., each individual serves as a visible representative of our organization. Please be sure that your dress reflects a clean and neat appearance. Also, when engaging in volunteer service for The One World Center for Autism, Inc., you must always wear your OWCA (The One World Center for Autism, Inc.) issued name badge and any identifying garment requires for that event or program.

#### J. Confidentiality

As a volunteer at The One World Center for Autism, Inc., you may have access to confidential information (information regarding medical treatment or diagnosis, financial information regarding contractual arrangements or other transactions, information regarding homes or income of clients, information about convictions or allegations of arrests or abuse). Volunteers must ensure that the agency's information is kept strictly confidential and any confidentiality policy is followed. Volunteers may be required to sign the confidentiality policy receipt form prior to beginning their volunteer service.

#### K. Conflict of Interest

It is the policy of The One World Center for Autism, Inc. to avoid potential and actual conflicts of interest in all of our efforts. The One World Center for Autism, Inc. abides by a board approved conflict of interest policy. Volunteers will receive a copy of this policy at their initial orientation. Certain volunteers with significant independent decision making authority may be asked to complete and sign a conflict of interest statement at their initial orientation and annually thereafter.

#### L. Partisanship

While working on behalf of The One World Center for Autism, Inc., volunteers must never present partisan information (supporting or endorsing political parties or candidates for office) in accordance with our organization's 501(c)(3) status.

#### M. Proselytizing

The One World Center for Autism, Inc.'s program participants, staff and volunteers hold a variety of political, social, religious, and personal beliefs. Volunteers must be respectful of the views and opinions of held by others with whom they come in contact while volunteering with the organization. Unless instructed to do so as part of the organization's mission and program, volunteers must refrain from advocating or proselytizing for the specific political, social, and/or religious beliefs in these situations.

#### N. Change of Placement

If you wish to seek a change in your volunteer position or placement, please see the Volunteer Coordinator or your supervisor. Assignment to a new volunteer position may require additional screening, background checks, training, and application acceptance.

## O. Reimbursement of Expenses

In certain situations, volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of actual out of pocket expenses. Such expenses must be pre-approved by the volunteer's supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.

## V. SAFETY AND LIABILITY

### A. Safety

Although we do our best to provide safe conditions for our volunteers, we count on volunteers to be the best protector of their own personal safety. Volunteers should always be aware of where they are and what they are doing. Volunteers should pay particular attention to safety instructions and proper equipment use. Volunteers should speak up if they have a safety concern and report any injuries to the person in charge as soon as possible.

### B. Legal Liability

Volunteers are concerned about their personal liability arising from their service for the agency. When a volunteer acts as a representative of the agency, acting on the agency's behalf and with its authority and within the scope of the volunteer's duties, the agency may be held vicariously liable for the actions of the volunteer. However, liability is based upon the personal acts of a person so the volunteer may also be liable for his or her actions.

All volunteers are required to sign a waiver and release of liability before serving the agency. By signing the waiver, volunteers agree to assume the risk of any accident or injury to person or property which may sustain in connection with your participation with the The One World Center for Autism, Inc. In addition, volunteers agree to release and discharge The One World Center for Autism, Inc. and any of its directors, officers, employees, partners, affiliates and successors from any and all liability or responsibility for any such accident or injury.

The One World Center for Autism, Inc.'s board of directors are covered by Nonprofit Director's and Officers' Liability insurance.

Volunteers are encouraged to discuss their personal insurance program with their insurance agent to determine what coverages are available for claims arising from their volunteer activities.

### C. Certificate of Ability

Any potential volunteer who indicates that they are under the care of a physician for any physical or psychological ailment which might impede their ability to work may be asked to present a certificate from the physician as to their ability to satisfactorily and safely perform their duties. Any volunteer who, after accepting an assignment with the organization, enters a course of treatment which might adversely impact upon the performance of their volunteer duties should consult with the Volunteer Coordinator.

**Volunteer Affirmation of Receipt, Review, and Agreement to the  
*Volunteers Handbook of the One World Center for Autism, Inc.***

I \_\_\_\_\_, who holds the position of  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_ have received and carefully read the *Volunteers Handbook of*  
Title/ Position

*The One World Center for Autism, Inc.* and have considered not only the literal expression of this document's policies, but also its intent. By signing this affirmation of compliance, I hereby affirm that I understand and agree to comply with the policies set forth in the *Volunteers Handbook of The One World Center for Autism, Inc.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please Sign and return to OWCA, Inc. Representative. Thank You!

**The One World Center for Autism, Inc.**

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