



# Volunteer Handbook

[www.breadforthecity.org/volunteer](http://www.breadforthecity.org/volunteer)

## **Northwest Center**

1525 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
(202) 265-2400

## **Southeast Center**

1640 Good Hope Road SE  
Washington DC 20020  
(202) 561-8587

Revised October 11, 2016

# Organization Overview

## **Mission**

The mission of Bread for the City is to provide residents of Washington, D.C. with comprehensive services, including **food, clothing, medical care, and legal and social services**, in an atmosphere of **dignity and respect**. We recognize that all people share a common humanity, and that all are responsible to themselves and to society as a whole. Therefore, we promote the mutual collaboration of clients, volunteers, donors, staff, and other community partners to alleviate the suffering caused by poverty and to rectify the conditions that perpetuate it.

## **Vision**

At Bread for the City, we share a vision of Washington, D.C. as a nurturing community, where all residents have access to the basic material resources they need for survival and growth, and the prosperity of their social, emotional, and spiritual lives.

## **Our Services**

**Food:** At both our Northwest and Southeast food pantries, Bread for the City distributes grocery bags consisting of a five-day food supply (adjusted to household size) to eligible clients. In 2015, staff and volunteers provided groceries to thousands of people, feeding an average of 8,409 individuals each month. In addition to our two food pantries, Bread for the City offers two Farmers Markets to clients and the general public each month. We are also a Grocery Plus distribution center, which offers additional food support for seniors in our community.

**Clothing:** Bread for the City's clothing program offers eligible clients a once per week visit where they can select up to 20 clothing and household items for free. The clothing room frequently has over 900 visits each month.

**Medical Clinic:** Bread for the City has provided primary medical care to uninsured and low-income children and adults since 1974. Our medical services include examinations, pediatric care, dental care, vision care, behavioral health care, pre-natal care, medications, lab tests, and referrals, regardless of ability to pay. In 2015, Bread for the City provided 2,791 uninsured and underinsured adults and children with 12,133 medical visits.

**Social Services:** Bread for the City provides a wide range of client-centered services. The first step in connecting to them is our low-barrier intake process conducted by our Social Services team. We conduct a 15-30 minute interview with all seeking aid that provides an introduction to our services, as well as other federal and local programs that may be of assistance. Social services programs at Bread for the City include SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery Program), Representative Payee services, housing assistance, a pre-employment program, and Women Strong D.C.

**Legal Clinic:** Bread for the City operates two legal clinics, one out of each Center in Northwest and Southeast DC. The Legal Clinic represents clients in landlord-tenant disputes and claimants who have been denied Social Security disability benefits. The Legal Program also advocates in fair hearings for other public benefits and represents clients in family law matters including child custody, civil protection orders, child support, and divorce.

**Advocacy:** While Bread for the City's direct service programs seek to alleviate the suffering caused by poverty, our advocacy and client organizing addresses the root causes of inequality. We collaborate with service providers, coalitions, campaigns and individuals to make the case for public investment in affordable housing, a dramatically improved food system, and adequate public benefits.

## Getting Started

For many one-time volunteer opportunities, getting started is as easy as signing the Bread for the City [Liability Waiver](#) and signing up for an available date. We prefer that most volunteers sign-up for service online. Just visit <http://www.breadforthecity.org/ongoing-opportunities/> to review opportunities, then click “sign up today” to request a specific activity, day, and time. The volunteer program staff will review your request and forward a confirmation via e-mail if there are no questions or conflicts related to your submission. If you do not have internet access, please feel free to call the volunteer program staff or to visit a team member in person when you are at the Northwest or Southeast center.

## Orientation

Once a month, Bread for the City hosts a volunteer orientation. Complete details are available at <http://www.breadforthecity.org/volunteer-orientation/>. This information session provides an overview on Bread for the City, volunteer expectations and responsibilities, and current volunteer opportunities. Some volunteer opportunities, such as Medical Program service, require a department-specific orientation beyond the general volunteer orientation.

## Paperwork

The bulk of paperwork needed for most volunteers is available on the Bread for the City website at <http://www.breadforthecity.org/volunteer-orientation/>. Some assignments/departments require additional paperwork. For example, volunteers and interns working in the database will need to sign confidentiality and information security agreements. In addition, volunteers and interns who will work regularly with clients must undergo a background check. Professional Volunteers will have their credentials reviewed and undergo a background check.

All volunteers are added to the Bread for the City mailing list unless they specifically indicate that they do not wish to be contacted.

## Volunteer Agreement

*All Bread for the City volunteers agree to:*

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Fulfill the duties of assigned volunteer roles to the best of their ability.
- Follow the direction of Bread for the City staff to the best of their ability.
- Follow all program policies and procedures.
- Alert volunteer program staff in advance if you cannot show for a commitment.
- Notify the volunteer program staff with concerns, issues, and feedback.
- Arrive to shifts in accordance with dress code and hygiene guidelines.

*Bread for the City agrees to:*

- Provide a welcoming environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- Provide information regarding specific job duties, expectations, codes of conduct, and more through a Volunteer Handbook provided in advance of service.
- Provide support, resources, and tools necessary to complete volunteer assignments.
- Listen to concerns and accept feedback in a neutral setting.
- Respect volunteer time.

Volunteer failure to comply with the terms of the volunteer agreement is grounds for suspension or termination of approved volunteer status with Bread for the City.

## Your Service is Important

At Bread for the City, we know there are many opportunities bidding for your time. That's why we appreciate your choice to serve with us. We hope you'll prioritize your volunteer commitment as you do other important activities. The work you'll do is vital to us and those we serve. When you volunteer:

- **You increase available funds and services.**

The work of individual fruit harvesters, for example, typically costs about \$20,417 per year. The volunteers serving in this role save us more than \$204,000 that instead goes to support other programs, such as our medical clinic.

- **You save us time.**

When you execute data entry, filing, shredding, and other critical, but time-consuming tasks, staff can instead focus solely on meeting the needs of clients.

- **You expand available food options.**

Without regular volunteers to tend and harvest crops, thousands of pounds of City Orchard produce would be lost to bugs, rot, wilt, mold, virus, or damage.

- **You help Bread for the City meet goals more efficiently.**

We cannot afford to pay for the completion of every needed task, so the diverse contributed skills of professionals and the public allows us to do more for our client community.

In short, when you volunteer, you make Bread for the City possible. We can only serve the 10,000 individuals who visit Bread for the City each month with your help. Please don't forget the time you've scheduled to serve!

## Recognition

Each October, Bread for the City hosts a volunteer appreciation breakfast. Awards are given to volunteers who have gone above and beyond in service to a department within the organization. All volunteers who have served in the prior year are typically eligible to RSVP for a free seat at this event. Space limitations may inhibit some volunteers who RSVP from being able to attend.

During summer 2016, Bread for the City became a certifying organization for the [Presidential Volunteer Service Awards](#). **All volunteers serving who are not completing mandated (court-ordered) hours are eligible to work toward this honor.** Hours required to achieve an award are indicated below. Bread for the City's PVSA year runs from October 1 to September 30 annually, and we follow all policies and procedures established by PVSA. Please let the Volunteer Program Staff know if you are interested in working toward an award.

Hours by Award	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Kids (5-10)	26 – 49	50 – 74	75 +
Teens (11-15)	50 – 74	75 – 99	100 +
Young Adults (16-25)	100 – 174	175 – 249	250 +
Adults (26 and older)	100 – 249	250 – 499	500+
Families and Groups*	200 – 499	500 – 999	1,000+
<b>President's Lifetime Achievement Award:</b> Individuals who have completed 4,000 or more hours in their lifetime.			
<i>* Two or more people, with each member contributing at least 25 hours toward the total.</i>			

# Policies and Procedures

## Assignments

While Bread for the City provides a variety of volunteer opportunities to the larger community, the primary role of all activities is to serve our clients. If a volunteer's interests, skills, availability, speech, or behavior negatively impact our ability to serve clients, it may be necessary to reassign or terminate the volunteer.

Volunteers are encouraged to regularly review the list of ongoing opportunities at <http://www.breadforthecity.org/ongoing-opportunities/>. Just click "sign up today" to express your interest in a particular activity, day, and time. Assignments are not considered "confirmed" or "scheduled" without written confirmation from a member of the Volunteer Program Staff. If you do not have regular internet access, please contact a member of the Volunteer Program Staff by telephone. In addition, though we cannot always guarantee a team member will be available, the Volunteer Program does accept walk-in questions and scheduling.

## Absences / Closures / Holidays

If you are unable to attend your scheduled shift, please contact a member of the Volunteer Program Staff as soon as possible. A minimum of 48 hours advance notice of cancellation is appreciated as it allows time to seek a replacement or make adjustments to ensure all programs are adequately staffed. **Volunteers who have multiple unexpected and/or unexcused absences may be terminated.**

Bread for the City is closed for all federal holidays and follows the District Government for weather closures and delays. Check <http://www.dc.gov> or <http://snow.dc.gov/closures> to see if we are open. If an orchard, rooftop garden, or other outdoor shift must be canceled due to heavy rain/other weather that will adversely impact the day's work, volunteers will be called and/or e-mailed at least 1.5 hours before their shift (if an appropriate telephone number/email address has been provided).

**If a volunteer is ill, or thinks that s/he might be contagious, s/he should not volunteer. Illness is an excused absence.** Protecting the health and safety of our volunteers, clients and staff is very important.

## Protection of Client Confidentiality

All volunteers are reminded that client/patient confidentiality is to be respected at all times. First and foremost, **the fact that an individual is a client/patient of the organization is, in and of itself, confidential information.** Occasionally, a caller or visitor will ask if an individual is a Bread for the City client or patient. Under no circumstances should this information be revealed without the express consent of the client/patient. Whether an individual is being seen in our medical clinic, working with an attorney or caseworker, getting a bag of groceries, or engaging our services in another form is confidential information and is not to be revealed to anyone making a general inquiry.

Confidentiality is also important when leaving telephone messages for clients/patients. **Telephone messages should not reveal any specific information, even those left on an answering machine.** Unless you have obtained specific authorization and guidance from the client/patient prior to leaving a telephone message, you should simply leave your name without leaving the telephone number or name of the organization.

In addition, we should always be concerned about revealing client/patient information in our conversations with other staff members and volunteers. Is it appropriate/necessary to share the information with the other person? Can it be overheard by other clients/patients? Sensitivity to client confidentiality should be paramount and conversations about clients in public areas are inappropriate and highly discouraged. Caution here fosters an environment of respect.

We should also be careful with patient/client charts and files, as well as documents we leave on or around workspaces (such as a desk or the copy/fax machine), and items we throw in the trash. **If there is any identifying information on an item, it should be shredded.** Ask a staff member for the location of the nearest on-site shredder.

Last, but not least -- computers. It may be obvious that you should not leave a client's intake form up when you step away from the computer, but please remember that once you are logged into the database, anyone can look up anything that you are authorized to access. **Please exit the database every time you are going to leave a computer unattended.**

**Please keep in mind that volunteers of Bread for the City are not entitled to see all information regarding clients.** Volunteers should seek out information only as it is necessary to your work.

If you are ever in doubt about whether information should be revealed or released, please talk to the staff member supervising your work. If s/he is not available and the situation needs immediate attention, please ask another supervisor or a member of the Volunteer Program Staff for guidance.

All volunteers working with clients and client data are required to abide by these rules of confidentiality and should sign a confidentiality statement. Volunteers who breach client confidentiality may be dismissed from service.

### Volunteer Record Management

Volunteer Program staff members strive to track every hour that a volunteer serves. **We only guarantee tracking, however, for volunteers who have signed in and out of their shift.** At each center, the Volunteer Program maintains a single physical sign-in binder. At the Northwest Center, this binder is on the front desk. At Southeast, this binder is either in the clothing room or front desk. When the Volunteer Program is aware of the presence and activity of a volunteer who did not sign in and/or out, we reserve the right to estimate completed hours. This estimation will only be changed if additional hours can be proven.

Volunteers with cell phones have the option of text sign-in to indicate their presence at a service activity. Text the keywords that follow to indicate your attendance at an activity if you do not sign a physical log. All hours submitted by text must be confirmed by a Bread for the City staff member.

Number	Keyword	Who Should Use This
31996	BreadForward	Any Bread for the City volunteer who is not contributing professional (medical or legal) hours
31996	BreadVol	Orchard Volunteers only
31996	BreadServe	Medical and Legal Volunteers only, particularly physicians and attorneys contributing professional hours

Volunteers striving for a Presidential Volunteer Service Award of any kind will only receive credit for hours that can be confirmed by either physical or text sign-in.

### Dress and Behavior Expectations

**Attire:** Volunteers should wear comfortable, casual clothing and flat, closed-toe shoes. If working in the orchard, volunteers may wish to wear boots, especially if it has recently rained. Event volunteers may be required to follow a specified dress code. Volunteers should not bring large backpacks nor a variety of loose items.

Please avoid:

- Controversial symbols, slogans, or language that could be considered offensive.
- Clothing that is sheer or revealing in any manner. This includes short skirts, short shorts, low necklines,

tight-fitting tops, midriff-bearing clothing, beachwear, and other items.

- High heels, sandals, and shoes with smooth (sometimes slippery) bottoms.
- Clothing of any sort that drags on the ground and might prompt tripping (floor-length skirts, pants that cover shoes, etc.)

Many volunteers provide direct services to clients; therefore, it is extremely important for all volunteers to practice good hygiene. We expect volunteers to bathe and arrive to their shifts in clean clothing. Deodorant is also greatly appreciated.

### **Behavior:**

At Bread for the City, everyone matters. Please remember the following:

- Bread for the City is a place of peace. We seek to build up, not hurt or destroy, so never cross a line that might cause physical or emotional discomfort or pain.
- Bread for the City appreciates the beauty in difference, so no one gets put down. When everyone holds their head high, things are as they should be. There's good in all of us.
- Bread for the City believes in self-control. Impulses and emotions can't manipulate us when we remember response is a choice. Always choose speech and gestures that benefit your neighbor.
- Bread for the City follows the rule of law. With your help, we can keep everyone in our community safe, so let staff know if someone is out of order.

Negative actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or other personal characteristic will not be tolerated. Bread for the City encourages volunteers to bring any incidents of harassment of any kind to the attention of the Volunteer Program Staff.

### **Equity**

The Bread for the City Volunteer Program is prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Persons with disabilities who require accommodation will be supported to the best of our ability. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

### **Expense Reimbursement**

Bread for the City has no expectation that volunteers will spend money in the execution of their duties. If a purchase is required, please contact the Volunteer Program Staff or the supervisor in the department where you are serving. **Volunteer time cannot be deducted on personal income taxes.**

### **Mandated Community Service**

<http://www.breadforthecity.org/community-service-opportunities/>

If you need community service hours for court, class, or to meet some other requirement, you must first meet with a member of the Volunteer Program Staff to discuss our community service volunteer protocol, including how we track and verify these hours at Bread for the City. Bread for the City may not be able to provide a volunteer with adequate hours to comply with court mandated or classroom requirements for community service. Mandated community service, particularly court-mandated community service, is ineligible for consideration toward a Presidential Volunteer Service Award. All volunteers completing mandated community service should utilize a Bread for the City timesheet. Bread for the City is not responsible for ensuring our volunteer hours meet external requirements. At the beginning of your term of service, please ensure that the service activity you've selected meets your program's requirements.

## Youth Volunteer Policy

In an effort to ensure that all clients receive complete and confidential treatment, the minimum age to independently participate in the Bread for the City Volunteer Program is fifteen (15). Youths under the age of 15 must be accompanied by an adult chaperone who assumes full responsibility and liability for the youth at all times. Youth volunteers will often be prohibited access to client/patient files, database information, and/or other confidential information. Nonetheless, all regular youth volunteers must still read and sign a confidentiality statement. Volunteer Program Staff may consider exceptions on a case by case basis.

## Smoking / Substance Abuse

No smoking is permitted on any Bread for the City premises. Bread for the City is committed to providing a drug free work place. All Bread for the City workplaces should be free from the illegal use, possession, and distribution of controlled substances and alcohol abuse by the employees of the organization. The unlawful manufacture, dispensing, possession, distribution of use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol by employees and volunteers will not be tolerated on the Bread for the City premises or while on Bread for the City business off the premises (which includes operation of Bread for the City vehicles). Violation of this policy will be dealt with promptly and can result in immediate dismissal.

## Safety & Security

Bread for the City is committed to having a safe working environment. We are always eager to hear suggestions on how we might improve our working environment to increase the well-being of staff and volunteers.

***Fire Evacuation Policy:*** Upon hearing the fire alarm, please stop working. Immediately leave your desk and escort others you are working with out of the building. Please remain calm during evacuation, and do not use the elevator. **If at the Northwest Center, walk immediately to the Kennedy Recreation Center at 1401 7th Street Northwest. If at the Southeast center, walk immediately to the Anacostia Public Library at 1800 Good Hope Road SE.** Each floor of Bread for the City has two or more designated individuals who are responsible for ensuring that no one is left on their floor if the fire alarm sounds. Should you find yourself upstairs and unable to leave the building via the stairs, please utilize the fire escape ladder located in the upstairs conference room (both centers) or the fire escape ladder located in the NORTHWEST legal clinic.

Once you have safely arrived at the evacuation point, please see the Office & Emergency Preparedness Manager (Carolina Argumedo) in NORTHWEST or Food/Clothing & Facilities Director (Melissa Frazier) in SE so that she can check off your name as “safe” on the roster.

Bread for the City will conduct quarterly fire drills to practice this procedure. It is important that drills are treated as an actual and necessary evacuation. Practicing this properly may help ensure the safety of our clients and staff when a real emergency occurs. If you ever see/smell smoke, alert your fellow co-workers immediately. There could be something burning in the oven or something much more serious.



## Parking & Transportation

Parking is generally not available to volunteers on the parking lots of our Northwest and Southeast Centers. Ample street parking is available near both centers. Volunteers must review road signs which may place limitations on volunteer parking. Parking is at your own risk.

If you would like to use public transportation to access the Northwest Center, please take the green or yellow Metrorail line to the Shaw/Howard University metro stop. Depending on which exit you use, Bread for the City is a one or two block walk away. The Northwest Center is also near many bus stops, particularly those on the 70 and 79 route. Some G2 and 64 bus stops are also within a few blocks walk.

Volunteers can also easily access our Southeast Center using public transportation. Please exit the green line at Anacostia, then take the B2, V2, or W6 bus to 16<sup>th</sup> and Good Hope Road SE (about a 10-minute bus ride from the metro). One may also catch the Circulator bus to the Southeast Center from Anacostia metro. The nearest Circulator stops are 14<sup>th</sup> and Good Hope Road SE or 18<sup>th</sup> and Good Hope Road SE.

**Client Tokens:** Volunteers who are also Bread for the City clients are eligible for tokens to cover transport to and from volunteer service. These tokens may be acquired from the volunteer program. Each token is worth \$1.75, and token values may be added to a SmarTrip card in the same way one would add coin money. Client volunteers are eligible for only two tokens per service activity. Please note that if you add your token to your SmarTrip card before riding the bus, you will be able to travel on area buses for up to two hours per token.

**Van:** Van service is only available for volunteers serving at City Orchard. Volunteers who wish to ride the van must RSVP specifically for the van. You should never assume you have a seat on the van if you only have an orchard service confirmation.

## In-Kind Donations

Volunteers should never assume that it is okay for them to take in-kind donations (food, clothing, etc.) given to support Bread for the City clients. A volunteer may, however, ask the Volunteer & In-Kind Manager or a Volunteer Coordinator for permission to acquire an item if s/he has need of it.

Volunteers must be respectful of all items that will be distributed to clients. Volunteers who engage in disrespectful activities, such as throwing apples at the orchard or ripping donated clothing, may be dismissed.

Volunteers should also be aware that like the donated goods made available to clients, many of our office supplies are donated or purchased in small quantities. Volunteers should use only those supplies that are necessary for the completion of an assigned task. Photocopiers, fax machines, printers, and other equipment should be used sparingly for personal business.

## Return of Property

Volunteers are responsible for the return of all Bread for the City property. If Bread for the City property has been taken off-site, Bread for the City may take all actions deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property.

## Grievance Procedures

Please alert the [Volunteer & In-Kind Manager](#) if you are ever unsatisfied with a Volunteer Coordinator or your treatment as a volunteer of Bread for the City. If possible, please summarize your concern in writing to help us fully address all questions and concerns. If your concern is with the Volunteer & In-Kind Manager, please contact Bread for the City's [Chief Operating Officer](#).

## Conflict of Interest

Volunteers are expected to act in a manner that merits public trust and confidence. Each volunteer is expected to safeguard the reputation and integrity of Bread for the City and to preserve and strengthen public confidence in Bread for the City activities. Volunteers must refrain from engaging in any transaction in which personal interests conflict, potentially conflict, or appear to conflict with those of Bread for the City. An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when a volunteer is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for yourself or a relative as a result of Bread for the City's business, fundraising, or other dealings. Participation in any activities that are a conflict of interest are prohibited, and verified activity of this sort may result in termination of volunteer service.

## Termination of Service

Service with Bread for the City may end through resignation or dismissal. A regular volunteer may choose to resign, or stop serving, at any time for any reason. We ask that the volunteer provide notification of their intent to terminate service with Bread for the City two weeks prior to his/her final day, either verbally or in writing.

Dismissal is the discharge of a volunteer for any of the following reasons: gross misconduct, unsatisfactory job performance, incompetence, frequent tardiness, unexcused absence, being under the influence of alcohol while on duty, unauthorized use of drugs while on duty, theft or other unethical/unlawful behavior, inappropriately altering records; abuse of clients, staff and/or volunteers; creating a disturbance on Bread for the City premises, lack of cooperation (repeated, deliberate failure to adhere to staff instructions during service engagements); inappropriate use of telephones, computers, and other systems; unauthorized disclosure of information, or conduct contrary to or detrimental to the spirit and character of Bread for the City or its policies.

If a volunteer is dismissed from a program at Bread for the City, they become ineligible to volunteer with other programs according to the terms noted in their dismissal letter. However, volunteers who are also clients of Bread for the City may still be eligible to receive services from the agency. This will be determined on a case by case basis.

## Final Thoughts

Bread for the City appreciates the contribution of every individual and group who joins us in support of friends and neighbors using Bread for the City services. No matter which role you fill, we encourage you to keep those we serve at the forefront of your thoughts. Learn more at <http://www.breadforthecity.org/the-problems/>.



- Volunteer Home:** <http://www.breadforthecity.org/volunteer>
- Opportunities:** <http://www.breadforthecity.org/ongoing-opportunities/>
- Internships/Other:** <http://www.breadforthecity.org/internships/>
- In-Kind Donations:** <http://www.breadforthecity.org/in-kind-donations/>
- FAQ/Factsheets:** <http://www.breadforthecity.org/volunteer-faqs/>
- Orientation:** <http://www.breadforthecity.org/volunteer-orientation/>
- Giving:** <https://www.breadforthecity.org/givetoday/>
- Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/BreadfortheCity>
- Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/breadforthecity>
- YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/BreadForTheCity>
- Flickr:** <https://www.flickr.com/photos/33621330@N07/>
- Subscribe to Blog:** <http://breadforthecity.us5.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=3b3618c75a2a6bc70bd0a7fe1&id=b0a88d7160>
- Program Staff:** <http://www.breadforthecity.org/contact-us/staff-directory/volunteer/>

**We look forward to serving with you!**