



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

**Stepping Stone Emergency Housing
3300 4th Avenue North
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Anoka, MN 55303
www.steppingstoneeh.org
763-323-7006**

Welcome to Stepping Stone!

We are pleased that you have chosen to volunteer at Stepping Stone. We carry out an important mission, which provides critical support services to those who are experiencing homelessness. It is important for you to fully understand expectations as a SSEH volunteer, as well as what working conditions and support can be expected. I am so glad you have joined our team and am confident that you will find SSEH a dynamic and rewarding place to spend your time.

With Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie J. Jeppson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Executive Director
Stepping Stone Emergency Housing
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Vision

Everyone has a place to call home.

Mission

To provide emergency shelter and critical support services to individuals 18 and older experiencing homelessness while striving toward self-sufficiency.

Values

SSEH believes in and is committed to:

- Empowering individuals to change their lives
- Treating each resident with dignity and respect
- Collaborating with partners in providing services, and
- Ensuring strong stewardship in managing resources

Code of Ethics

To meet our mission, SSEH relies heavily on the integrity and professionalism of employees. SSEH's effectiveness and reputation as a service provider is built on the performance of our team. In order to uphold the highest standards and ensure the integrity, honesty and reputation of our organization, it is expected that all employees will adopt and follow the below Code of Ethics.

Organizational Standards

All who volunteer for or on behalf of the SSEH, understand and are loyal to our mission and purpose.

Professional Responsibilities

- Commit to continually improving our relationship with the residents we serve, our employees and other stakeholders.
- Accept any and all, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, age, sexual or affectional orientation, gender identity, familial status, ancestry, local human rights commission activity, citizenship, veteran or military status, genetic information or any other protected class with regard to receipt of services, appointment or election to voluntary office, or hiring, for assignment to, or promotion in staff positions.
- Treat one another, residents, staff, volunteers and donors with dignity and respect.
- Operate in a manner that upholds the integrity of the organization and ensures public trust.
- Uphold all applicable laws and regulations, and furthering the ability of SSEH to accomplish our mission.
- Act as responsible stewards of our resources and respect the tools and resources provided to meet the needs of staff and residents.
- Practice consistent, ethical decision-making.
- Be aware of whether we are being asked to do something that might be illegal, immoral, or unethical.
- Follow developed procedures when presented with a dilemma on an issue.
- Determine our responsibility, review all relevant facts and information, and refer to all applicable organizational policies or professional standards in deciding on a course of action.
- Consider whether an action goes against ethical, moral, and professional standards.

Sexual Harassment Policy

SSEH seeks to ensure and maintain a working environment free of sexual harassment so that each employee, resident and volunteer may achieve his/her highest level of performance.

SSEH prohibits sexual harassment in any form. Employees shall not sexually harass other employees, residents or volunteers. Residents shall not sexually harass other residents, employees or volunteers. Volunteers shall not sexually harass other volunteers, residents or employees.

Sexual harassment of employees occurring in the workplace or in other settings in which employees may find themselves in connection with their employment is unlawful and will not be tolerated. Any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint will not be tolerated. Review the reporting procedure in the *Staff Resource Guide* by which inappropriate conduct will be dealt with, if encountered by employees.

Sexual harassment is behavior of a sexual nature that is unwelcome and offensive to the person(s) targeted. Examples of harassing behavior may include, but are not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, whether or not they involve unwanted physical contact, foul language of an offensive sexual nature, inquiries into or gossip about one's sex life, comments about an individual's body, sexual jokes or remarks, obscene gestures, and displays of pornographic or sexually explicit pictures, drawings, or caricatures. Use of the employer's computer system for the purpose of viewing, displaying, or disseminating material that is sexual in nature constitutes harassing behavior and is expressly prohibited.

Any conduct that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or sexually offensive work environment is expressly prohibited.

A victim of sexual harassment can be a man or a woman. The victim can be of the same sex as the harasser. The harasser can be a manager, co-worker, resident, or anyone else present on SSEH premises.

Sexual Relationships between Employees and Residents

Sexual relationships between employees and residents, whether occurring at SSEH or elsewhere, are strictly prohibited and constitute grounds for immediate termination.

Confidentiality Policy

SSEH and its employees must respect the privacy of our residents. We must protect and maintain the confidentiality of all information that we learn about our residents, and their family members in the course of providing services to these residents.

Resident records are confidential and must be treated as such. This means that resident records maintained by SSEH must be kept in locked file cabinets in a locked office at all times except when they are being reviewed or supplemented by an authorized employee. Resident records should never leave the office, except as permitted by SSEH's *Confidentiality Policy*.

Resident records and resident-related business (including the names of residents) should not be discussed with or disclosed to anyone except:

- Coworkers who are specifically authorized under SSEH's *Confidentiality Policy* to have access to such information
- An employee's manager
- Executive Director
- Any person authorized by the resident to obtain information about the resident from you (any such authorization must be in writing in a form approved by the Executive Director and must be retained in the resident file).

It is a violation of our *Confidentiality Policy* for any staff to discuss resident matters with friends, spouse, relatives, or anyone else, except those persons listed above, unless you are ordered to do so by a court or otherwise required to do so by law. If someone is insisting on obtaining information from you about a resident, and the resident has not authorized the disclosure, refer the matter to the Program Director.

Violations of the SSEH's *Confidentiality Policy* are considered very serious, and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Security Cameras

SSEH will only provide security camera footage to law enforcement or if legally required.

Solicitation and Acceptance of Gifts Policy

All SSEH employees and volunteers must respect other employees, volunteers and residents right to freely express and exercise the religion of their choice and shall not attempt to convert other employees, volunteers and residents to a particular religious practice or belief.

Solicitation and Acceptance of Gifts Policy

SSEH prohibits the solicitation and acceptance of gifts or gratuities by officers, employees, and Board members for their personal benefit from individuals who use SSEH services and from individuals or companies that seek to do business with SSEH or are a competitor. Employees shall not accept gifts prohibited by this policy.

The only exception to this policy is a gift that has an actual or estimated value of less than \$5, and which the employee cannot refuse without being discourteous. If the value of the gift is greater than \$5, and which the employee cannot refuse without being discourteous, the employee may accept the gift on behalf of Stepping Stone. In this situation the gift will be available for the benefit of SSEH. No personal gift of money may be accepted regardless of the amount. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Social and Sexual Relationships with Program Participants Policy

SSEH, as a provider of human services, is entrusted by the community to serve many people who are vulnerable. For this reason, social relationships or sexual contact between employees and volunteers with any resident will not be tolerated and constitutes grounds for immediate dismissal. Sexual harassment of residents is also prohibited. Please refer to the *Sexual Harassment Policy* for further information.

SSEH employees and volunteers are responsible for keeping boundaries clear, conducting themselves in a professional manner at all times, and avoiding non-work relationships with residents. It is unacceptable to meet a participant after work or attend their social functions. Employees may attend graduation ceremonies or recognition events if the event is related to the resident's program goals, based on the discretion and prior approval of the Program Director.

Sexual contact is defined in Minnesota Statutes Section 604.20, subd. 7, and occurs whether or not the resident or former resident consents to such contact during their stay at SSEH or up to two years following involvement. SSEH's policy regarding anti-harassment, set for the above, also will be applied to residents.

It is possible for a SSEH employee or volunteer to have a sexual relationship as defined under this policy prior to a resident's involvement with SSEH. If this situation arises, the SSEH employee or volunteer must notify the Program Director in writing, at the time the person becomes a SSEH resident. The Program Director will advise the employee-of the proper course of action.

Drug and Alcohol Free Working Environment Policy

SSEH is dedicated to maintaining a drug and alcohol free work place. It is our intent and obligation to provide a drug and alcohol free, healthy, safe and secure work environment. Employees are prohibited from working at any time under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or controlled substances. Only if an employee is lawfully taking a prescription medication may an employee be under the influence of a controlled substance while at work. Employees lawfully taking prescription medications that have, as a side effect, possible impairment of physical or mental abilities must advise a manager that the employee is taking such a medication (but should not disclose the medication or the reason it is being taken) so that the manager may assure that the employee and others may work safely.

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of any controlled substance or alcohol on facility and campus premises, or while conducting company business off company premises, is absolutely prohibited. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees are responsible for complying with this policy and any violation may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Tobacco Free Working Environment Policy

SSEH is committed to providing a tobacco-free environment for all employees, residents, volunteers, and visitors to keep a safe and healthy meeting and work place, support those trying to quit tobacco use and promote positive health behaviors. Smoking and secondhand smoke are known to cause serious lung diseases, heart disease, and cancer. SSEH recognizes the hazards caused by tobacco use and exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke. This policy covers the smoking of any tobacco product and the use of oral tobacco products, "spit" tobacco and e-cigarettes.

What we will be doing

- Allow tobacco use on authorized breaks only in designed smoking areas located outdoors. All materials used for smoking in designated smoking areas, including cigarette butts and matches, will be extinguished and disposed of in appropriate containers. These areas must be maintained by those using the area to ensure clean appearance at all times.
- Support employees in their desire to quit smoking through education, information, support and existing resources within SSEH.
- Employees will have opportunities for ongoing tobacco cessation education in order to feel more informed and able to assist those who are ready to quit using tobacco and motivate others who are considering quitting.
- Non-mandatory tobacco-free days will be offered and encouraged on a monthly basis.

What we will not be doing

- SSEH will not allow the use of tobacco products including cigarettes, e-cigarettes and "spit" tobacco within our facilities at any time.
- SSEH will not allow employees to smoke with program participants.
- SSEH will not allow employees to smoke near entrances to buildings.

Smoking in unauthorized areas is considered a violation of SSEH policy and may result in disciplinary action.

Personal Appearance Policy

Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the business image SSEH presents to residents, other employees, volunteers, and visitors.

During business hours, employees are expected to present a clean and neat appearance with an awareness of the

amount of skin showing. Employees who report to work inappropriately dressed, as deemed by his or her manager, will be sent home and directed to return to work in proper attire. Consult your manager if you have questions as to what constitutes appropriate attire.

Personal Telephone Calls/Cell Phone Usage Policy

SSEH realizes that employees may have a need to make or receive personal telephone calls or texts during working hours. Personal calls\texts must be kept to a minimum while working. Employees may not otherwise use their personal phones while working. Use of SSEH's long distance telephone service for personal calls is prohibited.

Social Media and Social Networking Policy

SSEH respects the right of any employee or volunteer to engage in social media for their own personal use, as well as promoting SSEH. Examples of social media include but are not limited to websites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, wiki's, You Tube, Twitter as well as various chat rooms and blogs.

SSEH is committed to building a working environment in which all persons can work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. This also applies when employees and volunteers choose to link with any SSEH social media or to affiliate themselves with SSEH in any social media. We expect that in these situations, employees and volunteers will communicate with honesty, integrity, and respect for the rights, privileges, privacy, sensibilities, and property of others. Nothing in this policy is intended to impact, or should be construed as impacting, an employee's rights under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act, and the policy shall be construed consistently with those rights.

The following guidelines apply to the use of social media or social networking outside of an employee's or volunteer's work for SSEH. Again, these guidelines show a list of examples only and are not intended to be, nor is it, an exhaustive list.

- Personnel policies such as *Code of Conduct*, *Confidentiality Policy*, *Harassment Policy* and *Information Systems Policy* must be followed. Respect your audience. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the SSEH workplace.
- Confidential or proprietary company information should not be shared on any social networking site.
- Do not reference or cite any SSEH resident without written consent. Do not publish any information regarding a resident without being assured they understand the pros and cons of sharing information on-line and asking them to sign a written consent.
- Do not "friend" a SSEH resident in any social network website.
- Be aware that blogs that have to do with any aspect of SSEH should have clear disclaimers that the views expressed do not represent the views of SSEH. Make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of SSEH.
- Respect copyright, fair use, and disclosure laws.
- SSEH logos, trademarks, and proprietary information may not be used without permission.

Application, Placement, and Orientation Process for Volunteers

Volunteer responsibilities are determined by interaction with residents:

- Level I – zero to limited, one-time only interaction with residents and staff supervised
- Level II – minimal interaction with resident (with ongoing volunteer schedule) and staff supervised
- Level III – increased interaction with residents and may not be staff supervised
- Level IV – one-to-one or small group interaction with residents and is not staff supervised

Volunteer orientation is mandatory for all Level II - IV volunteers. Volunteer Training is optional for Level I – III, but mandatory for Level IV volunteers.

Application

After a volunteer learns about an opportunity they are interested in at SSEH, they are asked to submit an online volunteer application. Depending on the desired opportunity, a brief tour is scheduled or the volunteer is scheduled to attend a training or orientation session.

Placement

In filling out the Application, the volunteer will designate in what capacity they would like to volunteer. Following attending the orientation, the volunteer and Development/Volunteer Associate are able to meet and discuss program needs, the volunteer's needs, and how to work together.

Orientation

Orientation is held once a month or more frequently when needed. All orientations will be held in the lower level classroom at SSEH. Staff will lead the orientations.

Volunteer Orientation is provided to all new volunteers and is designed to prepare the volunteer for their new role with our organization. The following will be included in the orientation:

- Overview of the organization
- Policies and procedures involving volunteers
- Opportunities for involvement

Training

For those volunteers who would like to be mentors with expertise in finances, employment, housing, life skills and social skills, or front office assistance, will have mandatory 16 hours of training that focuses on: boundaries and confidentiality, strategies for engaging with residents and handling conflict, empowerment, and shame and resilience. No volunteer will be able to work one-on-one with a resident or in a small group with residents until the volunteer has successfully completed all 16 hours of training.

Record Keeping and Reporting Volunteers

All individuals completing unpaid volunteer hours with SSEH are responsible for tracking and reporting their own volunteer hours through the SSEH database. The Development/Volunteer Associate will provide the volunteer with login credentials and directions on how to enter their information within 24 hours following their volunteer hours.

Examples of individuals that should be reported and hours that should be tracked/reported:

- Jane Smith, who works at a staffing agency, volunteers to present on interview skills and then participates in mock interviews afterwards.
- An individual or group provides/prepares a meal for residents.
- A staff member's fellow church member works at Cub Foods and does a short workshop on how to save money on grocery shopping.
- A business that hires residents decides to become more involved and agrees that each month two of their staff people will come critique resumes. This organization should be entered and hours tracked.
- All community volunteers who apply are placed through the volunteer program.