



# *CO-OP*

# *VOLUNTEER MANUAL*

# *Welcome to Community Outreach and Opportunity Programs (CO-OP)*

On behalf of the CO-OP staff, partners and youth, I would like to welcome you to our family. I am confident that you will have a rewarding and enjoyable experience with CO-OP!

This volunteer manual is designed to guide your work at CO-OP and is yours to keep. If you have questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me directly.

Again, I truly appreciate your volunteer time and energy. I look forward to working with you this year.

Sincerely,

Sharma Henderson,  
President/CEO  
Community Outreach and Opportunity Programs  
(310) 649-1016  
shenderson@co-opla.org  
www.co-opla.org

## OUR HISTORY

CO-OP was incorporated in the Fall of 2001 as a volunteer operated organization focused on providing pro-bono counseling and advisement services to individuals throughout the greater Los Angeles area.

Due to the overwhelming success of program participants and a pressing need for expanded and increased services, CO-OP is growing at an exponential rate and developing a name that is synonymous with quality, strength, and stability.

CO-OP is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals residing in the Southern California area by providing comprehensive services and projects in targeted communities. Currently, efforts are being made to expand services throughout Los Angeles County. The CO-OP main office is located in the community of Westchester in Los Angeles, California.

### ***Location***

#### **Community Outreach and Opportunity Program**

8929 South Sepulveda Blvd, Suite #400

Los Angeles, CA 90045

(Cross streets: Sepulveda & Manchester)

(310) 649-1016

### ***Office Hours***

Monday through Friday

9:00AM-7:00PM

Saturday

8:00AM-3:30PM (As scheduled)

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

Community Outreach and Opportunity Programs (CO-OP) is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The established policy of CO-OP is to affirm and dedicate itself to the primary principle of nondiscrimination in all phases of its activities. CO-OP pledges itself to the following policy to all applicants of volunteer opportunities: CO-OP will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, marital status, disability unrelated to ability to perform the task, or any other reason prohibited by the federal, state or local law. In addition, CO-OP will not tolerate sexual, racial or any other harassment prohibited by law.

## CO-OP VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**General Job Description:** Volunteers will assist staff and partners in the implementation of CO-OP programs and activities. Additionally, volunteers will provide general administrative support services as needed.

The following represents a sample of possible volunteer opportunities. Additional categories are listed on the volunteer application. Neither list is exhaustive and we welcome your interest to use your unique talents and gifts to help our CO-OP clients.

### 1. College Prep/Academic Tutor

Volunteers will work with individual and small groups of students on homework completion, skill acquisition, study skills assistance, supplemental instruction, and test taking skills.

**Hours of Operation** are as follows: Monday - Friday 3pm-7pm; Saturdays 8am-2pm. Volunteers are welcome to participate on any combination of time/days.

Volunteers are asked to demonstrate at least an average understanding of their assigned subjects/levels as evidenced by transcripts, test scores, references, etc. Volunteers must pass background checks and complete a volunteer application and interview.

### 2. Grant Writer

We are looking for a volunteer grant writer to complete foundation grants. We are willing to work with individuals developing their skills.

### 3. Graphic Designer

We are looking to update our agency logo and to create logos for specific individual programs.

### 4. Guest Speaker

We are looking for guest speakers to talk to groups of kids ranging from 9th-12th grade. Topics should be related to college, business, resiliency, overcoming obstacles or any other positive subject for youth.

### 5. Workshop Facilitator

We are looking for workshop facilitators to conduct workshops for small groups of teens ranging from 9th - 12th grade. Topics should be related to college, career planning, personal development, violence prevention, overcoming obstacles. or any other positive subject for youth.

### 6. Youth Mentor

We are looking for mentors to match with our High School program participants. Mentors will have a minimum of three hours worth of contact with their assigned students per week during the course of the program.

Volunteers are asked to demonstrate appropriate skills and behaviors as evidenced by references and experience. Volunteers must pass background checks and complete a volunteer application and interview.

**7. Public Relations/Community Relations Volunteer (PR/CR Volunteer)**

PR/CR Volunteers will develop and distribute flyers, coordinate email “blasts”, and announce special events at community meetings. Additionally, these volunteers will facilitate building tours for community adults and youth. Detailed instructions will come from a lead staff person.

**8. Administrative Support Volunteer**

Administrative Support Volunteer duties may consist of filing, answering phones and mailing projects for events and staff at the company. Volunteers may also be asked to transcribe minutes and notes, coordinate a phone bank and collaborate on intern projects. These volunteers are particularly sensitive to projects with deadlines and high priority events.

**9. Special Events Volunteer**

The Special Events Volunteer will work during receptions, conferences, concerts, theatrical performances, and large sports events. These volunteers will manage tickets, participants, guests, food orders, etc.

**10. Fundraiser Volunteer**

Fundraiser will research fundraising opportunities and coordinate fundraising activities on behalf of the agency.

*Please contact our **Volunteer Coordinator**, at our office (310-649-1016) for details about joining our family.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Manual is designed to acquaint you with Community Outreach and Opportunity Programs (CO-OP) and provide you with information about working conditions, benefits, and policies affecting volunteers.

The information contained in this Manual applies to all volunteers at CO-OP. Following the policies described in this Manual is considered a mandatory condition to continue volunteering. However, nothing in this Manual alters a volunteer's status. CO-OP is an at will employer and the contents of this Manual shall not constitute nor be construed as a promise of a volunteering opportunity or as a contract between the Company and any of its volunteers. The Manual is a summary of our policies, which are presented here only as a matter of information.

You are responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with the provisions of this Manual. Our objective is to provide you with a work environment that is constructive to both personal and professional growth.

### **CHANGES IN POLICY**

This Manual supersedes all previous volunteer manuals and memos that may have been issued from time to time on subjects covered in this Manual. However, this manual works in conjunction with all policies, procedures, and other documents included in the hiring packet, unless otherwise stated.

However, since our business and our organization are subject to change, we reserve the right to interpret, change, suspend, cancel, or dispute with or without notice all or any part of our policies, procedures, and benefits at any time. We will notify all volunteers of these changes. Changes will be effective on the dates determined by the Company, and after those dates all superseded policies will be null.

No individual supervisor or manager has the authority to change policies at any time. All changes must be made with Board of Directors approval. If you are uncertain about any policy or procedure, speak with your direct supervisor.

### **VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS**

We rely upon the accuracy of information contained in the volunteer application and the accuracy of other data presented throughout the interview process. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in exclusion of the individual from further consideration for volunteer opportunities or, if the person has already begun volunteering, discharge from further service.

### **VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIP**

You enter into service voluntarily, and you are free to resign at any time for any reason or no reason. Similarly, CO-OP is free to conclude its relationship with any volunteer at any time for any reason or no reason.

# **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

In order to provide equal volunteering opportunities to all individuals, volunteering decisions at CO-OP will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. CO-OP does not discriminate in volunteering opportunities or practices because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability.

CO-OP will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. This policy governs all aspects of volunteering, including selection, job assignment, discipline, training and discharge.

Volunteers with questions or concerns about discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their supervisor. Volunteers can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, including discharge from further service.

## **NON-DISCLOSURE/CONFIDENTIALITY**

The protection of confidential business information and trade secrets is vital to the interests and success of CO-OP. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- Program participant data and contact information,
- Financial information,
- Marketing strategies,
- Pending projects and proposals,
- Client information and records,
- Proprietary production processes,
- Personnel/Payroll records, and
- Conversations between any persons associated with the company.

All volunteers are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement as a condition to volunteer. Volunteers who improperly use or disclose trade secrets or confidential business information will be subject to disciplinary action, including discharge from service and legal action, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

## **NEW VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION**

Orientation is a formal welcoming process that is designed to make the new volunteer feel comfortable, informed about the company, and prepared for their position. New volunteer orientation is conducted by the Volunteer Coordinator and/or your immediate supervisor, and includes an overview of the company history, an explanation of the company core values, vision, and mission; and company goals and objectives. In



addition, the new volunteer will complete any necessary paperwork and be given an overview of any legal issues.

Volunteers are presented with relevant codes, keys, and procedures needed to navigate within the workplace. The new volunteer's supervisor then introduces them to staff throughout the company, reviews their volunteering description and scope of position, explains the company's evaluation procedures, and helps the new volunteer get started on specific functions.

### **VOLUNTEER REQUIRING MEDICAL ATTENTION**

In the event a volunteer requires medical attention, whether injured or becoming ill while at work, the volunteer's personal physician must be notified immediately. If it is necessary for the volunteer to be seen by the doctor or go to the hospital, a family member will be called to transport the volunteer to the appropriate facility. If an emergency arises that would require Emergency Medical Services to evaluate the injury/illness of an volunteer on-site, the volunteer will be responsible for any transportation charges. Furthermore, CO-OP's employees and volunteers will not be responsible for transportation of another volunteer due to liabilities that may arise. A physician's "return to work" notice may be required.

### **BUILDING SECURITY**

All volunteers who are issued keys to the office are responsible for their safekeeping. These volunteers will sign a Building Key Disbursement form upon receiving the key. The last employee or volunteer, or a designated employee or volunteer, who leaves the office at the end of the business day assumes the responsibility to ensure that all doors are securely locked, the alarm system is armed, thermostats are set on appropriate evening and/or weekend setting, and all appliances and lights are turned off with exception of the lights normally left on for security purposes. Volunteers are not allowed on Company property without prior authorization from President or Vice-President.

### **INSURANCE ON PERSONAL EFFECTS**

All volunteers should be sure that their own personal insurance policies cover the loss of anything occasionally left at the office. CO-OP assumes no risk for any loss or damage to personal property.

### **SUPPLIES, EXPENDITURES, OBLIGATING THE COMPANY**

Only authorized persons may purchase supplies in the name of CO-OP. No volunteer whose regular duties do not include purchasing shall incur any expense on behalf of CO-OP or bind CO-OP by any promise or representation without written approval.

### **EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT**

Expenses incurred by a volunteer must have prior approval by a supervisor. An example of such an expense would include mileage. If the amount is more than \$25.00, the

reimbursement request will be processed like an invoice. All completed reimbursement request forms should be turned in to the Accountant and/or immediate supervisor.

## **PARKING**

Volunteers must park their cars in areas indicated and provided by the Company and the designated parking authority for their work location.

## **VISITORS IN THE FACILITIES**

To provide for the safety and security of employees, volunteers, visitors, and the facilities at CO-OP, only authorized visitors are allowed in the workplace. Restricting unauthorized visitors helps ensure security, decreases insurance liability, protects confidential information, safeguards volunteer/employee welfare, and avoids potential distractions and disturbances.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

CO-OP provides information to volunteers about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication such as:

- Training sessions
- Team meetings
- Bulletin board postings
- Memorandums
- Safety Memorandums
- Other written communications

Each volunteer is expected to obey safety rules and exercise caution and common sense in all work activities. Volunteers must immediately report any unsafe conditions to their supervisor.

Volunteers should also inform their supervisor in the case of an accident that results in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear.

Volunteers injured at CO-OP must notify staff immediately following the incident. A volunteer should not administer first aid to staff, clients or visitors. Volunteers should take precautions to avoid contact with blood or bodily fluids. Contact a trained staff member for administering first aid and to address other emergency situations (i.e., accidents, theft or loss of personal items).

## **VISITORS IN THE WORKPLACE**

To provide for the safety and security of employees, volunteers, visitors, and the facilities at CO-OP, only authorized visitors are allowed in the workplace. Restricting unauthorized visitors helps ensure security, decreases insurance liability, protects confidential information, safeguards volunteer/employee welfare, and avoids potential distractions and disturbances.

## **BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS**

Upon notice from your immediate supervisor, all volunteers are subject to and must comply with a federal, state, and/or local background check. This includes contacting references, criminal records, Child Welfare agencies, Live Scan and/or Fingerprinting, and DMV clearances. CO-OP will cover the costs for background investigations.

No volunteer is allowed to have personal contact or interaction with any clients currently serviced by the program. Volunteers should avoid giving their personal contact information to clients including: personal e-mail addresses, home address, home or personal cell phone numbers, instant messenger information, etc. Volunteers may give clients their business e-mail address and company cell phone number as long as they are used for business purposes only and it is with permission from your supervisor.

# **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

## **HARASSMENT, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

CO-OP is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

If you believe you have been the victim of harassment, or know of any other volunteer who has, report it immediately. Volunteers can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

Any volunteer who becomes aware of possible harassment should promptly advise their supervisor and the Board of Directors Employment Supervisor who will handle the matter in a timely and confidential manner.

## **TELEPHONE USE**

CO-OP's telephones are intended for the use of serving our clients and in conducting the Company's business. Please answer all phones in a professional business manner and place all callers on hold while you retrieve information or relay the call to the appropriate person.

Personal usage during business hours is discouraged except for extreme emergencies. All personal telephone calls should be kept brief to avoid congestion on the telephone line.

To respect the rights of all volunteers and avoid miscommunication in the office, volunteers must inform family members and friends to limit personal telephone calls during working hours.

If a volunteer is found to be deviating from this policy, he/she will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **PUBLIC IMAGE**

A professional appearance is important anytime that you come in contact with clients or potential clients. Volunteers should be well groomed and dressed appropriately for our business and for their position in particular.

The following items are considered inappropriate working attire for CO-OP:

- Revealing shirts
- Short mini skirts
- Ripped clothing
- Visible undergarments
- Sheer clothing
- T-shirts with inappropriate or offensive gestures or advertising

If management occasionally designates "casual days," appropriate guidelines will be provided to you.

Consult your supervisor if you have any questions about appropriate business attire.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

The Company is committed to providing a safe and productive environment for its volunteers. In keeping with this commitment, the following rules regarding alcohol and drugs of abuse have been established for all volunteers and staff members, regardless of rank or position. The rules apply during operating hours to all volunteers and staff of the Company while they are on Company premises or elsewhere on Company business.

The manufacture, distribution, possession, sale, or purchase of controlled substances of abuse on Company property is prohibited.

Being under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol, or substances of abuse on Company property is prohibited.

Working while under the influence of prescription drugs that impair performance is prohibited.

So that there is no question about what these rules signify, please note the following definitions:

Company property: All Company owned or leased property used by employees and volunteers.

Controlled substance of abuse: Any substance listed in Schedules I-V of Section 202 of the Controlled Substance Act, as amended.

Drug: Any chemical substance that produces physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral change in the user.

Drug paraphernalia: Equipment, a product, or material that is used or intended for use in concealing an illegal drug, or otherwise introducing into the human body an illegal drug or controlled substance.

Illegal drug:

- a. Any drug or derivative thereof whose use, possession, sale, transfer, attempted sale or transfer, manufacture, or storage is illegal or regulated under any federal, state, or local law or regulation.
- b. Any drug, including – but not limited to – a prescription drug, used for any reason other than that prescribed by a physician.
- c. Inhalants used illegally.

Under the influence: A state of not having the normal use of mental or physical faculties resulting from the voluntary introduction into the body of an alcoholic beverage, drug, or substance of abuse.

Consistent with the rules listed above, any of the following actions constitutes a violation of the Company's policy on drugs and may subject a volunteer to disciplinary action:

Using, selling, purchasing, transferring, manufacturing, or storing an illegal drug or drug paraphernalia, or attempting to or assisting another to do so, while in the course of employment.

Working or reporting to work, conducting Company business or being on Company property while under the influence of an illegal drug or alcohol, or in an impaired condition.

## **TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

The use of tobacco products is not permitted anywhere on the Company's premises.

## **VOLUNTEER DISCHARGE**

A volunteer may be discharged from service at CO-OP at the discretion of the Senior Program Director or Executive Director. Discharge can be decided for any reason including, but not limited to: criminal action; disrespect of staff, clients and visitors; fighting; negative or harmful communications regarding CO-OP, its staff and/or clients.

## **EVALUATION**

Volunteers will be evaluated upon request. We will be happy to provide you with feedback on your performance and outline areas of strength. Volunteers will also get the chance to evaluate their experience at CO-OP.