



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Welcome!

Dear valued Volunteer,

On behalf of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Des Moines, we welcome you to our team of exceptional volunteers! As the Community Relations Manager, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for your dedication to our cause. Your role as a volunteer plays an integral part in continuing our commitment of empowering individuals and strengthening families. Your contributions are invaluable, and I am excited to collaborate with each of you as we continue this journey of service! Thank you for being an essential part of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Des Moines mission!



Sincerely,

Emily Klisares

Emily Klisares

Community Relations Manager

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About Catholic Charities

We help people face adversity to achieve their success. We have been empowering generations of Iowans since 1924.



Empower Individuals | Strengthen Families

None of us knows when adversity will leave us feeling hopeless. Catholic Charities serves the people of southwest Iowa when they find themselves in need of help. From basic needs of food and shelter, to empowering programs that lead to housing, employment, and more. Professional counseling services help to sort out barriers that can keep people from being their best. We continue to adapt to the needs in our communities so that we are offering services relevant to clients. At its foundation, we build all of these services on the basis of Catholic Social Teaching, which is focused on social justice, dignity, and respect.



Because our mission is based on Catholic Social Teaching, we seek to serve and help ALL in need. We partner with many other civic and religious organizations in the area to complement our services and strive for well-rounded care for those we serve.

Our Mission

Family centered services that empower individuals and strengthen families.

Vision

Catholic Charities connects people with exceptional life-changing experiences that inspire full human potential and growth.

Values

We ASPIRE to:

Advocate: In fostering self-sufficiency for our clients.

Serve: In empowering our clients and all we encounter.

Partner: In engaging fully in our relationships with others.

Innovate: In enhancing essential client services and programming.

Respect: In demonstrating our sacred trust to all we serve and do.

Excel: In living our commitment to human dignity, a healthy community, and the Catholic Social Teachings.

Our Roots



Diocese of Des Moines

The Diocese of Des Moines, created in 1911, serves people over a 12,446 square mile area, the southwestern quadrant of Iowa, including 23 counties. The diocese is comprised of more than 80 parishes, 17 schools, 51 active diocesan priests, and three Catholic hospitals.



Catholic Charities USA

Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) is a national organization that offers support to member agencies, provides disaster relief and promotes poverty-reduction through research and legislative reform. CCUSA partners and is a network for Catholic Charities organizations in the United States.



USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is an assembly of the hierarchy of bishops who jointly exercise pastoral functions on behalf of the Christian faithful of the United States and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Our refugee services efforts are directed through USCCB.



Catholic Relief Services

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) carries out the commitment of the Bishops of the United States to assist the poor and vulnerable overseas. As part of the universal mission of the Catholic Church, CRS works with local, national, and international Catholic institutions and structures, as well as other organizations, to assist people on the basis of need, not creed, race or nationality.



Catholic Campaign for Human Development

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) is the domestic anti-poverty program of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, working to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ "... to bring good news to the poor... release to captives... sight to the blind, and let the oppressed go free." (Luke 4:18)

Our Services

Counseling Program

Stress and anxiety are part of our daily lives, but what do you do when it gets to be too much? Professional therapy is one way to work through stress and anxiety. Our licensed, professional therapists work with clients of all faiths and backgrounds to address issues including depression, anxiety, stress, marital issues, relationship problems, child behavior problems, trauma, abuse and more.



Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Program

Catholic Charities Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program provides services to anyone faced with these issues through a 24-hour crisis phone line, emergency shelter, court and medical advocacy, empowerment education, support groups, case management and outreach to underserved populations. All services are free and confidential. Our program serves individuals in nine counties in southwest Iowa: Audubon, Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie and Shelby.



Emergency Family Shelter

Catholic Charities Emergency Family Shelter keeps homeless families together during a very difficult time in their lives. Our experienced staff understands that homelessness is not a simple issue. While each family is expected to follow the same rules and expectations at the shelter, they are all provided case coordination. The goal is to help each family leave the shelter with stable housing, financial stability, and empowerment to live a successful, sustainable life.



Food Pantry

Catholic Charities Food Pantry is a member of the Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) Food Pantry Network and partners with the Food Bank of Iowa to provide nutritious food to the hungry. Personal care and infant care items are also available to qualified households one time per month. We also provide food rescue items to those in need one time per day.



Refugee Resettlement

Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement works through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the U.S. State Department. We have 90 days to resettle families for their new life in Iowa. Every family is unique and requires a variety of services. Health exams, job placement assistance, school enrollment, language classes, and bus training are just some of the many tasks that have to be completed during the first three months. We want the entire family to have a great start so that they can be successful.



Volunteer Engagement

Volunteers are one of the greatest resources we have at Catholic Charities. People like you, who give their time, energy, and talents to provide help and inspire hope, are essential to our ability to deliver quality services. We are committed to creating opportunities for the community to be involved in our work, and many of our programs would not be able to carry out their goals if volunteers were not involved. Our program volunteers, Board of Directors and Board Committee members are priceless.



Volunteer Engagement and Catholic Charities' Strategic Plan

Volunteer engagement is an essential part of the organization's strategic plan.

By engaging volunteers in direct and indirect service activities, we are able to expand the efforts of our programs and reach more and more people in need.

Our volunteers participate by:

- Supporting the homeless
- Feeding the hungry
- Helping new refugee families
- Assisting domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking survivors
- Sorting through donations
- Providing clerical support
- Assisting with special events
- Aiding with many other programs and projects

We strive to provide our volunteers with a positive work environment, necessary training, supervision, evaluation, and recognition. In return, we expect you to honor your commitments to Catholic Charities, respect other staff members and volunteers, and perform your assigned duties to the best of your ability.



A Message from the Executive Director

Dear Volunteer,

On behalf of our Board of Directors and our dedicated staff and volunteers, I want to welcome you to Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Des Moines. You are joining an organization that has been helping people in central and southwest Iowa for 100 years!

As you read in our mission and vision statements, we ASPIRE to connect people with exceptional life-changing experiences that inspire full human potential and growth. Without a reliable team of volunteers, we could not carry out this extraordinary mission and social services ministry.

Regardless of your volunteer role, the tenants of Catholic Social Teaching are at the core of everything we do. Dignity and respect for all people are foundational in providing our services. As a volunteer, we entrust that you will demonstrate these values in your work.

We are honored that you have chosen to share your time and talents with Catholic Charities and welcome you to our dynamic team!

Sincerely,

Barbara Q. Decker, J. D.

Barbara Q. Decker, J.D.
Executive Director



Definition of a Volunteer

You are considered a volunteer if you, without compensation or expectations of compensation beyond reimbursement for volunteer related expenses, perform a service at the direction of and on behalf of Catholic Charities. This includes participating in program activities or serving on the Board of Directors. As a volunteer, you will be accepted officially and enrolled by the organization prior to performance of your tasks.



Catholic Charities is an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to creating a diverse workforce. With understanding that Catholic Charities is a Catholic entity with constitutional protections, Catholic Charities will not engage in unlawful discrimination against any employee, applicant or volunteer based upon a person's race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation and pregnancy), national origin, age, disability or genetic information, or any other protected class.



Family Members of Staff as Volunteers

Family members of staff may volunteer at Catholic Charities. When family members are enrolled as volunteers, they will not be placed under the direct supervision of family members who are employees.

Clients and Their Relatives as Volunteers

If you are a client of Catholic Charities, you may be accepted as a volunteer where such service does not conflict with provisions of service to you or to others. A one year waiting period between receiving services and volunteering is suggested. Relatives of clients may also serve as volunteers but will not be placed in a position of direct service or relationship to members of their family who are receiving services.

Minors as Volunteers

Volunteers under the age of 18 who wish to participate in an ongoing volunteer opportunity must have written permission from a parent or guardian before they begin service. The volunteer tasks assigned to a minor shall be performed in a non-hazardous environment and shall comply with the appropriate requirements of child labor laws. Under parent or adult supervision, younger children and groups can volunteer as appropriate.



Classification of Volunteers

There are several ways to classify volunteers as described below.

Ongoing Volunteers (Regularly Scheduled)

When a volunteer accepts a position with a regular schedule, s/he will be considered an ongoing volunteer after serving consistently for six months (or another pre-determined length of assignment, i.e., summer vacation).



Special Event Volunteers

People who serve as volunteers only once or occasionally in an event situation are considered special event or occasional volunteers. Examples of this include when someone signs up to volunteer one time through work or helps out at a golf outing or fundraising event.

Direct Service Volunteers

Direct service volunteers provide service directly to clients. There may be additional screening and training requirements for these volunteers.

Professional Volunteers

Professional volunteers are those who provide a volunteer service using their license, registration, or certificates as required by the profession. These credentials must be current if they are providing that professional skill as a volunteer.

Recruitment and Selection Process

Volunteer Opportunity Descriptions

As a volunteer, you will be given a position description outlining the specific responsibilities of your role. It is your responsibility to read about your position, gain an understanding of the requirements, and seek any necessary clarifications from your supervisor.

Recruitment

Catholic Charities uses a variety of different methods to recruit volunteers. You may find us reaching out to potential volunteers via our website, through other internet volunteering sites and social media platforms, in print publications, and by word of mouth. We also encourage you to let your friends and family know of volunteer opportunities.



Applications

As a volunteer, you will be required to complete the appropriate application on Better Impact, our volunteer management software, and provide emergency contact information. Required documentation varies per volunteer opportunity, and specific programs may also require supplemental forms. If you are participating as a volunteer in a one-time event, you will need to complete an application. Additional forms may not be required.

Getting Started

Most ongoing volunteer positions will require an initial meeting either in person or by phone with a Catholic Charities staff member. These meetings help clarify responsibilities of the opportunity and help decide if this is a good fit for both Catholic Charities and the volunteer.

Volunteers for ongoing positions and direct service volunteers are required to undergo a background/criminal records check and child abuse registry check prior to beginning service.

Driving record checks are required for volunteers who drive for their program or transport clients in Catholic Charities owned vehicles.

A State of Iowa Department of Human and Child Protective Services Central Case Records Search is required on volunteers who will be working directly with children. Childcare volunteers also need to provide immunization records to their supervisor. Catholic Charities covers the cost of any background and criminal records checks for volunteers.

VIRTUS training

Adult volunteers, at least 18 years old, who wish to be regular 'on-site' volunteers, must complete VIRTUS training prior to working with clients. Training information can be obtained from the Community Relations Manager.

Ensuring a Safe Environment

Catholic Charities of Des Moines takes comprehensive measures to ensure a safe environment for all clients, staff and volunteers. We prioritize safety through Background Screening Applications prior to the

date of volunteer service. For those driving on behalf of Catholic Charities, a thorough review of the prospective volunteer's driving record is undertaken, prioritizing the safety in transportation. Additionally, specialized training emphasizes the understanding of the impact of child sexual abuse, fostering a culture of vigilance and prevention.

Aspects of Volunteering

Supervision

As a volunteer, you will have a defined supervisor who will directly oversee your role within the program. This supervisor will be available to you for consultation and assistance. One-time volunteers will also be informed of their supervisor in case questions or problems arise. While all suggestions are respected, please be mindful that operational and service decisions are made at the directors' level.

The Community Relations Manager is also a point of contact throughout the application and orientation process to support volunteers throughout their service. If there is an urgent or emergency situation, contact your supervisor immediately.



Corrective Actions

In appropriate situations, corrective action may be taken following an incident or evaluation. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, re-assignment of a volunteer to a new position, suspension of the volunteer, or dismissal from volunteer service.

Concerns and Grievances

The Program Manager, Director of Programs and/or the Community Relations Manager will review decisions involving corrective action for appropriateness. If corrective action is taken, the volunteer shall be informed of the procedures for expressing his/her concerns. A volunteer has the opportunity to provide a written request to express his/her concerns to the Community Relations Manager (or to another Catholic Charities representative when necessary), where it will be properly addressed.

Record Management and Volunteer Time Reports

Keeping track of the time given by our volunteers is very important to us. Each program is required to record hours each month for each individual volunteer and report them to the Community Relations Manager. Some volunteer positions are more independent and require volunteers to log their own hours via Better Impact at the end of their shift. Hours will be approved by the Community Relations Manager



Volunteer Recognition

The annual volunteer appreciation dinner occurs each year in April, which is National Volunteer Month. It serves as a heartfelt recognition event of the impact our volunteers have on each of our programs. Awards for volunteer service will be presented. Information about the event will be communicated prior to the gathering.

Volunteer Communication

Better Impact fosters a community where volunteers can seamlessly connect and collaborate. The platform's enhanced features empower volunteers by providing visibility into shared shifts, fostering connection amongst those who contribute their time. Catholic Charities' program managers' contact information is conveniently accessible on Better Impact, openly visible to all volunteers, ensuring seamless communication throughout the entire organization.

Volunteer Impact on the Organization

The impact of our volunteers in our organization remains unparalleled, serving as the backbone upon which our programs flourish and the lives we touch are transformed. In the past fiscal years, the dedication of those remarkable volunteers translated into nearly 13,000 hours of volunteer time annually. Each hour volunteered represents a moment of compassion, a ripple effect of positivity which echoes far beyond any numbers.

Participation Guidelines

Certain policies and practices are in place to ensure positive and safe volunteering experiences at Catholic Charities. As a volunteer, you must comply with the guidelines and requirements.

Drug Free Policy

The unlawful manufacturing, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is not allowed in Catholic Charities program sites. Additionally, volunteers may not be impaired by any substance while serving. Such action may result in your immediate dismissal from the volunteer position.

Tobacco Free Policy

The use of tobacco products, smoking or vaping by our employees, volunteers, clients, or vendors in the interior offices or spaces of any building occupied by Catholic Charities is not allowed. There is also no smoking permitted within 25 feet of any entryway, vent, or doorway to interior buildings.

Absenteeism and Punctuality

All volunteers are expected to be conscientious of their duties, the value of the time to the organization, and of the staff, volunteers, and clients who may be counting on punctual service. If a volunteer is unable to arrive on time or must be absent for a scheduled shift, he or she must notify the supervisor as soon as possible. Continued absenteeism from assigned shifts, trainings, or meetings, with or without notice, may lead to reassignment of the volunteer or termination of the volunteer service.

Firearms and Weapons

To ensure that Catholic Charities maintains a workplace safe and free of violence for all employees, volunteers, and clients, the organization prohibits the possession or use of dangerous weapons on company property. All Catholic Charities employees, volunteers, and clients are subject to this

provision. A license to carry the weapon does not supersede company policy. Any volunteer in violation of this policy will be removed from volunteer service immediately.

Personal Involvement with Clients

If your volunteer position involves working directly with clients, it is important to maintain boundaries with them and to keep your relationship professional, not personal. Due to the delicate nature of your relationship, please refrain from initiating contact in public and/or photographing clients or friending/following the client on social media. If the client finds you on social media and requests that you like/follow their account, please ignore the request and let the program supervisor know right away. If you become aware of the client's address, phone number, or any other personal contact information outside of your volunteerism, sharing this information is strictly prohibited. As a volunteer you agree to not overstep the boundaries set in place.

Property Policy

As a volunteer at Catholic Charities, you will respect the property of Catholic Charities and the personal property of other volunteers and staff.

Safety

Catholic Charities is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for staff and volunteers as well as persons and families served. Each program will provide volunteers with information on facility safety plans and safety protocols related to the assigned volunteer position.

Any injury to the volunteer while fulfilling the duties of their position description must be reported to the supervisor. A volunteer injury claim may need to be filed.

Confidentiality

Catholic Charities recognizes confidentiality as a living principle based on the sanctity and dignity of the human person. Therefore, we will respect the privacy of personal information of those we serve or employ. You are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of all information to which you are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves staff members, volunteers, clients, or other people or involves overall program or Catholic Charities' business. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination or other corrective action.

Driving Policies

If you will be transporting clients as a volunteer driver, you must complete the Volunteer Driver Application and the Private Vehicle Use Application. In turn, a Motor Vehicle Record check and a criminal background check will be processed prior to your start. Catholic Charities reserves the right to accept or deny you as a volunteer driver based on findings of these checks. Please note that each program has specific volunteer opportunities. If you are interested in driving, speak with the Community Relations Manager.

You must be at least 21 years old to be a volunteer driver and must follow all state and federal traffic laws. All passengers must wear seat belts. For safety and confidentiality reasons, when volunteers are transporting clients, no additional passengers are allowed in the vehicle unless they have been authorized by the program. Also, you are not permitted to use your cellular phone while the motor vehicle engine is running. If you have had a previous OWI conviction, three years must pass before you may be considered for a volunteer driving opportunity with Catholic Charities.

You must be providing service within the scope of your volunteer service description and have your own automobile liability and physical damage insurance (with a minimum liability limit of \$100,000/\$300,000) and must be able to show proof of coverage prior to performing driving services. We encourage you to consult with your own insurance agents regarding the extension of your personal insurance to include community volunteer work.

Reporting Accidents

To ensure the safety of volunteers, clients, and staff, report all accidents to the site supervisor immediately.

Liability and Insurance

In May of 1997, Congress approved legislation (Volunteer Protection Act) that shields volunteers for nonprofit organizations from liability lawsuits. HR911 limits the occasions when volunteers, as well as directors, officers and trustees, may be sued in connection with their actions on behalf of a nonprofit. While the legislation removes a volunteer (but not the nonprofit) from liability if an individual commits negligent acts or omissions while acting within the scope of his or her responsibility, it does not protect the person if such acts were caused by willful or criminal misconduct or gross negligence.

Extra Help

Volunteers are here to support the mission and work of Catholic Charities. If you have an idea for services, please consult with the Community Relations Manager. Volunteers cannot take it upon themselves to provide services to clients, including providing items that are not currently approved for the program.

Under no circumstances should a volunteer/staff give of their personal money or any other personal gifts to a client. This includes donating cash or gift cards to a program and asking program staff to distribute this to a client.

Sexual Exploitation of Clients

Catholic Charities serves many people considered vulnerable under the law and thus prohibits sexual contact between any volunteer and any client, regardless of age. Any suspected incident of sexual exploitation of a client involving a volunteer or staff member or occurring on Catholic Charities' premises must be reported immediately to the Community Relations Manager. Such reports will be promptly reported to the proper legal authorities. Catholic Charities reserves the right to suspend or terminate volunteers, pending the outcome of the investigation.

Sexual contact with children who are current or former clients is strictly prohibited at all times and is a violation of the law. Catholic Charities fully cooperates with any law enforcement investigation involving the alleged sexual exploitation of a child.

Harassment Policy

Catholic Charities is committed to a work environment that is professional and harassment-free for all employees and volunteers. Harassment includes, without limitations, verbal, physical, visual, and innuendo. It also includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact of any sexual nature when submission to such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment or is used as the basis for unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment for employees and volunteers.

Volunteers should report any issues or concerns to their supervisor or Human Resources at Catholic Charities immediately.

Closings

Catholic Charities strives to ensure the safety of all volunteers. In the event of inclement weather, volunteers will be responsible for contacting their volunteer site to inform their supervisor that they will not be performing their scheduled service. If a Catholic Charities office should close, the Community Relations Manager or supervisor will notify volunteers via phone or email of the closing.

There may also be days that volunteer services are not needed due to office closure for staff training days. In addition, Catholic Charities offices and sites are closed for all major holidays. Site supervisors will post closings.

Media Relations

All public relations or media concerns must be handled by the Marketing office. No media contact shall be made or received by a volunteer. Any media contact received by a volunteer must be forwarded to the Marketing Manager or the Director of Development.

Computer, Equipment, and Cellphone Use

Use of Catholic Charities' computers and equipment is intended for organization-related purposes. Volunteers are not permitted to use computers or equipment for business or commercial purposes unrelated to Catholic Charities.

Catholic Charities' goal for volunteers is to meet the needs of clients we serve and provide the best experience possible. We ask that volunteers refrain from using their personal phone during their volunteering time as much as possible.

Dress Code

As a volunteer, you are responsible for presenting a positive image to clients and to the community as a representative of Catholic Charities. You should dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of your duties. Please wear closed toed shoes when you volunteer.

Ending Volunteer Service

Your volunteer position may conclude at the end of a particular project, event, or set time period, but you are also free to end your volunteer service with Catholic Charities at any time. Because volunteers are so important to the programs and Catholic Charities, we request that you provide advance notice of your departure and a reason for your decision.

Once again, we truly appreciate your willingness to volunteer with Catholic Charities! For questions or additional information, please contact the Community Relations Manager at 515-237-5078.