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# Volunteer Handbook

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952-546-0616

## WELCOME TO JFCS!

Thank you for volunteering with Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis (JFCS)! We know there are a lot of ways you could choose to spend your time, and we are grateful you chose us. We ask that volunteers carefully review and familiarize themselves with the contents of the Volunteer Handbook. After you have finished reading this important material, please submit this online acknowledgement form for our records, which can be found at the bottom of the volunteer page on the JFCS website.

In 2023, JFCS served 14,000 people of all ages and backgrounds, in all stages of life from Hennepin County and the surrounding areas. We are appreciative of the 880 volunteers (made up of individuals, families, and groups) who give of their time, resources and talent each year to help us serve people from the Jewish and broader communities in the areas of Career Services, Children and Family Services, Community Engagement, Counseling and Mental Health Support Services, and Senior Services. JFCS is truly **Here for all. Always.**



Thank you again, and we hope you will have a positive and meaningful experience volunteering with JFCS. Reach out at any time if you have questions or want to share about your volunteer experience.

Warmly,  
Dana Shapiro, Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager  
952-417-2112 | [dshapiro@jfcsmpls.org](mailto:dshapiro@jfcsmpls.org)

## OUR MISSION

Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis provides essential services to people of all ages and backgrounds to sustain healthy relationships, ease suffering and offer support in times in need.

## OUR VISION

Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis is the first place people choose: for help, to volunteer, to donate, and to work.

## OUR VALUES

Based on the Jewish concept of *Tikkun Olam* (repair of the world), JFCS believes everyone is entitled to equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities. As a human service organization, we value:

- Compassion – providing highest quality care and support through all stages of life
- Inclusion – treating people of all ages, genders, sexual orientations, races, religions and abilities with dignity and respect
- Innovation – anticipating community needs and responding with excellence, effectiveness and creativity
- Integrity – working in a manner that is consistently ethical and accountable
- Collaboration – establishing lasting partnerships in the community to broaden our impact and inform our work

## OUR HISTORY

In the early 1900s, immigrants from all over Europe came to America to build new lives. To escape persecution. To find better jobs. To provide for their families. And amid this wave of immigration to its shores, America provided help. Minneapolis was no exception.

On the evening of Feb. 9, 1910, representatives from nine community organizations gathered in Minneapolis to discuss how they might come to the aid of immigrant families here. This is how JFCS began. "Each of us should regard it, not only as our solemn duty, but also as our pleasure and privilege to give, in accordance with our means," the agency wrote in its earliest report.

Today, more than 114 years after that evening meeting, JFCS still honors that solemn duty to help people achieve their full potential, no matter their background, age or income. In 1910, 345 families were served with funds that provided food and shelter, a dispensary, loans, an employment bureau and a wayfarer's home. Since then, we have grown quite a bit and in 2023, more than 14,000 people from the Jewish and broader communities received services in a number of programs.

Through our many years of service, JFCS has resettled Holocaust survivors, helped the unemployed, assisted in adoptions of orphaned children, helped seniors remain independent in their homes, matched mentors with youth, educated the community about abuse, loaned much-needed funds, strengthened the Jewish connection of people with disabilities, counseled people in times of need...and so much more.

The community is largely responsible for the work JFCS does. Hundreds give their time to JFCS through volunteering and working with the agency. Thousands donate money through endowments, membership, Mitzvah Cards and more, which enables JFCS to remain the place people come to for help. JFCS staff, volunteers and donors contribute to positively influencing the lives of others. They strengthen JFCS and the Jewish and broader communities.

Many JFCS services are provided on a fee basis, though no one is turned away for inability to pay. Services are available to everyone. *As a JFCS volunteer, you play an essential role in helping us to accomplish our mission and provide assistance to individuals in our community who need help.*

## OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



### Career Services

Certified professionals provide complete career assistance including resume development, social media strategies, interviewing skills and more. Our programs empower people to explore and identify their visions of career success, including access to career training.

- ♥ Career Counseling and Coaching
- ♥ Minnesota Family Investment Program
- ♥ Dislocated Worker Program
- ♥ SNAP Employment and Training
- ♥ IT Pathways Career Training
- ♥ Vocational Rehabilitation Services

### Community Services & Engagement

JFCS looks for opportunities that help build and sustain well-being and meaningful connections, creating a stronger community. Through partnerships and initiatives, we aim to be a valuable and contributing member of the Jewish community, broader Twin Cities community and beyond.

- ♥ Hag Sameach (Happy Holidays) Program
- ♥ J-Pride
- ♥ Jewish Community Disability Services
- ♥ NextGen
- ♥ PJ Library and PJ Our Way
- ♥ Shalom Baby
- ♥ Volunteer Resources

## Counseling & Mental Health Services

Highly skilled, licensed therapists, social workers, and case managers work with care and compassion to help people address the challenges they face throughout their lives.

- ♥ *Intake and Resource Connection*
- ♥ *Mental Health Counseling Across the Lifespan*
- ♥ *Mental Health Support Services/Case Management*
- ♥ *PREPARE/ENRICH pre-marital and marriage enrichment program*

## Education And Learning

JFCS' education and learning programs for individuals, children and families provide the tools and support needed to live stable and engaged lives. They include mentorship, early childhood and parent education, support and resources for addiction, mental health, and caregiving for loved ones with Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

- ♥ *Addiction and Recovery Services*
- ♥ *Annual Mental Health Education Conference*
- ♥ *Caregivers Conference*
- ♥ *Professional and Community Education*
- ♥ *Jewish Youth Mentoring Program*
- ♥ *ParentChild+*
- ♥ *Parent Coaching*

## Financial Assistance & Food Security

JFCS provides financial assistance and programs to aid with stability and self-sufficiency. Through camp and academic scholarships, emergency financial assistance, the Jewish Free Loan Program, and food security assistance, we provide support through the hard times.

- ♥ *Academic Scholarships*
- ♥ *Camp Scholarships*
- ♥ *Emergency Financial Assistance*
- ♥ *Food Security Assistance*
- ♥ *Jewish Free Loan Program*

## Senior Services

JFCS Senior Services support the dignity and independence of older adults, providing highly-personalized care with boundless compassion. We work to ensure meaningful, safe, supported and independent living at home, and resources, education and respite for caregivers.

- ♥ *Alzheimer's and Dementia Community Services*
- ♥ *Care Planning Consultation*
- ♥ *Case Management/Care Coordination*
- ♥ *Holocaust Survivor Support Services*
- ♥ *Jacob Garber Transportation Services*
- ♥ *Kosher Meals on Wheels*
- ♥ *Memory Café*
- ♥ *Shopping Services*

## OUR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

JFCS communicates information about our volunteer needs via the monthly e-directions, quarterly volunteer newsletter, through targeted emails, and on social media. JFCS volunteer needs and opportunities fluctuate throughout the year, and we offer short- and long-term volunteer opportunities for people of all ages. Here are our main opportunities:

### Short-Term Volunteering:



- **Event Volunteer** - JFCS holds events throughout the year, and our staff can often use additional support with the set-up, greeting attendees and helping with the program, and clean up. These are some of the programs that currently utilize volunteers: Annual Benefit, Caring Connections, Community Conferences, J-Pride, NextGen, PJ Library, Volunteers in Action.
- **Hag Sameach (Happy Holidays)** - This is the program that has the largest number of volunteers each year. There are many ways to engage with Hag Sameach through a volunteer shift delivering Passover food and leading up to the winter holidays (sorting and organizing, gift assembly, gift selection, gift wrap, delivery).
- **Cards for the Community Project** - Create cards for JFCS clients to help decrease feelings of loneliness and isolation.)
- **Mitzvah Projects** - Many options to get involved in a project supporting JFCS programs.
- **Quick Fix Volunteer** - Minor household repairs and tasks to support a Senior Service client.

### Long-Term Volunteering:

- **Case Aide** - Provide administrative support to the Senior Services team in the Golden Valley office.
- **JFCS Leadership/Committee Member** - Board of Directors, Annual Benefit, Hag Sameach, NextGen, Community Conferences.
- **Household Financial** - Provide ongoing 1:1 support to an assigned Senior Service client.
- **Jewish Youth Mentor** - Provide ongoing 1:1 support to an assigned youth.

- Memory Cafe Volunteer - Assist with social events geared towards people with memory loss and their caregivers.
- Telephone Reassurance - Provide ongoing 1:1 support on the phone to an assigned Senior Service client.
- Volunteer Driver for Garber Transportation - Flexible role driving people to appointments, errands and social outings around town using your own vehicle.
- Volunteer Receptionist - Provide ongoing support to our Administrative Professionals Team in the Golden Valley office.
- Volunteer Visitor - Provide ongoing 1:1 support to an assigned Senior Service client.

## **VOLUNTEER PERKS**

We deeply value the dedication and commitment of our volunteers, and we hope you will find there are many perks involved in volunteering with us. Here are some examples:

- **Volunteering can improve your mental and physical health – Volunteering has been found to help reduce stress, feelings of isolation and depression and improve self-confidence. It can also lower your blood pressure and promote heart health.**
- **Volunteering can help you make a difference by doing tikkun olam (Jewish value meaning ‘repair of the world’) - Above all, as a JFCS volunteer you can make a difference in the lives of individuals and families who need your friendship, caring, support and assistance. You truly can make the world a better place!**
- **Volunteering can increase personal satisfaction - Volunteering offers you a chance to learn about other people, enhance your personal experiences and gain new skills. Through training and your work on the job, you may even learn skills that could be useful in future work or educational endeavors.**
- **Volunteering can help you increase social connections - Many of our volunteer opportunities provide you with a chance to meet people who share volunteering as their passion. Through their work at JFCS, our volunteers often form friendships with other JFCS volunteers, and bonds with the clients they serve. Depending on the volunteer role, you can also sign up to volunteer with your friends to spend time together doing something meaningful.**
- **Volunteering can help you cultivate references and document volunteer hours - JFCS maintains a record of your volunteer service and can document your volunteer work for community service requirements, a future employer, college or graduate school application, National Honor Society, or whatever your needs may be. We also are happy to serve as a reference, providing a letter regarding your volunteer contributions.**



## **VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

JFCS values the contributions you make as a volunteer. You provide a valuable service to our agency and our community. Because you represent JFCS and its mission, it is important that you are aware of and follow these policies and procedures.

### **Background Check**

JFCS uses Sterling Volunteers to perform our background checks, and some volunteer roles are required to complete a criminal and/or motor vehicle background check – either annually or every three years (depending on the role). If asked to complete a background check, these volunteers will need to complete the steps online, and JFCS will cover the fee involved.

### **Absences**

Volunteers are vital to the success of our agency. If you are ill or otherwise unable to volunteer for your shift or fulfill your volunteer responsibility, please notify your assigned staff and/or client as soon as possible. You are not expected to volunteer on national holidays and certain Jewish holidays when the agency is closed. Occasionally our volunteers will be unable to help for an extended period (due to vacation, illness, etc.). We ask that you communicate this with your assigned staff so we can stay informed, make other arrangements if needed, and know when to expect you back.

### **Confidentiality**

Boundaries and privacy are extremely important to keep in mind when volunteering. As a JFCS volunteer, you may have access to personal or protected health information pertaining to the people we serve. It is essential that volunteers observe, maintain and protect the privacy of those served by JFCS. Please note that all information shared with you by a

person we serve, either verbal or recorded in any form, may be discussed with your assigned staff and/or the Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager.

### **Confidentiality Policy**

JFCS values the contributions of our volunteers. You provide a valuable service both to our agency and our community. As a volunteer, you represent JFCS and its mission. Because we place a high value on our clients' right to privacy, it is important that you understand and agree to our confidentiality policy.

When visiting JFCS, remember that people are here for a variety of reasons. If you see someone who is familiar to you in the waiting room or other areas, please refrain from asking the purpose of their visit.

Additionally, when you have a relationship or contact with any JFCS client, individually, in a group setting or at an event, please refrain from:

1. Using a client's name in any setting outside of the agency or event;
2. Describing the client's case in such a way as to identify him/her outside of the agency;
3. Sharing personal information concerning a client with anyone outside of our agency;
4. Reading or removing any written records concerning a client without permission.

### **Here are some additional things to keep in mind:**

- To reflect client privacy, please refrain from initiating conversations about mutual friends or acquaintances.
- If a client you are working with has additional requests for service of any type, please redirect them to their assigned JFCS staff.
- Volunteers should refrain from dealing with clients' problems other than to listen to them. As a volunteer, you should be helping JFCS staff to help the client, rather than taking on a problem yourself.
- Keeping confidential what the client tells you is important. However, an exception can be made when there is an issue that presents harm to someone, including the client. If this is the case, you must pass the information on to your assigned staff. If a client shares some important information with you, you can encourage them to discuss the matter with his or her assigned staff.
- If you are in public and see a client, you should not approach or greet him/her unless they approach or greet you first. Our community is a small one and JFCS strives to ensure client confidentiality.



### **Communication**

Open communication is key to a positive volunteer experience for all involved. We are here to support you in your volunteer role, so please reach out to your assigned staff at any time to share how things are going (both successes and areas of improvement), ask questions, and notify us of any changes to your volunteer assignment. You can also contact the Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager at any time (contact info above). As a volunteer, we expect you to complete any volunteer check-in and/or evaluation forms that are sent to you regarding your volunteer role and experience with JFCS in a timely manner. Volunteers should notify the Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager of updates to their personal contact information and emergency contact information.

### **Concerns**

Clients and program participants sometimes discuss personal problems and bring complaints to a volunteer. Though complaints can be motivated by various circumstances and may or may not have merit, a complaint may be an indirect call for help. It is important that you discuss any client or program participant complaints with your assigned staff or the Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager to keep them in the loop, and they will determine if intervention is required. Concerns are taken seriously and will only be shared with those necessary to rectify the situation.

### **Injuries and Emergencies**

If you or a client experiences an injury while you are volunteering, please call your assigned staff as soon as possible to follow required incident reporting procedures. Do not assist clients or program participants if they fall. Call 911 and they can help.

*If the injury is of a serious nature and you need an ambulance, fire, or police services, call 911 immediately to obtain necessary medical or emergency support. Once you call 911, notify your assigned staff person and the Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager. If your assigned staff is not available, contact JFCS at 952-546-0616 and you will be forwarded to the next appropriate staff person.*

### **Conflicts of Interest**

This is defined as a situation in which a person is in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity. Volunteers should avoid activities that could be construed as a conflict of interest. It is important that you refrain from accepting loans or gifts of money or property from clients of any value. A small token of appreciation is okay, for example if you are visiting a client's home and they offer you something small to eat or drink and you are open to it. Additionally, volunteers must refrain from offering or agreeing to loans or gifts of money or property to the clients, unless it is through an organized agency program. Please refrain from offering professional, legal, medical, or financial advice to clients. Instead, advise him or her to work with JFCS to deal with the issue. You should also immediately report the information you receive to your assigned staff so they can best serve the client.

### **Mileage, Parking, and Expense Reimbursement**

Some volunteer roles are eligible for mileage and parking reimbursement, and if so, you will be notified. If your assigned staff approves reimbursement for you, your mileage and parking fees should be recorded on an official agency monthly expense record/travel log sheet. Please save parking receipts to attach to the form. If you do not receive reimbursement, you may claim your mileage and parking expenses as a deduction on your state and federal taxes. Quick Fix volunteers will be reimbursed by the client for the assigned materials purchased. Reach out with any questions.

### **Personal Issues**

At any given time, even our volunteers can have pressing personal issues. In your role as a JFCS volunteer, we ask that you not use a client as a sounding board for personal concerns.

### **Safety**

JFCS makes every effort to ensure that you will have a safe and pleasant volunteer experience. For your safety and that of our clients, program participants, staff or others around you, please refrain from volunteering if you are ill.



If at any time you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, it would be appropriate to remove yourself from the situation. In the unlikely event that you encounter such a situation, please report the experience to your assigned staff or the Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager as soon as possible.

If you feel threatened while performing volunteer work, please contact your assigned staff or the Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager as soon as possible. If he or she is unavailable, call JFCS at 952-546-0616, ask to be directed to an Intake Counselor and explain the situation.

### **Publicity Guidelines**

At JFCS, our intention is to honor your wishes regarding photos of you and your family. JFCS is proud to share our ongoing success stories with our volunteers, donors, clients and staff. Nothing captures these stories better than the wonderful smiles in our pictures. JFCS uses these photos to educate, inform and expand our audience.

We may use pictures in several ways, including printed newsletters or brochures, email newsletters, and social media such as Facebook and Instagram. If an image is used on Facebook or Instagram, it may be shared. In fact, our hope is that it will be shared so that more people - potential participants, staff, volunteers and donors - will see it. The picture may be viewed by people who are familiar with JFCS or friends of JFCS fans. The potential is great for many people to see our pictures. JFCS follows industry best practices for social media.

For clients and children:

- We must have a signed photo release
- We never print a child or client's full name by their picture, and don't "tag" them in photos

- For children we eliminate identifying information in photos, such as blurring out nametags and school names on t-shirts.

JFCS does not require a signed photo release for volunteers 18 and older. To increase our visibility and ability to connect with new followers, JFCS may use volunteers' full names to caption their photos.

If you have questions regarding these publicity guidelines, please contact JFCS Marketing and Communications Director Lori Leavitt at 952-542-4811 or [leavitt@jfcsmpls.org](mailto:leavitt@jfcsmpls.org).

### **Sexual Harassment**

JFCS is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment free from unlawful harassment in which our clients, volunteers and employees are treated with respect and dignity. Sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is defined as, 'unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact, or other verbal or physical harassment or communication of a sexual nature.'

Some examples of prohibited behavior include:

- Unwelcome comments, jokes, or gestures of a sexual nature
- Inappropriate or unwanted physical contact
- Displaying sexually suggestive materials
- Any behavior that demeans, humiliates, or intimidates based on gender or sexuality

### *Reporting and addressing concerns*

If you experience or witness sexual harassment, please report the conduct immediately to your assigned program staff. If that person is unavailable or you prefer to talk to someone else, please contact Dana Shapiro, Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager, at 952-417-2112 or [dshapiro@jfcsmpls.org](mailto:dshapiro@jfcsmpls.org) or Lucy Marshall, Director of Community Services at 952-542-4820 or [lmmarshall@jfcsmpls.org](mailto:lmmarshall@jfcsmpls.org) immediately, without fear of reprisal.

Complaints of harassment can be made in writing or verbally. Know that we take these things seriously and all reports will be handled promptly, as confidentially as possible, and without retaliation. We cannot guarantee complete confidentiality, because to conduct an effective investigation, some disclosure may be required to the alleged harasser and potential witnesses. Disclosures will be limited, on a "need-to-know" basis.

### *Consequences*

JFCS has a "zero tolerance" policy on sexual harassment. This means that sexual harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination from your volunteer role.



### **Social Media**

We encourage volunteers to post on social media about JFCS and your positive experience volunteering with us, to help us spread the word about JFCS to your networks. Please refrain from posting any photos or identifying features that could identify a JFCS client. Do not include a child's name or "tag" them in photos and eliminate identifying information in photos. By posting any content on any JFCS social media site, you grant JFCS the right

to reproduce, distribute, publish, or display the content, as well as the right to create derivative works from your content, edit or modify it for JFCS purposes.

### **Substance and Weapons Policy**

The use, possession, or transfer of illegal drugs by volunteers on agency premises or while volunteering is prohibited. Legally obtained drugs, including alcohol and prescriptions, may not be used to the extent that job performance is adversely affected, subject to applicable laws. JFCS prohibits possession of firearms, weapons, explosives or other dangerous, illegal, or unauthorized materials in the workplace or while working on JFCS business.



## Supervision

Your assigned staff will be your direct link to JFCS. He or she is your sounding board and supervisor and is here to provide guidance, feedback, and encouragement to help you succeed in your volunteer role. It is beneficial to keep in regular contact with this staff member to get the support you need, as well as to help us monitor how things are going with your volunteer experience. In addition to your assigned staff, feel free to reach out to the Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager for support at any time.

## Training and Support

As a volunteer, you will receive appropriate training to equip you with the skills and knowledge needed for your volunteer role. If you find you could benefit from some additional training or support at any time, please reach out to your assigned staff or the Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager.

## Weather Closures

In the case of inclement weather and the JFCS offices are closed, you will hear from your assigned staff if you have a volunteer shift. You can also check the JFCS website at [jfcsmpls.org](http://jfcsmpls.org) and closings will be posted. Trust your instinct. If you do not feel safe to drive, and you want to cancel your volunteer shift/assignment, be sure to communicate to any client and/or staff involved.

## Disciplinary Procedures

JFCS maintains the highest possible standard of conduct both in the workplace and community in order to achieve our mission. We know that our volunteers intend to be responsible to support the agency. However, violation of volunteer policies or procedures may result in disciplinary action or termination.

## Ending or Changing of Service

When your volunteer role has ended, we ask that you complete a written volunteer exit survey with us so we can learn about your experience. You can also choose to provide this information verbally if that's your preference.

JFCS reserves the right to terminate any volunteer when the volunteer fails to fulfill the duties of the position and/or there are questions about the safety or well-being of anyone involved. If you cannot fulfill your volunteer obligations, we expect that you will speak with your assigned staff or the Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager as soon as possible.

If your volunteer role or the match with your client is not a good fit, we may be able to explore other options at JFCS as we have a wealth of volunteer opportunities available. Whether you volunteer in one program or want to be involved in a variety of program opportunities, we are happy to help you customize a volunteer experience that is right for you and keep you informed of future opportunities as well.

***Thanks again for your willingness to volunteer with Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis! We hope you have a great experience with us, and we know that you will bring so much to the agency - our staff, our clients, and our program participants.***

**Questions? Contact Dana Shapiro, Community and Volunteer Engagement Manager at [dshapiro@jfcsmpls.org](mailto:dshapiro@jfcsmpls.org) or 952-417-2112.**

**Please complete the form acknowledging you read this document at: [jfcsmpls.org/volunteer-handbook-acknowledgement-form](http://jfcsmpls.org/volunteer-handbook-acknowledgement-form)**

