

**VOLUNTEER**

**HANDBOOK**

**Updated October 2024**

**OUR MISSION:**People helping people strengthen the Dunn County community by providing food, shelter, and support.

**OUR VISION:**Stepping Stones seeks to foster a community that prevents hunger, homelessness, and isolation throughout Dunn County.

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**Overview of Organization**

This volunteer manual is designed to give you a broad overview of our organization and to serve as a quick reference guide to our policies and procedures. Volunteers are a critical element in the effective delivery of Stepping Stones services and the achievement of Stepping Stone's mission. Thank you for choosing to help!

**Mission statement**

People helping people strengthen the Dunn County community by providing food, shelter and support.

* The **Food Pantry** provides food, personal care items, and resources for healthy living.
* The **Stepping Stones Shelter Program** provides emergency shelter, housing assistance, and referral services to prevent homelessness and facilitate self-sufficiency.
* The **Community Connections Program** connects volunteers to neighbors to provide needed supportive services, offers direct assistance, and connects people to other community resources.

**Vision**

Fostering a community that prevents hunger, homelessness, and isolation throughout Dunn County.

**Values**

* Justice and Sustainability
	+ All people have the right to nutritious food, adequate housing, and other needed support services.
	+ Sufficient resources exist in our community to provide supportive services and prevent hunger and homelessness.
	+ Stepping Stones advocates for the just and equitable sharing of resources.
	+ Stepping Stones is committed to the sustainable use of resources, including economic, environmental, and personal resources to assure their availability and abundance in the present and the future.
* Community
	+ Individuals reach their full potential and achieve balance and wellness through connections to community.
	+ Stepping Stones services provide bridges to community, to stability, and to self-sufficiency.
	+ Community is fostered by nurturing inclusivity and diversity.
* Compassionate Work and Service
	+ The effectiveness, talent, and commitment of volunteers and staff are critical to the success of Stepping Stones' mission.
	+ Clients, volunteers, and staff cooperate to create a caring, respectful, trusting atmosphere and to engage in work that is mutually rewarding.
	+ Work and service spaces that are pleasant, well maintained, and suited to the needs of the service will best facilitate Stepping Stones' mission.

Programs

Food Pantry Programs

* Project SAM (Share A Meal): Bags of food for school children to eat on the weekend.
* Senior Commodity Boxes: Monthly pre-packed boxes of food from the government for low-income seniors. (in collaboration with Community Connections)
* Food Rescue: Volunteers pick up donations of food from local grocery stores.
* Food and Fund Drives: Organized by local organizations, schools, churches, and businesses. We encourage groups to include a fund drive because it gives us more purchase power at the Feed My People food bank.
* Pop-Up Pantries: On the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month we do a food distribution at community centers in Sand Creek and Ridgeland. On the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month we distribute to the Colfax and Downsville areas. And on the 1st Tuesday of each month, we distribute in Rock Falls and Elk Mound.

Shelter Programs

* Cairn House: Provide immediate 24/7 shelter for 4-8 weeks to those experiencing homelessness
* Broadway Shelter: 3 apartments for homeless families/individuals to live in while looking for stable housing.
* Stout Road Shelter: The house is broken in to 2 apartments for homeless families/ individuals to live in while looking for stable housing.
* Client Case Management: Shelters, motel (in extreme situations), waiting list, and recent past clients.
* Pre-planning for Discharge Housing Needs: Arbor Place, Dunn County Jail
* Jail Classes: Classes are focused on learning how to be a successful adult, how to acquire and maintain stable housing, and how to create lasting relationships.

Community Connections Programs

* Referrals: Local resources given as needed by the client
* Homelessness Prevention: Work with clients to find and maintain permanent housing to prevent homelessness.
* Assistance: Works with volunteers and local agencies to help our low-income elderly, and physically disabled community members stay safely in their home.
* Volunteers: Community members, class requirements, court ordered community service, housing subsidy community service, internships, job experience, Job Center program participants, and small groups.
* Communications: Mailings of appeals and newsletters, church bulletin information.
* Energy Assistance: Works with clients to assist in covering energy bills
* Senior Commodity Boxes: Monthly pre-packed boxes of food from the government for low-income seniors. (in collaboration with Food Pantry)

**Stepping Stones Staff**

* Executive Director: Padraig Gallagher - p.gallagher@steppingstonesdc.org
* Assistant Director - Development & Public Relations:
* Community Connections Manager and Volunteer Coordinator:
* Food Pantry Manager: Angie Wolf - a.wolf@steppingstonesdc.org
* Food Pantry Assistant: Amanda Davis - a.davis@steppingstonesdc.org
* Shelter Manager: Heidi Hooten - h.hooten@steppingstonesdc.org
* Shelter Coordinator: Katlynn Pichler - k.pichler@steppingstonesdc.org
* Shelter Assistant: Rochelle Weber - r.weber@steppingstonesdc.org
* Program Assistant: Mai Nou Hang - m.hang@steppingstonesdc.org
* Warehouse Manager: Jon Oakland - j.oakland@steppingstonesdc.org
* Maintenance Manager: Henry Amberson - h.amberson@steppingstonesdc.org
* Shelter Case Manager: Brit Blankheim – b.blankheim@steppingstonesdc.org
* Shelter Shift Supervisor: Katie Jo Walker – k.walker@steppingstonesdc.org
* Volunteer Coordinator: Julie Bendel – j.bendel@steppingstonesdc.org

**Volunteer Requirements**

Stepping Stones Food Pantry relies on volunteers to be the helping hands for our programs that assist approximately 500 households each week. Our volunteers include individuals, families, senior citizens, religious organizations, corporate groups, military members, school groups, scout troops and many others who help us feed those in need.

Before volunteering, we ask that you attend a New Volunteer Orientation session lead by a staff member or board member. You will be given additional detailed instruction in the area you choose to work when you volunteer.

Scheduled Hours: If you are scheduled, please show up. If you're sick or need to cancel for any reason, please try to give us as much notice as possible so we can find a replacement.  After two occurrences of tardiness or absence, we may not be able to offer you future volunteer opportunities.

Poor Weather Conditions: If Menomonie schools are closed due to bad weather, the Food Pantry will be closed. If you are scheduled to volunteer in the food pantry, please note staff will not be present and volunteers are not expected to work their shift. The office may still be open and staff may be present depending on severity of weather. If you are scheduled to volunteer at Cairn House, please use your best discretion and call the shelter phone 715-231-1404 ext 203 to let us know whether you will be working your shift.

Dress Code: Volunteers' appearance and conduct reflect upon Stepping Stones. The dress code is casual but professional. Please consider your volunteer assignment and dress appropriately. Close-toed shoes must be worn at all times when working or serving with Stepping Stones.

Conduct: Clients, donors, other volunteers, and staff should be treated with respect, courtesy, and professionalism. Conduct which creates friction or detracts from our mission of service to the community will not be tolerated.  Conduct agreement attached.

Food: Volunteers who need food are eligible to shop in the pantry during pantry hours. If you are volunteering during those hours, please do your shopping before or after your shift.

* "Food/products obtained from Feed My People (FMP), including any food or products obtained through FMP Retail Rescue relationships, can only be distributed to Stepping Stones Food Pantry clients. No preferential treatment may be given for volunteers, staff or donors who are also clients."
* The above statement is in the annual contract between Stepping Stones and the Feed My People Food Bank. We follow it for ALL donations.

Computers and Cellphones: All computers at Stepping Stones are to be used for Stepping Stones business only. Keep personal cellphones on silent during volunteer hours. If a call is urgent and you need to use your phone, please do so in the break room.

No Smoking: Stepping Stones buildings and grounds (including the parking lot) are smoke- and vape-free.

Children must be 12 years of age or older to be in the warehouse. If volunteering, they must be accompanied by an adult. Those that are 16-18 may volunteer individually with parental consent.

In the event of a violation of these policies, we will want to discuss with you whether or not it is a good fit for you to continue volunteering.

***Mandatory Volunteer Documents***

All volunteers MUST read and sign required Volunteer documents

In order to maintain a harmonious environment, the Executive Director has the right to dismiss a volunteer at any time if it becomes necessary.

**Volunteer Opportunities**

Volunteers are the backbone of our programs and serve a vital role in our organization ensuring the success of our programs. The following are ongoing programs that are regularly staffed by volunteers.

Volunteer **Opportunities**

Food Pantry (see program specific documents for more details)

* Pantry Stockers - Stocking pantry shelves
* Pantry Greeters - Assisting clients as they shop in the pantry
* Intake - Using database to enter client data
* Cleaning - Light cleaning duties before and after pantry hours

Warehouse (see program specific documents for more details)

* Receiving & Stocking – Accepting, weighing, logging, and sorting donations and food deliveries. Food Rescue - Picking up donations from area grocery stores and Farmers Market using your own truck or van.
* Truck Driver-picking up donations from area grocery stores using our truck (no CDL required but will need a training).
* Cleaning - Light clean up duties during and after warehouse hours. Sweeping, mopping, vacuuming
* SAM Packing
* Grounds Maintenance
* Lawn Mowing
* Snow Shoveling

Homeless Shelter (see program specific documents for more details)

* Apartment cleaning - cleaning between tenants; preparing for next tenant
* Grounds Maintenance
* Lawn Mowing
* Snow Shoveling
* Overnight shifts
* Visiting with Cairn House guests
* Helping prepare weekend meals for Cairn House guests
* Picking up food from local churches

Community Connections (see program specific documents for more details)

* In-home client support service
* Yard work - lawn mowing, raking, snow shoveling
* Small home repairs
* Home Food Delivery - Deliver food boxes to home-bound pantry clients - once a month

Administrative Support (see program specific documents for more details)

* Reception
* Special events
* Bulk Mailing

Committees (see program specific documents for more details)

* Education and Advocacy
* Program Development and Evaluation
* Development (Fundraising and marketing)

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

Our fun filled events bring the community together to raise much needed funds. Some events are sponsored by groups or businesses with the proceeds benefiting SSDC programs. Volunteers can participate in event planning as part of a committee and have the chance to assist with promoting and/or running the event.

**Empty Bowls – Spring**

**The BEAT Concert – late Summer/early Fall**

**Give Me Shelter – Winter**

As you can see there are many ways to serve at Stepping Stones. Thank you for sharing your time, talents, and treasures.

**Volunteer Rights, Responsibilities & Principles**

As a volunteer you have the right:

• to work in a clean, healthy and safe environment

• to be given accurate and truthful information about the organization for which you are volunteering

• to be given a copy of Stepping Stones volunteer handbook and any other policy that affects your work

• to be provided with orientation to the organization

• to have your personal information kept confidential

• to be provided with sufficient training to do your job

**Equal Volunteering Opportunity**

Stepping Stones of Dunn County does not discriminate in volunteer opportunities to all persons, regardless of age, race, color, creed, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital status, military status, disability, or any other reason prohibited by law. All matters relating to volunteering are based upon one's ability to perform the job, as well as one's dedication to SSDC’s Mission and needs.

**Expense Reimbursement**

You must have the Executive Director's authorization prior to incurring an expense on behalf of SSDC. To be reimbursed for all authorized expenses, you must submit the original receipts.

**Feedback**

Your time is greatly appreciated and we encourage you to discuss any ideas or concerns you have with us. If at any time you would like to share your thoughts regarding your experience, do not hesitate to speak with the staff. Usually, there are members of the Board available at various times throughout the day/week. We encourage you to talk to them.

**Parking**

SSDC does not assume any liability for loss or damages your car may sustain while parked in the parking lot.

**Attendance**

We require that you respect our time, as we will respect yours, by being punctual. If you are running late or need to cancel, please call or text as far ahead of time as possible. Our phone number is 715-440-5780 (Volunteer Coordinator’s phone).

**Drugs & Alcohol**

SSDC is a substance-free environment; please respect this policy at all times. While volunteering, we ask that you please refrain from consuming alcohol or using other substances at SSDC Events, including fundraisers and outreach programs. You may be asked to leave the event should this policy be broken.

**Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

Language Assistance will be provided to those with LEP.  Non-English language signage is posted outside of outlet to inform this population of hours and days of operation as well as an emergency phone number.

**Accessibility**

Stepping Stones makes every effort to make its site accessible.   If a Stepping Stones client is not able to access the food pantry, it is acceptable for them to assign someone else as an authorized representative to be proxy for them.

**Data Collection and Reporting** helps identify demographics of population served and must be kept confidential.

* Food pantry applicants and participants may not be asked to provide information that is not required by The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) form without prior approval from the Wisconsin Department of Human Services.
* Participant cooperation (or refusal) must be voluntary.
* Applicants must be informed verbally and in writing that they are NOT REQUIRED to provide additional information in order to participate in Stepping Stones programming.
* Participants may “Self-Declare” by choosing multiple races.
* If an applicant/participant does not choose a race, the Stepping Stones Volunteer or Employee must inform them that a race will be chosen for the applicant based on the perception of the volunteer/employee, as TEFAP requires race be included on the form.

**Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure**

Staff members or volunteers must comply with the policies of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and must maintain in strict confidence all of the Personally Identifiable Information (PII) that belongs to individuals and households receiving assistance and have an ethical responsibility to protect that confidentiality. PII may include (but is not limited to) names of participants; information about their household compositions; dates of birth; addresses; and telephone numbers. Confidential information may be oral, printed or electronic.

**Conflict Resolution**

If a conflict arises, stay calm, explain the situation, and contact a staff member for additional assistance if needed.

**Right to File a Complaint:**

Any person who believes they or someone they know has been discriminated against based on federal protected classes has a right to file a complaint within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory action.  Complaints can be filed verbally or in writing by using the Rights and Grievance Procedure Form to our Executive Director, Padraig Gallagher.

**Stepping Stones – Workplace Safety, Discrimination and Harassment Policies**

**Personal Safety Practices**

1. Have one or two other people in the pantry during indicated hours the pantry gives out food. If alone, arrange the pick-up times to be when someone else will be with you in the pantry.
2. Never invite referrals or “walk-ins” to accompany you into the pantry. You do not want to be in an isolated place with an unknown person.
3. When speaking on the phone to those needing help, be cautious about telling them you are alone, or when you will be leaving the agency. Give no indication of your routine arrival or departure times, or information about your home address, phone number, etc.
4. Keep a cell phone handy and call the if you feel your safety is in jeopardy. Give the police your address that they may respond rapidly.
5. If you are the last person to leave the building, make sure all doors are locked.

**Facility Workplace Safety**

Workplace safety is a top priority at Stepping Stones. To promote a safe working environment, our policies need to be fully understood and followed. Violations of any of these policies may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

To promote a safe work environment, the following practices are prohibited:

* Personal use of cellphones within the warehouse and processing area
* Using earbuds to listen to music from any type of electronic device while working
* Mixing chemicals when cleaning
* Climbing on shelves, standing on rolling carts, or using carts as skateboards
* Standing or sitting on industrial scale

**The following are best practices that must be followed when volunteering at the Food Pantry:**

* Keep aisles and walkways clear
* Place items only in designated areas, away from doors and high traffic areas
* Clean up spills **immediately** and use the caution signs to indicate wet floors
* Use a ladder when retrieving items above eye level
* Alert others near you of your movements to avoid collisions or other accidents
* Learn and use proper lifting procedures with loading and unloading all vehicles
* Use cleaning products as directed by manufacturer, use proper protective gear
* Never store chemicals around food items

**Staff and volunteers will observe the basics of Safe Lifting practices**

* A healthy person with no physical restrictions on lifting will not pick up or move boxes weighing more than 45 pounds by themselves.
* Any person with physical or medical limitations will not exceed the limitations set by their provider under any circumstances

Volunteers are responsible to make staff aware of any physical limitations they might have and will be reassigned to tasks that they can safely complete.

**\*\*\*Any safety concerns, injuries, accidents, and other incidents need to be reported to the Executive Director or Pantry Manager immediately\*\*\***

**Food Safety**

For reasons of public safety, we must handle the food as any grocery store or restaurant would. Stepping Stones employees and volunteers are responsible to make sure that food safety rules are followed AT ALL TIMES. Specific food safety guidelines are posted throughout the warehouse and pantry.

**Non-Discrimination Policy**

Stepping Stones of Dunn County does not discriminate in employment matters or in providing its services to all persons, regardless of age, race, color, creed, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital status, military status, disability, or any other reason prohibited by law.

**Workplace Harassment**

Stepping Stones depends upon strong community support, which can only be gained by maintaining a positive public image. Personal conduct is expected to be maintained at the highest ethical standards at all times.

The agency will not tolerate any type of workplace harassment. All such allegations are taken seriously and will be investigated. Any suggestive, threatening, or demeaning remarks, either racial, religious, sexual, ethnic, or other type will be considered harassment. Harassment complaints should be lodged with the Executive Director or President of the Board. A prompt, professional, and confidential investigation will be conducted.

Allegations of sexual harassment will be handled the same as any other allegation of harassment in the workplace. Sexual comments, gestures, and/or advances are inappropriate in the workplace and at agency functions and will not be tolerated. Any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment will not be tolerated. Any volunteer or employee refusing to cooperate in such investigation or knowingly supplying false information will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Any volunteer or employee found to have engaged in harassment will also be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**Volunteer Drivers**

Volunteers are required to observe all traffic laws. If failure to comply results in fines or other penalties, these are the responsibility of the volunteer concerned and must be reported to the Executive Director. Smoking or pets are not permitted in the SSDC vehicle. Excluding an emergency, drivers other than SSDC staff or approved volunteers are not permitted to drive the SSDC vehicle. Volunteer drivers must supply a copy of their valid driver’s license first to be submitted to our insurance carrier.

**Fuel**

Each SSDC vehicle uses different fuel and it is expected that the fuel gauge will show that the vehicle is more than a quarter full at all times. In the event the fuel is running low, and the volunteer is asked to use their own card and the purchase will be reimbursed upon presentation of the receipt.

**Passengers**

Volunteer safety is of paramount importance to SSDC; therefore, providing transport for passengers not associated with the organization’s business is prohibited. Volunteers should also refuse to provide transport to persons associated with the organization’s business who are intoxicated, under the influence of a prohibited substance, or wanting transport to a location not identified in the volunteer’s work related itinerary. A volunteer has the right to refuse transport requests outside those stipulated above should they have concerns regarding personal safety.

**Work Travel**

Volunteers may be asked to ensure that the vehicle and safety equipment are in good working order prior to commencing road travel required as a part of their work duties. Volunteers must ensure the tires, including the spare tire and tire changing equipment, are serviceable and that oil, water and fuel levels are sufficient prior to travelling.

**Vehicle Traffic Incident**

A copy of the **Incident/Accident Checklist** (page 15) can be found in the vehicle’s glove box compartment. In the event of a traffic incident, please fill this out and give it to the Executive Director.

**Vehicle Defects**

Any vehicle with operational faults must be reported to the Executive Director to enable defects to be repaired.

**Damage or Loss of Vehicles**

In the event of an accident or loss of a vehicle, the driver will comply with all legal and insurance requirements. The driver should immediately obtain particulars of the other parties involved, notify law enforcement of the incident, and inform the Executive Director. The Executive Director will ensure that appropriate action is taken to enable the insurance claim to be processed or the vehicle to be repaired/replaced.

**Personal Vehicle**

When using your personal vehicle for SSDC’s donations pick up, please provide the Executive Director with a copy of your auto insurance. Pets are not allowed in the vehicle during food pick up or deliveries. There will be no reimbursement for any costs related to using a personal vehicle while volunteering.

**Rights and Grievance Procedure for Staff, Volunteers, and Participants**

All staff, volunteers, and participants have the right to file an appeal/grievance when there is a disagreement or dissatisfaction with the service delivery from our organization.

The following procedure is to be followed:

1. The grievance procedure should be expressed verbally to the Program Manager and they will respond within two business days.

2. If you feel the grievance was not appropriately addressed by the Program Manager it should be expressed verbally to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will respond within two business days.

3. If the verbal interchange does not resolve the problem, the grievance should be expressed in writing to the Executive Director who will refer it to the appropriate committee. The committee will respond in writing within five business days.

Executive Director

Stepping Stones of Dunn County

1602 Stout Road

Menomonie, WI 54751

715-235-2920

4. If the grievance remains unresolved, it will be put on the agenda for the next committee meeting or Board of Directors meeting. The Board of Directors will respond in writing within one business day after the meeting.

**Incident/Accident Checklist √**

**Complete and submit to the Executive Director**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Work status of injured person  | Circle one: Staff, Volunteer, Client, Guest  |
| Name of Injured Party  |  |
|  Address  |  |
|  Cell  |  |
| Incident Date and Time  |  |
| Obtain the other driver’s name (if applicable)  |  |
|  Address  |  |
|  Phone number  |  |
|  Insurance provider  |  |
|  Note their car make, model, year  |  |
|  License Plate #  |  |
|  Note any damages  |  |
| Location of Incident  |  |
| Nature of injury |  |
| Describe how the incident occurred  |  |
| Witness name #1  |  |
|  Phone  |  |
|  Address  |  |
|  Statement  |  |
| Witness name #2  |  |
|  Phone  |  |
|  Address  |  |
|  Statement  |  |
| Was first aid administered?  | YES or NO |
| Was 911 called?  | YES or NO |