

Volunteer Policy & Agreement

Adopted February 2024

Volunteers are an invaluable resource at The Center Project (“TCP”). As an all-volunteer organization, volunteers do literally everything to keep our space open and our programs and resources accessible to the community. Our volunteers contribute their time, knowledge, and experience to help make TCP and our whole community better, stronger, and safer. We want everyone who volunteers with us to feel connected and supported, and have an enjoyable and positive experience during their service with TCP.

Volunteering is a two-way partnership, from which both parties can benefit. By volunteering with TCP, volunteers can gain valuable experience, build their skills, meet new people, work through challenges, have fun, and support others in our community.

Purpose

In order for our volunteers to have a positive experience, we have created this document to outline the relationship, responsibilities, and agreements made between TCP and individual volunteers within our organization. This is to establish guidelines and expectations to ensure that everyone is on the same page, to prevent misunderstandings, and to protect all parties.

This document sets out the basic level of standards and procedures volunteers must understand to safely undertake their roles. Additional policies or expectations may exist for particular roles within the organization.

Volunteering with Youth Programming

In addition to our standard expectations and process for volunteers, those serving with youth will be required to complete additional screening to include interviews, applications, background checks, and screenings for child abuse and neglect. See our Child Abuse & Neglect Screening Policy for more information.

Application Process & Volunteer Orientation

All volunteers are required to complete an online Volunteer Application and attend our Volunteer Orientation prior to beginning their volunteerism. The Volunteer Orientation will review important information like Door Codes, Emergency Procedures, Opening & Closing the building, and a review of our groups, resources, and events.

Support & Supervision

We are committed to ensuring volunteers have a positive experience with us, and one important factor is clear communication, expectations, and connection. When interested in volunteering

with a particular program, we will do our best to make a direct connection with appropriate program coordinators.

Expenses

TCP cannot cover any expenses that arise during or as a result of someone's volunteerism with us.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by TCP's insurance while they are carrying out their role with us. This includes coverage for accidents to another person or their property, or personal injury (where the injury could have been reasonably prevented by TCP).

Health & Safety

We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of our volunteers and the individuals in our space. Health & Safety Procedures and important phone numbers can be found in the House Binder by the fridge in the kitchen.

Health and safety concerns and suggestions should be brought to the attention of the Board as soon as possible.

Ground Rules & Community Expectations

We know people come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences, and we feel that having agreed upon expectations can help create a safer space for everyone. These [ground rules and shared expectations](#) we have at TCP can be considered a baseline or starting point, and individual groups / events are encouraged to review and expand upon these for their own use. Volunteers are expected to follow these Community Expectations, and to help others be aware of them as well.

Raising & Resolving Concerns

The relationship between TCP and our volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any binding contract. TCP is committed to safe and respectful delivery of our programs and resources, in line with our values.

We encourage volunteers to resolve conflict while practicing respect, kindness, and understanding for others. When conflict is unresolvable, TCP will do its best to provide support for the parties involved, but we cannot offer formal mediation, conflict management, or counseling.

If someone has a grievance against TCP, one of its volunteers, a policy, or anything else, they may file a formal complaint with the TCP Board of Directors. Please see our Grievance Policy for more information.

Social Media

We understand that social media is an important way for volunteers to communicate. However, when using social media, volunteers must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Volunteers should not post in their capacity as a volunteer, unless this has been communicated in advance with the TCP Board.
- Volunteers can share that they are volunteers of TCP, but should clearly state: *“All opinions are my own and do not necessarily represent The Center Project’s positions, policies, or opinions.”*
- We encourage volunteers to consider their safety when using social media, being aware of their privacy settings, ensuring what they post is lawful and does not cause harm to themselves, other volunteers, or The Center Project as a whole.

Community Outreach

We recognize that our volunteers have a wide range of interests and involvements in the community outside of their work with TCP. We ask that when TCP volunteers be aware of their self-representation and to follow the following guidelines:

- Volunteers should not speak on behalf of TCP, unless this has been communicated in advance with the TCP Board.
- Volunteers can share that they are volunteers of TCP, but should make clear that their opinions are their own and do not represent TCP’s positions, policies, or opinions.

Lobbying & Political Activity

As a 501(c)3, we are *highly regulated* in our political activities. [According to the IRS](#), a 501(c)3 may engage in some minimal amount of lobbying, but it must be an insignificant part of what we do, and we must track all related activities and expenditures.

Lobbying is any attempt to influence legislation, which includes acts (1) “by local, state, and federal governing bodies regarding acts, bills, resolutions or similar item ... or (2) by the public in referendum, ballot initiative, constitutional amendment, or similar procedure. ... An organization will be regarded as attempting to influence legislation if it contacts, or urges the public to contact, members or employees of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing,

supporting, or opposing legislation, or if the organization advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation.”

As such, we ask any volunteer engaging in lobbying or political activity to be highly aware of their dual role as a TCP volunteer and report any appropriate expenses or activities to the Executive Board (exec@thecenterproject.org).

We may do educational outreach related to issues of public policy.

We are explicitly prevented from campaigning on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate running for office; at no time may a TCP volunteer, in their capacity as a volunteer, support or oppose any political candidate.

Confidentiality

All volunteers have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality for other volunteers and community members who attend programs or utilize services at TCP. This means volunteers should not disclose anything about a person without their consent that would allow others to identify them, including contact information, identifying attributes, or any other information that might result in a person’s identity or involvement being disclosed without explicit permission.

This does not include situations in which there is a responsibility to safeguard someone, including:

- Concern for the safety of a child,
- Concern for the safety of a vulnerable adult,
- Someone is threatening to harm themselves or others,
- There is the possibility of serious risk to a particular person or people, or to the general public.

Volunteers may have access to private information about fellow volunteers or community members. Volunteers should not share, copy, or in any way retain information they have access to.

Ending Volunteer Service

We welcome volunteers to serve with us for as long as they can, but we also understand that things change and people may need to end their volunteer service with us for a variety of reasons. We ask that volunteers please communicate with the others they volunteer with to allow for smooth transitions between projects and volunteers. It also gives us an opportunity to express our appreciation!

We are committed to conflict resolution and finding solutions that pull people in rather than push them away. However, there may also be times when we need to ask a volunteer to no longer

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serve with us. These might include breaches of confidentiality; disruptions to the safety & security of our space; or other violations of our [Ground Rules and Community Expectations](#).

Volunteer Agreement

Thank you for choosing to share your time, talents, and experience with The Center Project! We are excited to work with you.

In addition to the information laid out above, this Volunteer Agreement describes the arrangement between you and TCP - what you can expect from us during your volunteerism, and in turn what we expect from you. This is part of our commitment to do the best we can to provide you with a rewarding volunteer experience.

What you can expect from The Center Project:

- Volunteer Orientation - an introduction to our organization, and connections with other key volunteers related to your interests
- Support - clear communication, encouragement, and connection; responsiveness to questions and feedback
- Safety - access to House Manual, understanding of safety resources & protocols, feedback channels to address inter/personal safety issues and concerns
- Accessibility - accommodations on request for any accessibility needs
- Addressing Conflict - support in fairly resolving problems and difficulties arising during the course of your volunteerism, opportunity to be heard and discuss issues
- Centering Joy & Community - a commitment to creating space for joy, celebration, and positive GLB, queer, and trans energy; thoughtful, community-minded decision making
- Centering Marginalized Voices - intentional space for silenced and marginalized voices, thoughtfulness about missing perspectives, willingness to learn & do better
- Confidentiality - expectation that you and what you share will be kept in confidence by other volunteers and community members

What we expect from you as a volunteer:

- To help TCP work towards its Mission of providing a safe, affirming space to learn, grow, build community, and access support and resources
- To remember that you are a representative of The Center Project

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- To be mindful of the community we serve and treat fellow volunteers and community members with respect, understanding, and consideration
- To communicate with us any questions or concerns you may have, and to let us know if changes need to be made with your volunteerism
- To perform your volunteer role to the best of your ability
- To let us know if we can improve the support you are receiving
- To abide by our [Ground Rules and Community Expectations](#) in your volunteer service and time at TCP
- To follow TCP's procedures and standards, including health and safety and non-discrimination policies, in relation to other volunteers and community members
- To maintain the confidentiality of The Center Project and all of its volunteers and visitors
- To meet the commitments you have agreed to and to ask for help when you need it, and to give reasonable notice when this is not possible so other arrangements can be made
- To submit to a background check, if working with youth or otherwise required for your particular volunteer role
- To state clearly when sharing your opinions publicly or through social media that those opinions are your own, and to only speak on behalf of The Center Project if explicitly asked to do so by a Board Member.

This agreement is binding in honor only, and is not intended to be a legally binding contract between an individual and The Center Project. This contract may be canceled at any time at the discretion of either party. Volunteers are not employees of The Center Project and this agreement in no way constitutes an employment relationship. TCP does not provide any compensation, benefits, unemployment, or workers' compensation.

Volunteer Agreement Statement

I have read and understand TCP's Mission, Vision, and Values, [Ground Rules & Community Expectations](#), and the above Volunteer Agreements. (____)

I understand that I am not an employee of TCP. (____)

I understand that if I violate any of the above agreements, I may be asked to volunteer in a different capacity, or may be asked to no longer volunteer with TCP. (____)

I release and hold harmless The Center Project from any and all claims, costs, loss, or injury to me or to my property which may arise from my participation as a volunteer. (____)

Name

Date