



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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Our Mission

To provide nutritious meals and foster social connection across the Greater Lehigh Valley.

Our Program

In the fall of 2016, the Board of Directors from Meals on Wheels of Lehigh County and Meals on Wheels of Northampton County began to explore the possibility of a merger. After two years of collaboration and three distinct phases of planning, Meals on Wheels of the Greater Lehigh Valley (MOWGLV) officially began on Sept. 1, 2018.

Financial support is provided by Northampton and Lehigh County Area Agencies on Aging and Human Service Departments, the United Way, client fees, grants, fundraising events and private donations from the community. Our agency is a member of the Meals on Wheels Association of America and a partner of the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley.

While many Meals on Wheels recipients are elderly, the program is also available to younger adults with disabilities or chronic illnesses. Meals are offered on either a long-term basis or short term to help with recuperation, to aid in a crisis or to provide a caregiver with respite care.

Referrals for service come from multiple sources: a friend, family member, hospital, or even a potential recipient. Basic information is taken and each applicant is visited by a MOWGLV Case Manager who determines need, appropriate diet, meal options and financial status. Meals are paid for by the recipients, their designee or a funding source. A sliding fee scale based on total income and expenses is used to determine what a client pays. While the reason why someone is receiving our service may not be readily apparent, each client's eligibility has been determined by a MOWGLV Case Manager.

Volunteer Requirements

As a volunteer, you are essential to helping us carry out the services our clients rely on. You are the face of our agency and play a key role in upholding the reputation we have established over many years.

Your interactions with clients and others you encounter while volunteering reflect on MOWGLV. We ask that you are courteous and pleasant and treat clients and their families with kindness and respect.

In order to provide the highest level of service, volunteers need to:

- Complete a one-time application and annual abuse waiver.
- Complete a background check through Sterling Volunteers with renewal every 5 years.
- Verify current driver's license and valid auto insurance if driving on our behalf.
- Attend an orientation and/or watch the MOWGLV video.
- Observe on a route if volunteering to deliver meals.
- Review and confirm receipt of this handbook.
- Review our Shift Instructions if volunteering to deliver meals.
- Meet our age requirement of 18+ to volunteer solo or be accompanied by a parent/guardian who has completed our application process if under 18.
- Ensure anyone joining you to volunteer has completed our application process.
- Provide services or perform tasks only as outlined in your volunteer duties.
- Be physically able to manage coolers/bags/boxes, navigate stairs and other delivery conditions.
- Use proper care handling MOWGLV equipment and supplies and notify our office if anything is broken or lost.

Code of Conduct

Volunteers are the lifeline of our organization and represent us in the community. To protect both volunteers and clients, we have a clear code of conduct. We do not permit, condone or tolerate illegal or unethical behavior that may undermine the integrity of our organization.

Performance

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner, free of behaviors such as physical, sexual or verbal abuse. We expect volunteers to treat clients with consideration, respect and dignity. You are to carry out assigned duties only; no extra-curricular interaction with clients should be occurring without express authorization from our office.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are expected to maintain strict confidentiality regarding all client information. This information should not be shared with anyone other than MOWGLV staff and any questions or concerns should be directed to our office. In accordance with client privacy policies, staff may not be able to share specific information with you.

Conflict of Interest

Volunteers cannot take advantage of clients for personal or financial gain and are prohibited from receiving gifts, tips or other monetary payments. Volunteers should not offer medical, legal or financial advice to clients or solicit clients or fellow volunteers on behalf of other agencies, organizations or businesses.

Judgments

Volunteers should not judge the living conditions of clients. If there is a situation that is a cause for concern, report it to our office immediately. Staff will take the appropriate action when client health and safety is at risk.

Beliefs

Volunteers are expected to respect the political and religious beliefs of clients and to not impose any of their own opinions on clients.

Attendance and Absenteeism

Please alert the Volunteer Services Department of any scheduled absences as far in advance as possible. You can cancel upcoming assignments in MOWScheduler or by calling or emailing our office directly.

In the event of an unscheduled absence due to illness or emergency, please alert us immediately by calling 610-691-1030. If you are feeling unwell and will have direct client contact, you must cancel your shift. Be sure to identify yourself as a volunteer when calling and specify which location you volunteer for.

Volunteers who fail to notify us of their unavailability more than twice will be moved from regular to substitute status. If absenteeism continues, your volunteer position will be re-evaluated.

Service at the Discretion of MOWGLV

We accept the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of MOWGLV. Violations of policy and/or procedure will be addressed and verbal and/or written warnings may be issued prior to removing a volunteer's assignment. Volunteers agree that we may decide to discontinue the volunteer's relationship with us or make changes in the nature of the volunteer assignment at any time.

Providing Information

While carrying out your volunteer duties, people may approach you with questions about our agency and the services we offer. If you are unsure of an answer to a question, refer them to a member of our staff. We provide volunteers with business cards listing contact information for our departments; please share with anyone inquiring about our program.

Additional Support

Our expectation is that volunteers carry out their duties as assigned. However, we realize some clients may ask for help with other tasks. If these requests are simple, for example retrieving mail or taking out a trash can, it is up to you if you are willing to assist. It is not required and you can refuse by reminding the client that you are there simply to deliver meals. If the client is insistent or if the request is for more substantial support such as cleaning or yard work, please report to our office so we can follow up with them.

Insurance and Liability

MOWGLV has liability insurance that covers a volunteer during their interaction with a client or a client's property during meal or grocery deliveries only. Volunteers are protected by liability insurance for personal injury to MOWGLV clients or damage to property of MOWGLV clients arising from their volunteer duties. Damage arising from the use of an automobile or injury to the volunteer is excluded from this insurance.

A volunteer who receives a parking or traffic citation while using their personal vehicle on MOWGLV business is responsible for all fines, court costs, etc.

Mileage Reimbursement

Volunteers use their own vehicles for deliveries and may submit mileage for routes driven. Mileage is calculated starting and ending from the pickup location and will be reimbursed by MOWGLV at a rate determined by the IRS (currently \$.14 per mile). Please submit your mileage form within 90 days of the time you initially logged the mileage.

At your request, we will give you a complete report of your mileage if you wish to deduct it on your tax form. You can choose reimbursement or tax deduction but not both.

Safety

Our goal is to provide a safe environment for volunteers. All clients are visited by a MOWGLV Case Manager prior to starting on our service. The Case Manager assesses both the client and their living situation to minimize or avoid any issues that could impact volunteers. Clients must also sign off on the following agreement:

If you should ever encounter a situation that feels unsafe, always err on the side of caution and do not continue. Report any concerns or issues immediately to our office.

Client Pet Policy

MOWGLV requires clients who have pets to make sure they are restrained or confined during meal delivery times. Volunteers have the right to refuse to deliver if the client is in violation of this policy. If a volunteer believes that their safety would be jeopardized by delivering the meal/groceries, they should return to their car and immediately call our office. We ask that volunteers refrain from approaching a client's pets or giving them treats. As always, if there is a concern about a particular situation, please call our office.

Dress Code

Volunteers represent MOWGLV while onsite and out delivering and are encouraged to dress comfortably yet appropriately. Volunteers are strongly discouraged from wearing flip flops or open-toe or open-heel shoes due to the uneven sidewalks, steps and ground they may encounter at our pickup locations and while delivering.

Inclement Weather

If MOWGLV cancels deliveries due to inclement weather, we will notify scheduled volunteers by sending an automated phone call from 855-644-0501. You may also check our Facebook page or WFMZ.com for a list of cancelations and closings. Meals are canceled when conditions make it too hazardous for volunteers to safely deliver. If you are uncertain about whether we will be open, please call the office at 610-691-1030 to confirm

cancelation prior to venturing out in unsafe driving conditions. We provide shelf stable meals and emergency frozen meals to all clients so they have food on hand in event of cancelation.

Reporting Emergency Situations

As a Meals on Wheels volunteer, you serve as the agency's eyes and ears while interacting with our clients. If you feel that a client is unsafe for any reason, please call our office immediately. If a client is in imminent danger or needs immediate medical attention (e.g., has fallen, has sustained an injury) call 9-1-1. Do not leave until help has arrived. Please do not touch or move a client to prevent any harm or further injury and notify our office so we are aware of the situation. Direct these calls to our Community Care Department; they handle all client-related issues.

Important Reminders

- Wear your MOWGLV name badge (provide a selfie or other photo to the Volunteer Services Department and they will make a photo ID badge for you).
- Dress comfortably including shoes appropriate for walking.
- Use a Meals on Wheels sign when you deliver (located in your route binder).
- Keep hot bags plugged in while delivering.
- Keep cold carriers closed between stops.
- Keep food in carriers until arriving at each client's home. This is necessary to prevent food spoilage. Hot food begins to spoil if temperature is below 140 degrees, milk begins to spoil when temperature exceeds 45 degrees.
- Handle food trays carefully to avoid tilting and mingling of liquids or puncturing of cellophane.
- Make contact with the client - verbal and/or visual - unless otherwise instructed.
- NEVER give the client additional food or medication or physically assist them out of a chair or bed.
- Be professional and friendly when delivering. Don't exceed more than a few minutes per stop, but don't rush through your exchange with each client - it may be the only interaction they have with someone all day!