



Volunteer Policy

Approved by the Board of Directors: September 12, 2018 Reviewed and reapproved by the Board of Directors: May 2021

Review Date: September 2024

Volunteers are a vital component of the structure of The Table Community Food Centre. Without the help of our dedicated team of volunteers it would not be possible to serve our community. Volunteers from all areas of the community are welcome and encouraged to participate in activities at the CFC.

Under the supervision of the Program Coordinators, the volunteers carry out many of the day to day tasks required to run The Table Community Food Centre effectively and efficiently. Volunteer opportunities include:

- Food preparation and serving at community meals
- Stocking, intake and shopping assistants in the Good Food Bank
- Assisting with food skills programs and community kitchens
- Assisting with the After School Program
- Community gardening
- Participating in advocacy and social justice initiatives
- Fundraising events and outreach to donors.
- Special events
- Driving
- Cleaning and Maintenance

The Table also has a volunteer Board of Directors, however there is a separate policy specifically for the board.

Volunteers are invited to bring all of their experience and skills to contribute to The Table Community Food Centre. They are also encouraged to step outside their “comfort zone” and learn new skills while helping us achieve our goals.

Our Mutual Commitments

The relationship between The Table and our volunteers is based on the following mutual commitments.

The Table Commits to ensuring that volunteers are:

- Given adequate tools and training to do the tasks assigned to volunteers;
- Provided with a safe work environment
- Treated with respect
- Recognized for their contribution
- Ensured that their personal information is held in confidence
- Given opportunities to provide feedback to The Table.

Volunteers Commit to:

- Contributing their skills and knowledge to work at The Table Community Food Centre;
- Treating participants, other volunteers, and staff with respect;
- Respecting all policies and procedures of The Table Community Food Centre including the following policies: Health and Safety; Violence and Harassment; Confidentiality; and Conflict of Interest;
- Being reliable and meeting commitments made.

Health and Safety

The Table Community Food Centre recognizes the importance of, and is committed to, the health and safety of its volunteers. An ongoing objective of The Table Community Food Centre is to make every effort to provide a safe and healthy work environment. **This is a shared responsibility.** Everyone volunteering at The Table Community Food Centre must be dedicated to the continuing objective of eliminating or reducing the risk of occupational illness or injury. The Table Community Food Centre takes reasonable precautions and measures towards ensuring compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/), as well as achieving and maintaining our objective.

Each volunteer is responsible for:

- (a) Protecting their own health and safety by complying with the law and the safe work practices and procedures established by The Table Community Food Centre;
- (b) Reporting to their supervising Program Coordinator or the Executive Director, all obstacles or unsafe practices which may exist in the workplace as soon as they become aware of them. Upon receipt of any concern or complaint, every attempt is made to reach a successful resolution.

Equal Opportunity and Diversity

All volunteers at The Table Community Food Centre:

- Work to ensure that people are treated equally and with respect;
- Work to ensure that people feel safe and welcome;

- Share The Table’s commitment to social justice and ending systemic discrimination based on race, class, gender, ability, religion, sexual orientation, or cultural background;
- Report incidents of ill-treatment or injustice that occur at The Table that negatively impact a person or a group of people to a staff person.

Recruitment

Our recruitment goals include:

- Having enough volunteers that the CFC can deal with a surge in volume of participants or unexpected resignations or absences of volunteers
- Having a diverse and competent team of volunteers

Prioritizing opportunities for program participants and other low-income community members.

Volunteers are recruited to work at The Table Community Food Centre through various means. These include; notices in the media; school, club, service groups, and church newsletters and bulletins; word of mouth; and inclusion of family members; website; and regular information/orientation sessions at the community food centre. Special emphasis is put on recruiting volunteers from among our program participants. All potential volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Application Form. *See Appendix #1 Volunteer Application Form.*

In most cases the Volunteer Coordinator does the initial intake of volunteers and identifies the program with the best fit. Program coordinators will communicate vacancies in volunteer positions as soon as possible with the Volunteer coordinator. Program coordinators may also directly recruit volunteers for their programs, however, the volunteer must still complete all the required paperwork with the Volunteer Coordinator. Program coordinators must keep the best interests of the entire organization and consider the needs of other programs whenever they directly recruit a volunteer for a program.

Acceptable age of volunteers

Volunteers must be 16 years of age or older to fill a volunteer position at The Table Community Food Centre. In some circumstances The Table Community Food Centre will allow younger volunteers (if a parent is accompanying the youth or the position is specifically designed for students).

Orientation and Training

Before committing to a volunteer position at The Table Community Food Centre, volunteers must participate in an information/orientation session which includes a tour of the facility, an explanation of the various volunteer positions, The Table Community Food Centre’s structure, and general operations.

Volunteers are provided with proper training by the Program Coordinator of the specific program they are joining for the position they will be performing at The Table Community Food Centre. This includes clear descriptions of duties, procedures, expectations for conduct and all processes and procedures at the community food centre.

The Table seeks out opportunities to assist volunteers in widening their skill set and experience.

The Table offers ongoing volunteer development workshops on relevant topics such as food safety, non-violent communication, social justice, and trauma-informed care.

Police Checks and Security

Volunteers for the After School Program and any other program where volunteers interact directly with children when the parents are not present are required to present a valid Vulnerable Sector Police Check. Volunteers with a criminal record or who are included on the national sex offenders database are not eligible to volunteer in the After School Program.

In order to safeguard our participants and volunteers, all programs are structured in ways to prevent volunteers from being alone with participants.

To safeguard the material assets of The Table, volunteers must not be left alone at the Centre without the presence of a staff person or allowed to handle money. Exceptions can be made for some special events where volunteers are needed to handle money, though these volunteers must be well known, and have a history with The Table (e.g. Board members). Appropriate measures are employed to account for all funds handled at special events.

Supervision

Once volunteers are placed in a specific program, Program Coordinators assign duties to each volunteer and supervise his/her work while performing their duties at The Table Community Food Centre.

Feedback and Evaluation

Program Coordinators provide ongoing constructive feedback to volunteers in a supportive and encouraging manner. Where serious corrective actions are needed a formal meeting with the Program Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator may be scheduled to address the issues.

The Table administers a Volunteer Survey semi-annually.

Volunteers are asked to review new policies, procedures and other information to provide input and/or to keep them up to date with the expectations of The Table Community Food Centre.

Volunteer Recognition and Appreciation

The Table Community Food Centre recognizes the participation of volunteers through various means which include: daily thanks for working at The Table Community Food Centre, volunteer appreciation events, certificates of appreciation, and public thanks posted in the local media.

Confidentiality

It is important that all volunteers respect the privacy and confidentiality of each other and of participants. This means, for example:

- Not disclosing information read in documents or files
- Not disclosing information heard in conversation with participants, volunteers or staff.
- Not disclosing information about an incident that involved participants, volunteers, or staff.

All volunteers are required to read and sign The Table Community Food Centre's confidentiality agreement. *See Appendix #3 Confidentiality Agreement.* Volunteers are also required to sign the Volunteer Code of Conduct Acceptance form. *See Appendix #4*

Access to the services at The Table Community Food Centre

Volunteers are invited and welcomed to use the services at The Table Community Food Centre, in the same way that other community members access services; this may require registering with specific programs before accessing them.

All volunteers are permitted to access the Good Food Bank twice per month; volunteers do not need to live in the catchment area to use this service. Volunteers are requested to schedule their visit before or after your shift at The Table Community Food Centre.

All volunteers are permitted to take part in the community meals offered before or after their shift. If a volunteer wants a break or use another service, they must not leave their volunteer shift unattended without the staff supervisor's permission.

Call staff for support when needed

Volunteers must call a staff person if there is an incident involving community members or in case of an emergency. Volunteers are not to deal with incidents on their own.

Attendance

In order to ensure a smooth operation, we ask that volunteers let us know about absences, late arrivals, and early departures. Volunteers are expected to show up on time for their shifts.

Volunteers are asked to inform the Volunteer Coordinator or the Coordinator of the program in which they volunteer if they are going to miss a shift, and to avoid coming into The Table Community Food Centre if they are ill. Volunteers are asked to give as much notice as possible if they are going to be away for any given time.

Use of Drugs and Alcohol

Volunteers may not attend their shift while showing signs of inebriation/intoxication. Volunteers are expected to be in a sound, coherent condition and perform their duties in a, competent and respectful manner. Volunteers must not consume un-prescribed drugs or alcohol during their shift at The Table Community Food Centre.

Volunteers whose drug or alcohol use puts the wellbeing or safety of staff, volunteers or community members at risk will be asked to take a leave of absence from volunteering.

Access to Restricted Areas

Volunteers on shift have access to certain areas and supplies that other community members do not. When volunteers are not on shift, they should not go in these areas.

Use of TheTable Community Food Centre Equipment

Volunteers must not use The Table Community Food Centre equipment (photocopier, fax, phones, and computers) during their shift unless it is an emergency, or part of their job description. Volunteers are required to ask a staff member for permission before using the equipment.

Dress Code

All volunteers are expected to dress appropriately while working at the community food centre. Casual, washable attire is suggested. Due to the nature of the work of The Table Community Food Centre clothing may be soiled or damaged during the course of the work shift. Volunteers may wish to wear aprons or other protective gear. Closed toed shoes are required for all volunteers. Volunteers must wear hair nets, bandanas, or ball caps when working directly with food.

Grievance, Disciplinary, and Conflict Resolution Procedures

Grievances

Volunteers who are unhappy or dissatisfied with a project, a fellow volunteer, or a staff member are encouraged to communicate that dissatisfaction with a staff member. If they are uncomfortable approaching the staff member with whom they have a conflict, they are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Coordinator. If the conflict is with the Volunteer Coordinator and a volunteer is uncomfortable with a direct approach, they may contact either the Program Coordinator for the program for which they volunteer or the Executive Director.

Disciplinary Actions

When a staff member has concerns about a volunteer's performance on a project, including violations of the code of conduct, they should communicate those concerns to the volunteer with consideration to privacy and confidentiality whenever possible. If communication with the volunteer does not correct the

situation, the staff member should communicate with the Volunteer Coordinator who will determine appropriate next steps. These concerns will be documented and discussed directly with the volunteer in the presence of a third party if deemed necessary. However, if staff observes directly or are told by multiple individuals that a volunteer's actions on a project are threatening to their own or other individuals' safety or welfare, staff has the authority to ask the volunteer to leave immediately and/or escort them from the property. When concerns are documented, additional language must be attached about how the conflict was resolved and how it can be avoided in the future.

The Table's Workplace Harassment and Violence Policy applies to volunteers and must be followed in any case of workplace violence or harassment.

Factors which may be considered in determining the appropriate disciplinary action include:

- The seriousness of the conduct
- The volunteer's record
- The volunteers ability to correct the conduct
- Precedent – action taken with respect to similar conduct by other volunteers
- Other surrounding circumstances

Volunteering at The Table is at the mutual consent of The Table Community and the volunteer; either party may terminate the arrangement at any time.