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Volunteer Program Policies and Procedures

I. Introduction

1. Mission, Vision, Theory of Change

The Literacy Council of Frederick County (LCFC) provides Frederick County adults with pathways to essential literacy skills. Our vision is: literacy lifts lives. Success for the individuals and families we seek to serve rests on a collective community approach that shapes a full path to a thriving life.

2. Volunteer/ Staff Relationships

Volunteers are critical to the success of LCFC and are essential to the organization's day-to-day operations. Volunteers and employees are considered partners in implementing the mission and programs of the organization, each with complementary roles. Designated employees can be expected to provide orientation, training, supervision, and feedback for volunteers.

A volunteer is anyone who, without compensation or the expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the organization.

3. Equal Opportunity Policy

LCFC maintains a strong policy of equal volunteer opportunity. We recruit, accept, train, promote, and dismiss volunteers based on their ability to complete the tasks associated with the position, without regard to race, ethnicity, culture, religion, age, gender, gender identity, national origin, veteran status, socioeconomic status, or disability.

4. Inclusive Workplace

Inclusive work environments are made up of individuals of diversity, different races, sex, ethnicities, gender identities, ages, sexual orientation, and ability levels. Inclusion promotes collaboration, creativity, and sharing of knowledge amongst staff, volunteers, and interns in a real-world environment.

II. Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to this organization, its staff, and its clients. Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated fairly, the right to effective supervision, the right to be engaged and fully participate, and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the goals and procedures of the organization.

III. Volunteer Program Procedures/Development

1. Learn About the Literacy Council and Volunteer Opportunities

The Literacy Council invites members of the community to learn more about its programs, services, and volunteer opportunities. Prior to being assigned or appointed to a position, all volunteers are expected to attend a Volunteer Information Session (VIS) as an introduction to the LCFC and volunteer opportunities, and registration is managed by submitting a Volunteer Inquiry & Registration Form from LCFC's website.

2. Onboarding and Screening

Following participation in a VIS, prospective volunteers will be requested to complete a Volunteer Application form if they are interested in continuing. Individuals submitting applications to serve as volunteers should be treated confidentially and respectfully. LCFC's onboarding process will offer the organization's staff and volunteer leaders the opportunity to learn more about prospective volunteers and give individuals the opportunity to learn more about the organization. Volunteers will also be given the opportunity to ask any questions they may have about different volunteer opportunities. Background checks are part of the routine onboarding and screening process for volunteer positions within LCFC.

3. Orientation and Training

During Volunteer Information Sessions, volunteers will receive a general introduction to the nature and purpose of the organization and an overview of volunteer opportunities within LCFC. Volunteers who want to become tutors will complete a Tutor Training Workshop. Volunteers who want to teach community classes may also attend a Tutor Training Workshop, depending on their previous teaching experience, and/or an additional class instructor orientation. Volunteers involved in other programs and activities for LCFC will receive instructions and/or an orientation to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer responsibilities.

4. Supervision and Support

Every volunteer will have a clearly identified staff member or volunteer coordinator who will be available for consultation, support, and direction. The designated representative will be responsible for the management and guidance of the work of the volunteer.

5. Position Description

A position description will be specifically defined for each volunteer or group of volunteers. Each volunteer will receive a copy of their position description during the onboarding, orientation, or training process.

6. Feedback and Evaluation

The work of volunteers shall be evaluated by program participants and/or staff or coordinators on a regular basis. Evaluations will include an examination of the volunteer's performance of position responsibilities and a discussion of any suggestions the volunteer may have concerning the position or volunteer program.

7. Recognition and Opportunities for Advancement

Volunteer service is vital to LCFC and the organization endeavors to recognize volunteers, both informally and formally, in ways that our volunteers appreciate and value. Exemplary volunteers will be made aware of other volunteer opportunities in which they may be interested in participating and will be given the opportunity to continue their involvement as appropriate. LCFC plans periodic volunteer appreciation events to highlight and recognize the contribution volunteers make to LCFC's mission and impact.

8. Volunteer Record Keeping System

A system of records will be maintained for each volunteer with the organization. Volunteer records are confidential. The records will include the Volunteer Application information, Volunteer Tutor/Class Instructor Agreement, Indemnification and Release Agreement, background check information, emergency information, training and professional development attended, dates of services, position held, duties performed, volunteer hours reports, and any evaluation of work. Volunteers are responsible for providing updated information to the LCFC office.

9. Scheduled Volunteer Time/Recording of Volunteer Hours

Volunteer attendance is critical for the successful operation of LCFC's programs. Volunteers are responsible for submitting their volunteer time each month.

- Volunteer tutors and class instructors must record their volunteer hours for the previous month by the 5th day of each month on the LACES software platform. Reminders to add hours will be sent to the volunteers' emails on a monthly basis.
- Volunteers performing non-instructional services, including working on committees, office support, event support, community outreach, and leadership positions will receive a separate monthly email reminder to submit hours by the same deadline.

IV. Volunteer Conduct

1. Standard of Conduct

Volunteers are expected to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all students, volunteers, staff, and the LCFC. The lasting impression that volunteers make on those they serve and work with reflects directly on all staff, volunteers, and board members of LCFC. All words and deeds should help build our volunteer program and its reputation for quality. The Literacy Council reserves the right to select volunteers who we believe have the background consistent with the mission and values of LCFC. All volunteers are subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.

2. Safeguarding Literacy Council Students, Families, and Volunteers

- The LCFC works with adults ages 18 years and above. To safeguard LCFC students, their families, and volunteers, all tutors and class instructors must meet their adult students **only in public places**. In addition, tutors and class instructors must **never accept or provide transportation** for students or family members.
- Although friendly communication with the children of adults participating in the LCFC's programs can be appropriate, it is essential that volunteers' actions do not in any way offend the participants or violate, or have the appearance of being in violation of, current laws associated with child abuse. At no time during a tutoring or class may a volunteer be alone with children. Volunteers are prohibited from relating to children of adults who participate in LCFC's programs outside of their parents' involvement in LCFC programs.

3. Absenteeism/Attendance

Volunteers should do their best to be present and on time for each event or activity for which they are scheduled. If a volunteer knows that they will be late or absent, it is requested that they notify their student(s), and contact the person in charge of the event, or their coordinator, at least 24 hours beforehand or as soon as possible so that alternate plans can be made.

4. Service Requirement

Volunteer tutors are asked to commit to a minimum of one year of service. We request that if the volunteer cannot make that commitment, they tell the LCFC so that an appropriate short-term assignment can be made.

5. Change of Placement

Volunteers should contact their coordinator if they are requesting a change in placement, feel that their student is ready for a different program, or to request another student. If the volunteer wishes to volunteer in a totally different capacity, they should contact their coordinator or the LCFC Program Manager to discuss additional orientation or training

needs. Assignment to a new volunteer position may require additional screening, background checks, training, and application acceptance.

6. Leave of Absence/Discontinuation of Volunteer Service

Tutors and class instructors should notify their coordinator or LCFC Program Manager, as well as their student(s), prior to any extended absence or discontinuation of volunteer service.

If a volunteer wishes to leave their volunteer service for any reason, they should contact their volunteer coordinator or member of the staff so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Volunteers have the right to terminate their volunteer service for any reason. LCFC reserves the same right.

7. Smoking/Alcohol/Drugs

The LCFC office is a smoke-free facility. When participating in LCFC programs and activities, volunteers are prohibited from purchasing, transferring, using, or possessing illicit drugs, alcohol, or prescription drugs in any way that is illegal. Implementing this policy provides a drug and alcohol-free workplace in order to ensure a safe, healthy, and productive environment for all volunteers and employees. Exceptions to this policy may include special events, such as a fundraiser or gala, where alcohol is served to attendees. If caught or suspected of breaking this policy, disciplinary actions up to and including termination will result.

8. Harassment Policy

Volunteering should be an enjoyable experience. Harassment is not only illegal, but it also creates uncomfortable conditions and unpleasant experiences for everyone involved. Any volunteer who feels he or she is the subject of harassment should speak to his/her staff contact or supervisor in an attempt to reach a solution.

9. Dress Code and Personal Belongings

When volunteers are working on behalf of LCFC, each individual serves as a representative of the organization. Volunteers should be sure that they are dressed appropriately for the business setting. In the office, clothes should be clean and free of rips or tears. Tank tops, short shorts, mini-skirts, flip flops, or clothing that is revealing should not be worn. If a name badge has been provided by LCFC for specific locations (such as a school), it should always be displayed when volunteering.

10. Confidentiality

As a volunteer at LCFC, individual tutors may have access to students' confidential information (such as information regarding medical treatment or diagnosis, financial information or other transactions, information regarding homes or income of clients, and/or information about convictions or allegations of arrests or abuse). Volunteers are required to maintain their students' confidentiality and right to privacy.

11. Media Conduct/Social Media Conduct

Volunteers should not represent themselves as spokespersons or representatives of the organization under any circumstances without prior approval. Only the Board President, Executive Director, or their designee shall serve as spokespersons for the organization. Volunteers should not post to social media on behalf of the organization. Volunteers should not take pictures of clientele being served without written consent of the client and the organization.

12. Conflict of Interest

It is the policy of LCFC to avoid potential and actual conflicts of interest in all our efforts and the LCFC abides by a board-approved conflict of interest policy. All members of LCFC's Board of Directors and Officers are required to complete and sign a conflict-of-interest statement at their initial orientation and annually thereafter.

LCFC is judged, in large part, by the individual and collective performance of its volunteers. LCFC must recognize the importance of a volunteer's duty to LCFC and to its members and supporters, to act in a manner that merits public trust and confidence.

Each volunteer must act in all matters in a manner that will safeguard the reputation and integrity of LCFC and will preserve and strengthen public confidence in LCFC activities. Likewise, volunteers must refrain from engaging in any transaction in which personal interests conflict, potentially conflict, or appear to conflict with those of LCFC.

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when a volunteer is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for themselves or for a relative as a result of LCFC's business dealings. For the purposes of this policy, a relative is a person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the volunteer is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

The Literacy Council reserves the right to select volunteers, including tutors, who we believe have the background consistent with the mission and values of the Literacy Council of Frederick County. All volunteers are subject to the approval of the board of directors.

Participation in any activity prohibited by this Policy can result in the termination of volunteer service. Some conflict of interest situations are easily identifiable, whereas others are more subtle. Some of the more common situations pertaining to volunteers rise to the potential conflicts set out below. This list is illustrative only and should not be regarded as all-inclusive:

- *Accepting Payment or Gifts:* No volunteer shall accept payment of any kind (including gifts, cash, discounts, concessions, services, or other similar item or benefits) for services rendered as part of his or her volunteer service. This includes payment for speaking engagements or for participation in workshops or similar activities.

- *Improper Influence:* A volunteer, or close relative, should not, when acting on his or her own behalf or when acting on behalf of another person, business, or organization, attempt to influence LCFC's position on any issue, matter, or transaction, nor participate in any discussions pertaining to a related organization.
- *Inside Information:* Inside information should not be used either for the purposes of gaining advantage for one's self, a close relative, or another organization or for any other purpose not specifically approved by LCFC.
- *Competing with LCFC:* No volunteer shall prevent or hinder LCFC from lawfully competing with others or divert business or personnel from LCFC.
- *Political Activities:* Volunteers are encouraged to take an active interest and to participate in the political and governmental process. However, except for registered lobbyists and others authorized to act on behalf of LCFC, volunteers participating do so as individuals and not as representatives of LCFC. To avoid any inference of support or sponsorship by LCFC, a volunteer must never represent that his or her political donation, endorsement, or other political activity was made or engaged in with the approval, or on behalf, of LCFC. Likewise, volunteers must not engage in political activities during their volunteer service on behalf of LCFC.
- *Making of Statements:* No volunteer shall use LCFC stationery or any title of LCFC or refer to LCFC or misidentify him or herself as an employee thereof in connection with any matter as to which he or she is not authorized as a representative of LCFC and to express an opinion on its behalf.

13. Partisanship

While working on behalf of LCFC, volunteers must never present partisan information (supporting or endorsing political parties or candidates for office), in accordance with our organization's 501(c)(3) status. Exhibiting partisan behavior when working on behalf of LCFC is a serious offense and may jeopardize our nonprofit status.

14. Proselytizing

LCFC's program participants, staff, and volunteers hold a variety of political, social, religious, and personal beliefs. Volunteers must be respectful of the views and opinions held by others with whom they come in contact while volunteering with the organization. Unless instructed to do so as part of the organization's mission and program, volunteers must refrain from advocating or proselytizing for specific political, social, and/or religious beliefs in these situations.

15. Reimbursement of Expenses

In certain situations, volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of actual out of pocket expenses. Such expenses must be pre-approved by the volunteer's supervisor, Program Manager, or the Executive Director.

16. Use of Material

All material produced by and provided by LCFC is intellectual property of LCFC and may not be distributed outside of my appointed volunteer engagement.

17. Use of Literacy Council of Frederick County Property

- *Telephones:* Telephones are for business purposes. Personal phone calls should be kept to a minimum and should not interfere with volunteer service. Personal long distance calls should not be made.
- *Computer Usage:* LCFC provides computers, email, and internet access to assist volunteers in performing their duties. Computers, email, and internet access should be used only for business and related purposes. Personal business should not be conducted during volunteer time. LCFC provides computers for tutors and class instructors to use in teaching their students.
- *Copier:* LCFC provides a copier that may be used by staff, tutors, and class instructors for LCFC business and copying of teaching materials. It should not be used for personal copying.
- *Teaching Materials and Equipment:* LCFC provides a library of materials for use by our tutors and class instructors. These materials should be used only by LCFC volunteers for teaching their students.

18. Return of Property

Volunteers are responsible for LCFC property, which includes all materials, files, keys, passwords, and any other written or electronic information issued to volunteers or in volunteers' possession or control. All LCFC property must be returned on or before a volunteer's last day of active service. LCFC may take all actions deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property. Teaching materials should be returned promptly when the tutor or class instructor is finished using them, even if they are still tutoring the student, so the materials can be used by others.

19. Safety and Liability

- **Safety**

Although the organization does its best to provide safe conditions for our volunteers, the organization counts on volunteers to be the best protector of their own personal safety. Volunteers should always be aware of where they are and what they are doing. Volunteers should pay particular attention to safety instructions and proper equipment use. Volunteers should voice their safety concerns and report any injuries to the person in charge as soon as possible.

- **Emergency Closings**

It is the policy of LCFC that the office will be closed for inclement weather when Frederick County Public Schools and Frederick County government offices are closed. In some instances, if the staff determines that driving is safe, the office may be open when the schools are closed. Volunteers should call before traveling to the office to verify that it is open.

- **Legal Liability**

Volunteers are concerned about their personal liability arising from their service for the organization. When a volunteer acts as a representative of the organization, acting on the organization's behalf and with its authority and within the scope of the volunteer's duties, the organization may be held vicariously liable for the actions of the volunteer. However, liability is based upon the personal acts of a person so the volunteer may also be liable for his or her actions.

Indemnification and Release Agreement for Authorized Volunteers

All volunteers are required to sign a waiver and release of liability before serving the organization. By signing the waiver, volunteers agree to assume the risk of any accident or injury to person or property which they may sustain in connection with their participation with the LCFC. In addition, volunteers agree to release and discharge LCFC and any of its directors, officers, employees, partners, affiliates, and successors from any and all liability or responsibility for any such accident or injury.

Insurance Coverage

LCFC carries commercial general liability insurance for volunteers and staff, while they serve as agents of LCFC. Volunteers must be working under the supervision and control of the LCFC to be covered.

Volunteers **may not** accept from, or provide transportation to, students, students' families, or other volunteers during their LCFC duties. If they do so, it is at their own risk, and a volunteer's personal automobile insurance policy is primary in the event of an accident. LCFC's Board of Directors is covered by Directors and Officers Liability insurance. Volunteers are encouraged to discuss their personal insurance program with their insurance agent to determine what coverages are available for claims arising from their volunteer activities.

- **Certificate of Ability**

Any potential volunteer who indicates that they are under the care of a physician for any physical or psychological ailment that might impede their ability to work may be asked to present a certificate from the physician as to their ability to satisfactorily and safely perform their duties. Any volunteer who, after accepting an assignment with the organization, enters a course of treatment that might adversely

impact upon the performance of their volunteer duties should consult with the Volunteer Coordinator.

20. Grievance Procedure

Volunteers and staff are expected to act professionally and in accordance with their position descriptions. At our organization, professional behavior means an employee or volunteer is responsible, respectful, diligent, courteous, and works with competence and maturity. It also means that an employee or volunteer refrains from referencing non-work-related or inappropriate topics. Should a volunteer have a grievance concerning their work environment, they should report it promptly to the volunteer coordinator, Program Manager, or the Executive Director. Every effort will be made to achieve speedy and effective resolution, and all complaints will be treated confidentially. Confidentiality may not be guaranteed in some circumstances where legal rights may have been violated.

21. Reporting Misconduct/Whistleblower Protection

Any LCFC staff, member of the board of directors, or volunteer with information about known or suspected improprieties or misuse of the organization's resources or other ethical problems is encouraged to report their concerns to the Executive Director, who is the person designated as the Ethics representative, who will then investigate the issue. In the event that the allegations involve the Executive Director, staff and volunteers should report problems to the Board President.

The person reporting may choose to do so anonymously via mail or through other means of communication.

All efforts will be made to protect the confidentiality of those who report improprieties and choose to do so anonymously. However, in certain situations, legal requirements make it impossible to keep the individual's identity confidential.

In accordance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, no retaliatory organizational action will be taken against those who report truthful information, even if the person incorrectly believes that a violation has occurred.

Whistleblower Policy & Procedure on Confidential Reporting of Impropriety or Misuse of Organization's Resources, Adopted by the Board of Directors, Feb. 2020

Sample Whistleblower Form

The Literacy Council of Frederick County would like to thank you in advance for filling out this form. Please request a copy of the Whistleblower Policy before filling out this form to review procedures including submission information and your protections.

Section 1: Background Information:

1. This submission is: New A Supplemental Submission
 - a. If this submission is a supplemental submission, please provide information regarding the first submission. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
2. Your Name: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
3. Your Email: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
4. Your Phone Number: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Section 2: Alleged Violation

1. Name of Person committing violation: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
2. Email of Person: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
3. Phone Number of Person: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
4. Describe the Alleged Violation. State all pertinent facts. Attach a detailed explanation including all supporting information or supplemental documentation (if documentation exists, or describe where the documentation can be found). [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
5. Describe how you learned about or obtained this information. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
6. What is your current relationship with the alleged violator? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
7. Do you still maintain relationship with the alleged violator? Yes No
 - a. If yes, please describe the relationship with the violator. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
8. Is anyone else aware of this? Yes No
 - a. If yes, please describe who is aware of this alleged violation and when you made them aware. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - b. Please provide contact information for the additional person(s) that is/are aware. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
9. Is there anything else you would like us to know? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Sources:

- Maryland Nonprofits, Standards of Excellence Resources
- McCurley, Steve. "Volunteer Management Policies." Downers Grove, IL: Heritage Arts Publishing, 1990.
- People's Community Health Center Volunteer Program Policies and Procedures
- The Greenway Guardians Volunteer Manual
- National Wildlife Federation Volunteer Policies
- Inclusive Internship Program: A How-to Guide for Employers

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