



Volunteer Handbook

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1 Welcome!

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Armenian Volunteer Network (AMVN). This handbook is designed to introduce you to AMVN and to provide a basic overview of the practices and procedures which provide all of us – employees and volunteers – with guidance and direction.

As the organization grows and changes, there may be a need to modify the practices, procedures, and other information described in this handbook. If you have any questions or need any clarification of the information contained in this handbook, please contact your Program Director or Volunteer Coordinator.

2 A Message from our Executive Director

Dear Volunteer,

On behalf of our Board of Directors and our team of staff and volunteers, I want to formally welcome you to Armenian Volunteer Network!

AMVN was created by a group of teachers and educators in the US and Armenia who want to expand the educational opportunities available to students in Armenia while promoting ties between the people of Armenia and the rest of the world.

Our mission relies on dedicated, energized, and committed volunteers like yourself who believe in making the world better by giving of themselves. As a volunteer, I am sure you will find that your life is enriched as you work to enrich the lives of others. Volunteering is a two-way street of giving.

I want to personally thank you for joining our organization and welcome you to our team. There are grand adventures and discoveries waiting out there. Enjoy!

Yours sincerely,

Seroj Terian, Executive Director

3 About Armenian Volunteer Network

3.1 Our Mission and our Work

Mission Statement

Our goal is to promote the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and learning between professionals and students in Armenia and professionals and students in other countries.

We do this by recruiting, training, and placing volunteers in Armenian organizations, universities, and institutions where they can share and exchange knowledge.

Our Work

We work in both public and private institutions in Armenia including:

- Primary schools
- Secondary schools
- High schools
- Colleges
- Universities

Our volunteers teach a variety of subjects including:

- English
- Armenian
- German
- French
- Russian
- English for Specific Purposes (medical, law, business, tourism, etc.)
- SAT Math Prep
- Information Technology (IT)
- Business Management
- Art
- Dance and Fitness
- And many more exciting subjects!

3.2 Our Volunteers

Our volunteers come from all over the world; from many countries and nationalities. They range widely in age, background, and experience, but they each share a desire to help promote education in Armenia.

Volunteers are the heart of AMVN. Our program volunteers and board members are priceless.

3.3 Benefits of volunteering

As an AMVN volunteer, you will have the opportunity to use and enhance your personal and professional skills and gain valuable experience that will help you in the future. We strive to provide our volunteers with a positive work environment, necessary training, supervision, evaluation, and

recognition. In return, we expect you to honor your commitments to the organization, respect other staff members and volunteers, and perform your assigned duties to the best of your abilities.

3.4 Non-Discrimination Policy

AMVN does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, sexual orientation, or marital status in any of its activities or operations.

4 Definition of a Volunteer

You are considered a volunteer if you, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement for volunteer related expenses, perform a service at the direction of and on behalf of the organization. This includes participating in program activities or serving on the Board of Directors.

4.1 Volunteer Expenses

In general, every AMVN volunteer is responsible for covering all costs associated with their volunteer position. These costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Travel costs
- Housing expenses
- Food and living expenses
- Insurance
- Transportation
- Medical care and prescriptions

AMVN continually seeks funding, grants, donations, and sponsors to sustain our work. When funding is available, AMVN may help individual volunteers with certain expenses. Volunteers may be able to receive some reimbursement for travel expenses, housing, and living expenses associated with their volunteer stay in Armenia. Needs are assessed on a case-by-case basis and are wholly dependent on available funding. AMVN makes no promise to be able to reimburse volunteers for any expense.

4.2 Employees as Volunteers

If you are already an employee of AMVN, you may volunteer within any AMVN program. Under no circumstances are employees expected to volunteer their time nor are they ever expected to volunteer for duties they normally are paid to do. AMVN employees are not required to fill out the formal volunteer application or have background and reference checks completed, as these elements were already completed as part of the hiring process. They are expected to follow the same service guidelines in place for all of our volunteers.

4.3 Family Members of Staff as Volunteers

Family members of staff may volunteer with the organization. When family members are enrolled as volunteers, they will not be placed under the direct supervision of family members who are employees.

4.4 Minors as Volunteers

AMVN typically requires all volunteers to be at least 18 years old.

Volunteers under the age of 18 who wish to participate in an ongoing volunteer opportunity must have written permission of a parent or guardian before they may begin service. The volunteer tasks assigned to a minor shall be performed in a non-hazardous environment and shall comply with all appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

4.5 Group Volunteers

Groups formed of relatives, friends, schools, churches, or like-minded individuals may choose to apply to volunteer with AMVN.

Groups that are interested in volunteering with AMVN should contact the appropriate AMVN Program Director or Volunteer Coordinator to discuss possibilities.

Youth under 18 may participate in group volunteering activities with the permission and supervision of their leaders. Group leaders assume responsibility for obtaining any necessary parent/guardian permission.

5 Classification of Volunteers

5.1 Junior Volunteers

Junior volunteers are typically college students and new graduates. Junior volunteers need to be at least 18 years old and have completed high school.

We work to understand what subjects excite junior volunteers and find them positions where they can share their passion and knowledge while gaining valuable experience.

5.2 Professional volunteers

Professional volunteers have college degrees and at least 1 year of work experience in their field of study. We work with professional volunteers to find the best matching institution in Armenia for them to share their knowledge.

Professional volunteers provide a volunteer service using their license, registration, or certification as required by the profession.

5.3 Occasional Volunteers

People who serve as volunteers only once or occasionally in an event situation are considered special event or occasional volunteers. Examples of this include when someone paints a wall, helps out at golf tournament, or spends an afternoon redesigning window displays at the Thrift Store.

5.4 Volunteering vs. Interning

As opposed to most volunteer opportunities, internships are primarily educational experiences with an emphasis on learning academic or career-related skills. Interns will be directly supervised by licensed or

otherwise accountable professionals. Interns may receive academic credit for their experiences if they arrange this with their school ahead of time.

6 Recruitment and Selection Procedures

6.1 Volunteer Opportunity Descriptions

As a volunteer, you will be given an opportunity description outlining the specific responsibilities of your role. It is your responsibility to read about your position, gain an understanding of the requirements, and seek any necessary clarification from your supervisor. Completing the Volunteer Agreement Form demonstrates that you are aware of the duties your position entails and agree to perform them to the best of your abilities.

6.2 Recruitment

AMVN uses a variety of different methods to recruit volunteers. We recruit volunteers through our website, through other internet volunteering sites and social media platforms, in print publications, and by word of mouth. We also encourage you to let your friends and family know about our volunteering opportunities.

6.3 Applications

As a volunteer, you will be required to complete our Volunteer Application form. Specific programs may also require supplemental forms.

6.4 Interviews

Most volunteer positions require an interview with an AMVN staff member. Interviews help volunteers clarify the responsibilities of the opportunity and help AMVN staff decide if the prospective volunteer is a good fit. If you are participating as a volunteer in a one-time event, then an interview before the event may not be necessary.

6.5 References

AMVN requires volunteers serving in Armenia to provide three non-family references. These references will be checked prior to accepting the individual as a volunteer.

6.6 Background/Criminal Records Checks

Volunteers serving in Armenia are required to undergo a background/criminal record check prior to beginning service. AMVN covers the cost of all background and criminal record checks for volunteers.

6.7 Volunteer Agreement Form

To document that you have read, understood, and agreed to follow the AMVN volunteer practices and procedures and feel comfortable with the responsibilities of your specific volunteer position, we require you to fill out a Volunteer Agreement Form when beginning service.

7 Aspects of Volunteer Service

7.1 Program Orientation & Training

As a new volunteer, AMVN will provide you with orientation and the necessary training required for your specific volunteer position.

7.2 Armenian Language Instruction

AMVN believes that all of our volunteers should have the chance to learn Armenian. For this reason, we offer volunteers free Armenian classes. We will tell you more about this exciting opportunity during volunteer training.

7.3 Supervision

As a volunteer, you will have a clearly identified supervisor who will directly oversee your role within the program. This supervisor will be available to you for consultation and assistance. One-time volunteers will also be informed of their supervisor in case questions or problems arise. The Coordinator of Volunteer Services is also a point of contact throughout the application and orientation process and to support organization volunteers throughout their service.

7.4 Record Maintenance & Volunteer Time Reports

Keeping track of the time given by our volunteers is very important to us. Some volunteer positions are more independent and require volunteers to keep track of their own hours which they must then report back to their supervisor.

7.5 Corrective Action

In appropriate situations, corrective action may be taken following an incident or evaluation. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, re-assignment of a volunteer to a new position, suspension of the volunteer, or dismissal from volunteer service.

7.6 Concerns & Grievances

Decisions involving corrective action of a volunteer will be reviewed for appropriateness by the Program Director, Human Resources Director and/or the Coordinator of Volunteer Services. If corrective action is taken, the volunteer shall be informed of the procedures for expressing his/her concern or grievance. A volunteer has the opportunity to provide a written request to air his/her concerns to the Human Resources Director or the Coordinator of Volunteer Services

7.7 Evaluation

If you are a volunteer with ongoing responsibilities, you may be given an annual evaluation in accordance with Council on Accreditation standards. Occasional or "casual" volunteers will receive evaluations only upon request of the volunteer.

7.8 Recognition

As a volunteer, you are an essential part of our program operations. Therefore, we believe it is very important to recognize the time and effort that you put into your service. Recognition opportunities will occur at the organization level, as well as the program level.

8 Participation Guidelines

8.1 Safety

AMVN is committed to creating and maintaining safe and positive environment for staff and volunteers as well as persons and families served. Each program will provide volunteers with information on facility safety plans and safety protocols related to the assigned volunteer position. Certain practices are in place to ensure positive and safe volunteering experiences at AMVN.

8.2 Drug Free Policy

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is not allowed in AMVN program sites. Additionally, volunteers may not be impaired by any substance while serving. Such action may result in your immediate dismissal from the volunteer position.

8.3 Non-Smoking Policy

Smoking by our employees, volunteers, clients, or vendors in any interior offices or spaces of any building occupied by AMVN is not allowed. There is also no smoking permitted within 20 feet of any entryway, vent, or doorway to interior buildings.

8.4 Dress Code

As a volunteer, you are responsible for presenting a positive image to clients and to the community as a representative of AMVN. You should dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of your duties.

8.5 Property Policy

As a volunteer at AMVN, you will respect the property of AMVN and the personal property of other volunteers and staff. Each program will also coordinate annual training for volunteers if they might reasonably be expected to have exposure to blood borne pathogens while providing their volunteer service. AMVN shall make available the hepatitis B vaccine and vaccination series to volunteers who have occupational exposure, and post-exposure evaluation and follow-up to volunteers who have had an exposure incident. Any injury to the volunteer while fulfilling the duties of their position description must be reported to the supervisor immediately. A worker's compensation claim may need to be filed.

8.6 Liability and Insurance

In May of 1997, the US Congress approved legislation that shields volunteers for nonprofit organizations from liability lawsuits. HR911 limits the occasions when volunteers, as well as directors, officers, and trustees, may be sued in connection with their actions on behalf of a nonprofit. While the legislation removes a volunteer (but not the nonprofit) from liability if an individual commits negligent acts or

omissions while acting within the scope of his or her responsibility, it does not protect the person if such acts were caused by willful or criminal misconduct or gross negligence.

8.7 Confidentiality Policy

AMVN recognizes confidentiality as a living principle based on the sanctity and dignity of the human person. Therefore, the organization will respect the privacy of personal information of those it serves or employs. You are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of all information to which you are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves staff members, volunteers, clients, or other people or involves overall program or organization business. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination or other corrective action.

8.8 Harassment Policy

AMVN is committed to a work environment that is professional and harassment-free for all employees and volunteers. Harassment includes, without limitations, verbal, physical, visual, and innuendo. It also includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact and other verbal or physical conduct, or visual forms of harassment of sexual nature when submission to such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment or is used as the basis for unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment for employees and volunteers. Volunteers should report any issues to their supervisor.

8.9 Personal Involvement with Clients

If your volunteer position involves working directly with clients, it is important to maintain boundaries with them and to keep your relationship professional, not personal.

8.10 Mandatory Reporting

While volunteering for AMVN you have the legal obligation to report:

- Any known or suspected child abuse, neglect or any other behavior placing the health and welfare of children in jeopardy. 22 M.R.S.A. §§ 4011-A and 4012
- Any known or suspected adult abuse, neglect or exploitation. 22 M.R.S.A. § 3477.

Per Organization policy, volunteers are trained in reporting requirements and associated procedures. It is recommended that volunteers immediately consult with a supervisor when presented with a situation that may warrant a child or adult protective report.

9 Ending Volunteer Service

9.1 Resignation & Leave of Absence

Your volunteer position may conclude at the end of a particular project, event, or set time period, but you are also free to end your volunteer service with AMVN at any time. Because volunteers are so important to the programs and organization, however, we request that you provide advance notice of your departure and a reason for your decision.

9.2 Termination

You may be terminated from your position as a volunteer for a variety of reasons. Some of these include: gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of organization equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of clients or coworkers, failure to abide by organization policies and procedures, failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

9.3 Exit Surveys

When you leave your position, you will be given an opportunity to fill out an exit survey detailing why you are ending your service. The exit survey is also a great place to give us any further comments about your experience and to provide any potential ideas for improvements. Once again, we truly appreciate your willingness to volunteer with AMVN! For questions or more information about this handbook, please contact the Coordinator of Volunteer Services.