

JVC Policy on Supporting Volunteer Service on Shabbat and Yom Tov Holidays¹ (collectively referred to as “Shabbat”)

Proposed to Board of Directors: January 18, 2018

Jewish Volunteer Connection engages volunteers to meet vital community needs and live with purpose through meaningful service. In developing a policy guideline regarding volunteer service on Shabbat, we recognize and celebrate the depth of Jewish history, tradition and values that guide our work as well as the diversity of Jewish identity and ritual practice in the Baltimore Jewish Community.

Shabbat holds a central and foundational role in the Jewish community. JVC honors the sacred tradition of Shabbat while striving to empower volunteers to engage in acts of *hesed*² that fit within their personal Jewish practice. Because Shabbat is a holy day in Judaism, JVC is closed for all business operations on Shabbat. JVC will only support volunteer service that occurs on Shabbat within certain boundaries and guidelines. These guidelines include:

VolunTeams

JVC supports VolunTeam leaders in multiple ways. For VolunTeam leaders who want to plan their projects on Shabbat, JVC staff can support them by:

- Setting up the connection with the nonprofit service site and troubleshooting periodic issues that may arise with the relationship. The VolunTeam will be managed by the leader and JVC staff will not be directly involved in setting program dates or in the ongoing operations of a VolunTeam that meets on Shabbat. Per JVC practice, staff members are not generally available to troubleshoot issues that may happen while a group is at a service site, including issues that may arise on Shabbat.
- Referring individual volunteers who express a relevant interest. For volunteers who do not specifically indicate a preference for volunteering on Shabbat, a VolunTeam that meets on Shabbat should not be offered initially in a list of referrals.
- Providing relevant, innovative, and experiential Jewish learning to celebrate the separate and sacred nature of Shabbat. VolunTeam leaders will be encouraged to use these resources with their VolunTeams and training will be provided as requested for VolunTeam leaders.
- Share resources and tools that are made available to all VolunTeam leaders.

There are certain restrictions on supporting VolunTeams that meet on Shabbat, which are as follows:

- JVC will not publicly market the project in advance of the volunteer opportunity. This includes posting on JVC’s social media, JVC’s website, and JVC’s community-wide emails.
- VolunTeam leaders will be asked not to hashtag or reference JVC on social media on Shabbat.

¹ Yom Tov Holidays are Jewish holidays during which activities related to work are prohibited. They include: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first two days of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah at the end of Sukkot, the first two and last two days of Passover, and Shavuot.

² *Hesed* are acts of lovingkindness, often meaning acts of volunteer service.

Synagogue-Based Programming

JVC will follow the guidelines, restrictions, and practices of any synagogue that seeks JVC's partnership for volunteer service on Shabbat. If a synagogue asks JVC to market Shabbat programming with a volunteer component, JVC can provide marketing support. Per organizational practice, JVC's staff will not generally provide staffing support to programs run internally at a synagogue or other Jewish organization.

Volunteer Requests by Nonprofit Partners

When a nonprofit organization requests JVC's assistance in meeting a volunteer need on Shabbat, JVC staff can make individual connections between the organization and likely partner groups or individuals. JVC will not advertise the need in any public way and will not guarantee any responsiveness to the volunteer need.

Individual Volunteer Matchmaking Requests

When an individual requests JVC's volunteer matching services and identifies Friday night or Saturday as their preferred time to volunteer, JVC staff can make specific suggestions, including VolunTeams that are known to meet on Shabbat.

JVC Staff Time on Shabbat

JVC staff will never be asked to violate their own personal practice regarding work and volunteering on Shabbat and will not generally represent JVC in any official capacity on Shabbat. Staff members may make individual choices that are consistent with their personal practice.

Repair the World

Through JVC's programmatic partnership with Repair the World, the Repair the World Associates at JVC are primarily bound by the policies of Repair the World in programmatic decision making.