



Jewish Volunteer Connection

# JEWISH VOLUNTEER CONNECTION MANUAL



**Welcome to Jewish Volunteer Connection's (JVC) volunteer manual!** We created this guide to help prepare you for your upcoming volunteer assignment by providing important information, as well as key Dos and Don'ts for your project. Without help from volunteers, our community service partners would not be able to do the important work they do.

**Thank you for your passion and commitment!**

## About JVC

JVC is the hands-on volunteer branch of The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore. Like a match-maker, we develop relationships within both the Jewish and general community, identifying vital community needs and connecting volunteers with opportunities to make a difference.

We connect volunteers with organizations throughout Greater Baltimore (nonprofits, schools and service agencies) based on their interests, skills and the needs of the organizations. Recognizing a fundamental gap between organizations that need consistent commitments from volunteers and most volunteers' difficulty in making a long-term commitment, we developed innovative strategies to connect volunteers to the on-going needs of the community while making volunteering accessible, easy and flexible for the volunteer.

Our goal is for people to be inspired by each volunteer experience and to be motivated to build on their service over time.

**Mission:** Jewish Volunteer Connection engages volunteers to meet vital community needs and live with purpose through meaningful service.

**Vision:** Strong, connected communities supported through purposeful and committed volunteering.

### **This volunteer experience is just the first step!**

We sincerely hope you have a meaningful volunteer experience that leaves you wanting to do more! If that is the case, please contact JVC to find ways to incorporate service into your everyday life.

**E-mail us:**

[JVCBaltimore@associated.org](mailto:JVCBaltimore@associated.org)

**"Like" us:**

[Facebook.com/jvcbaltimore](https://www.facebook.com/jvcbaltimore)

[Instagram.com/jvcbaltimore](https://www.instagram.com/jvcbaltimore)

**Call us:**

410-843-7490

**Jewish Volunteer Connection  
5708 Park Heights Ave  
Baltimore, MD 21215**



# 10 Qualities of a Great Volunteer

## **Energetic**

The number one thing you can bring to the table is energy! When you are enthusiastic about a cause, your energy will be contagious. You will not only feel fantastic, but you will find that your positive spirit can motivate others to act on behalf of the cause as well.

## **Willing to Learn**

Go into each volunteer opportunity with a willingness to learn about new people, unfamiliar issues and circumstances, and to truly listen to those around you. Be open and be willing to leave your assumptions at the door. If you listen, you are guaranteed to learn something new.

## **Flexible**

Organizations recruit volunteers for roles of all kinds, and new needs pop up constantly. Your willingness to jump in and help with any tasks that may arise will open doors to new experiences and allow you to make a difference in a variety of ways. Remember, while JVC aims to plan out most details and keep you informed, there is only so much we can control. Be flexible and you will have a great experience!

## **Reliable and Committed**

If you make a commitment to volunteer, make sure you can follow through! These organizations count on your commitment. Of course, as with all things in life, situations can happen that prevent you from volunteering. Let us know when things come up and remember that our nonprofit partners rely on you so if you don't show up, it can have a big negative impact.

## **Good Communicator**

Make sure to keep a good line of communication open with JVC, the organization you are volunteering with, and other volunteers joining you. You should expect the same good communication from us as well. Once your volunteer experience is over, please continue to keep in touch. Let JVC know how your experience went. What did you love and what could have been improved? The more you communicate, the better we are able to improve your experience in the future.

## **Passionate**

When you align your passions with your volunteer work, you are unstoppable. Your passion can help make a big impact on an organization or individual. Remember that passion is just as infectious as energy. It will have a positive effect on people volunteering with you, as well as clients.

## **Team Player**

Being a part of a team is essential to volunteering. The world is very rarely changed by just one person. It's the collective efforts of a group of committed individuals (both staff and volunteers) working together that makes the difference. Stay friendly, respect all opinions, be compassionate and you can achieve something wonderful with your team!

## **Respectful**

Being respectful of people you encounter while volunteering is key to making sure everyone has a good experience. Remember to respect the staff at the organization. They work incredibly hard to make sure everyone has a good experience so respecting their rules and wishes can make their job just a bit easier! Respect other volunteers and remember that they are there to help just like you. Most importantly, make sure to respect all clients/patients/guests. Your respect can go a long way in making a difference.

## **Take Direction Well**

Don't forget that you are volunteering to help the organization. When you are volunteering, please respect the policies and procedures set in place by the organization. Listen to the staff member who is in charge. Each organization has certain methods of doing things and it is important to respect that.

## **Kind**

Last, but not least, don't forget to be kind. Be kind to everyone you meet, and you can't go wrong!

# HOMELESSNESS

## Useful Terms

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**Homelessness:** An individual who lacks permanent housing who may live on the streets; stay in a shelter, abandoned building or vehicle; or in any other unstable or non-permanent situation.<sup>1</sup>

## Facts and Figures

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Homelessness affects a wide segment of the population including families and veterans. There are many factors that play a part in how someone became homeless. Below are some facts about the nation's homeless population in hopes of giving you an idea of how widespread the problem of securing and maintaining permanent housing is.

- Families make up about 35 percent of the homeless population.<sup>2</sup>
- On a given night in 2017, 553,742 people experienced homelessness in the U.S.<sup>3</sup> 40,056 were veterans (about 9 percent of all homeless adults).<sup>4</sup> At least 3,500 people in Baltimore experience homelessness on any given night, totaling more than 30,000 people each year.<sup>5</sup>
- Over the course of 2016, roughly half a million people in families stayed at a homeless shelter or transitional housing program – 292,166 were children, and 144,991 were under the age of six.<sup>6</sup>
- People experiencing chronic homelessness typically have long-term health conditions, such as mental illness, substance use disorders, physical disabilities, or other medical conditions. Once they become homeless, it is difficult for them to get back into housing and they can experience long or repeated episodes.<sup>7</sup>

## Dos and Don'ts of Volunteering

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**DO** feel free to talk about yourself – family, interests, etc.

**DON'T** share your personal information – phone number, address, or email.

**DO** ask staff members about ways you can support their clients beyond your volunteer duties.

**DON'T** give anyone money, a public transit pass or a ride over the course of your volunteer work.

**DO** treat everyone with respect and dignity.

**DON'T** make assumptions about someone based on situation, appearance, or anything else.

**DO** feel open to learning and experiencing new things.

**DON'T** go into your volunteer experience closed off or closed-minded.

## What You May Need While Volunteering

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*\*\*Specific details vary based on organization and project\*\**

- Pants, jeans, or skirts (no shorts) – must go past your knees- leggings are not recommended
- A top with sleeves (no tank tops)
- A hat if you are providing food service (may act as a replacement of a hairnet)
- Closed-toed shoes
- Clothing that can get dirty (in case of spills)
- Water bottle