



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

"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!

SPECIAL NEEDS

Useful Terms

Special Needs: “Special needs” is a term used in clinical diagnostic and functional development to describe individuals who require assistance for disabilities that may be medical, mental, or psychological.

Hearing Loss: Hearing loss is a decrease in the ability to perceive sounds. It can be partial or total, sudden or gradual, temporary or permanent. It can affect one ear or both.¹³

Facts and Figures

“Special needs” covers a wide range of physical and developmental disabilities. It is important to treat individuals that have a disability with respect and dignity, making sure they feel included.

- The American Community Survey (ACS) estimates the overall rate of people with disabilities in the US in 2015 was 12.6%. In Maryland, the rate is 10.9%. In Baltimore City, the rate is 15.5%.¹⁴
- 2 to 3 out of every 1,000 children in the United States are born with a detectable level of hearing loss in one or both ears.¹⁵ A mild hearing loss can cause a child to miss as much as 50% of classroom discussion.¹⁶
- Just over 6.8 million Americans use assistive devices to help them with mobility. This group comprises 1.7 million wheelchair or scooter riders and 6.1 million users of other mobility devices, such as canes, crutches, and walkers.¹⁷

Dos and Don'ts of Volunteering

DO be aware of personal space, including mobility aids such as wheelchairs, walkers, and canes.

DON'T touch, move, or lean on mobility aids. This is important for both safety and dignity.

DO use “people-first” language when referring to people with disabilities. People-first language means put the person first and the disability second (e.g. person with Autism, not Autistic person).

DON'T be careless with your words.

DO ask before you help.

DON'T assume someone needs help and don't be offended if someone declines your offer for assistance.

DO talk directly to the individual, not to the interpreter, attendant, or friend. If you will be speaking for some time with a person in a wheelchair, sit down so that you are at eye level with them.

DON'T talk down to someone.

What You May Need While Volunteering

Specific details vary based on organization and project

- Pants, jeans, or skirts (no shorts) – must go past your knees – leggings not recommended
- A top with sleeves (no tank tops)
- Activity supplies (coloring, crafts, games, etc.)