

Volunteer Handbook



Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People

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Welcome to VEAP!

We understand your time is precious and we are so happy you have chosen to spend some of it with us. Every day, VEAP serves 200+ participants through our basic needs and social services departments, and we could not do so without you and your support. By beginning your journey here with us you are joining a dedicated team of volunteers and staff devoted to creating pathways to stronger, more hopeful communities through access to healthy food, housing stability, and other supportive services.

The Volunteer Department is here to support you as you navigate our organization and find your best fit. We are always here to answer any questions you may have about your role here at VEAP. This handbook is designed to introduce you to our organization, our department, as well as your role as a volunteer. We hope your experience here with us will be a rewarding one!

With many thanks and appreciation,



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Organization Overview	4 - 6
Volunteer Department Overview	7 - 8.
Logistical Information	9 - 10.
Volunteer Safety.....	11.
Volunteer Schedules.....	12.
Volunteer Hours/Volunteer Store.....	13.
Communication & Code of Conduct.....	14

Want to learn more? Visit your Get Connected dashboard! You will find:

- Opportunities
- Information about VEAP programs
- Volunteer Schedule (Listed under your profile)
- Volunteer Hours as well as Impact Value
- And more!



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Who We Are

VEAP is a basic needs organization whose programs include access to healthy foods, social services, housing stability, and supportive services.

Our history

In the early 1970s, a small group of 13 churches in Richfield and South Minneapolis became increasingly concerned about the state of their community and the living conditions of seniors. This, along with other societal issues, mobilized a group of volunteers from these churches to band together and form VEAP in 1973. In the beginning, programming focused on the needs of the elderly but has since expanded to meet the ever-changing needs of our community.

VEAP incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 1974, and while no longer faith-based, continues to work with many faith organizations (Mission Partners) who provide financial support, need referrals, food drives & distribution, and many volunteers!

Our Vision

A thriving community where all are free to pursue their dreams!

Our Mission

Together we create pathways to stronger, more hopeful communities through access to healthy food, housing stability, and other supportive services.

Our Values

- **Compassion** - *We support and care for each other.*
- **Collaboration** - *We are most effective when we work together.*
- **Inclusion** - *We are stronger when we embody and empower all voices.*
- **Innovation** - *We are bold and creative and maximize all resources available.*
- **Responsiveness** - *We are proactive and adapt to meet changing needs.*
- **Integrity** - *We are always authentic and trustworthy.*



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW (cont'd)

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

VEAP embraces diversity and is committed to pursuing a more just, equitable and inclusive society for all people.

We respect and value all dimensions of diversity including differences of preference, perspective, race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, sexual orientation, economic status, religious or non-religious background, ability, and all other visible and nonvisible differences.

As a community-based nonprofit, we have a responsibility to break down barriers, address historical and current inequities and injustices, as well as proactively engage all people in our community. We strive to create a space where all people are welcome and seek to foster a culture of respect, human dignity, learning, openness, and integrity. Our mission calls us to work together, and our vision challenges us to embrace all. All means all at VEAP. We can accomplish more in partnership with others.

When our entire community is reflected in our volunteers, staff, and leadership, and we enable all voices to be heard, then our services will be stronger, we will be more effective, and we will advance our vision: A thriving community where all are free to pursue their dreams!

VEAP's Equity Statement

We recognize that both advantages and barriers exist and that not all people start from the same place. We strive to identify and eliminate the barriers that prevent all people from pursuing their dreams and thriving in our community. We believe in fair treatment, access, opportunity, and resources for all people.

What do we mean when we say DEI?

- **DIVERSITY** is the representation of all our varied identities and differences, both visible and invisible. We believe the solution to the problems we hope to address through our services can be found by affirming our similarities, as well as by finding value in our differences. We seek to proactively engage, understand, and draw on a variety of life experiences and perspectives.



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW (cont'd)

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (cont'd)

- **EQUITY** seeks to ensure fair treatment, equality of opportunity, and fairness in access to information and resources for all by identifying and eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. We believe equity is only possible in an environment built on respect and dignity. We seek to provide dignified services that are accessible to all in our community.
- **INCLUSION** builds a culture of belonging and understanding by actively inviting the contribution, participation, and leadership of all people. We believe every person's voice adds value, and we strive to create balance in the face of power and privilege. We believe an inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. We seek to be accountable to the most marginalized in our community and commit to serving with compassion, curiosity, and self-reflection.

Our Services

- **FOOD PANTRY:** Our food pantry is one of the largest in Minnesota. We provide access to healthy, fresh foods for visitors experiencing hunger or food insecurity, and during In-Pantry visits, offer a visitor-choice model which means participants can select the food they know their family will use and enjoy.
- **MOBILE PANTRY:** Our Mobile Pantry provides access to fresh produce, and shelf-stable items at several convenient locations and times throughout each month so participants can shop closer to their homes.
- **HOME DELIVERIES:** We understand that transportation is often a barrier to visiting us. We can deliver food right to a participant's place of residence. Some geographical restrictions apply.
- **CASE MANAGEMENT:** Our Social Workers & Case Managers create comprehensive, strengths-based case plans and individualized support for those accessing our other services.
- **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:** We can provide limited emergency funds for deposits or eviction prevention to help maintain housing stability and prevent homelessness.
- **RESOURCE NAVIGATION & REFERRALS:** Our resource navigation is designed to help visitors access available resources, meet immediate needs, and work toward long-term, achievable solutions.



VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Volunteer Department Vision

A community engaged in positive change and connected by service to one another.

Volunteer Department Mission

Food and shelter are our two most basic needs. If we cannot satisfy these two needs all else - our safety, sense of belonging, freedom, and ability to follow our dreams becomes impossible to accomplish. At VEAP, we connect neighbors with opportunities to serve their communities, so no one must struggle to keep food on the table and a roof over their head.

Volunteer Department Staff

Karen Hancock, Volunteer Manager (she/her/hers) karenh@veap.org, 952-955-8325

- **About:** VEAP's Volunteer Manager leads our volunteer corps of 1,000+ volunteers and coordinates corporate group activities. She works to increase and expand current volunteer opportunities and engagement, ramp up recruitment efforts, and find fun ways to recognize the efforts of VEAP volunteers.

Riley Hauch, Volunteer Coordinator (she/her/hers) rileyh@veap.org, 952-388-6409

- **About:** VEAP's Volunteer Coordinator supports the volunteer application process, scheduling, and placement of volunteers in addition to greeting and orienting new volunteers and supporting volunteer staffing needs throughout the organization.

What You Can Expect from Us	What We Expect from You
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> The right to say no to projects and tasks that make you uncomfortable.<input type="checkbox"/> Recognition and appreciation of your work and individual efforts.<input type="checkbox"/> Respectfulness of your commitment, time, and confidentiality.<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing support from everyone on the VEAP staff.<input type="checkbox"/> Timely feedback on performance<input type="checkbox"/> An inclusive, welcoming culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Be punctual and considerate of the shift times you have chosen.<input type="checkbox"/> Be friendly, respectful, and welcoming to all visitors, staff, and fellow volunteers.<input type="checkbox"/> Be fully engaged in your chosen way to partner with us.<input type="checkbox"/> Respect and adhere to participant confidentiality.<input type="checkbox"/> Abide by VEAP's Code of Conduct



VOLUNTEER TRACKS

- **FOOD PANTRY:** Our pantry roles include public facing (**Pantry Support**), and non-public facing (**Prep Stock**). As a **Pantry Support** volunteer, you may assist participants with their shopping, load groceries into vehicles, weigh carts at checkout, or pack shopping orders for home delivery. Our **Prep Stock** team sorts through donations, repacks bulk produce for distribution and keeps our Pantry shelves stocked. During your shift, you may be asked to perform several tasks, and we encourage to try out many roles as the needs of the Pantry change daily! **Training: on the job with our Volunteer Trainers and Pantry Staff.**
- **MOBILE PANTRY SERVICES:** VEAP's **Van Driver** team makes Home Deliveries, drops off food at partner organizations for distribution or distributes food directly from our vans at locations in the community. **Training: provided by our Mobile Services Coordinator.** **Valid MN Driver's License & completion of additional compliance documents required.**
- **PARTICIPANT INTAKE:** Whether you are answering the phones at **Phone Intake** or checking participants in for their appointments at **Lobby Intake**, YOU are the public face of VEAP for our participants. **Training: provided by the Social Services team and includes training in our Client Track database, on our phone system, and Q-Flow lobby system.**
- **SUPPORT SERVICES** Support volunteers provide critical services for our various departments and vary depending on the needs of the day. Some roles are public facing (Volunteer Check-In Desk, Annual Gala, VEAP Ambassadors), others are not (Donor Mailings, Buildings & Grounds). **Training: varies with each department.**



LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

Parking:

You may park anywhere in the lot however ALL volunteers must enter via Door #2 labeled Staff and Volunteer Entrance. This ensures you remember to sign in for your shift, and we are aware of who is in the building. VEAP is not responsible for damage to or theft from vehicles in our lot.

Dress Code:

We encourage volunteers to dress comfortably. Volunteers in pantry and transportation programs are required to wear close-toed shoes such as tennis shoes while volunteering. No sandals or open-toed shoes, please!

Wear clothes that are workplace appropriate. Workplace appropriate attire is defined by clothing that is unbranded, a solid color, or has generic patterns (i.e., stripes, dots, floral, print, plaid, and paisley). Branded attire bearing only the clothing brand label itself or the name of a college/high school, sports team, or branding is fine. **VEAP does not allow political attire.**

Name Tag:

For security and safety reasons, all staff, volunteers, and visitors are required to wear a nametag while on site or representing VEAP. We will prepare a permanent name tag for you and have it ready at the volunteer check-in desk by your second volunteer shift. **Youth volunteers will receive a permanent nametag and lanyard upon completion of twenty volunteer hours.** You also have the option to include your personal pronouns on your nametag. If you lose your nametag or choose to include your pronouns later, contact the Volunteer Department to let us know.

Breaks & Gathering Area:

You are welcome to take a break and enjoy a snack and/or beverage in our volunteer gathering area before, during or after a volunteer shift. Some volunteers enjoy taking a break with their



colleagues: if you chose to do so, we encourage you to coordinate with your fellow volunteers and supervisor to ensure adequate coverage for your work area.

Please remember the volunteer break area is a shared space. It is also where volunteers check in/out for their shifts, visitors are welcomed, and groups gather before heading into the Pantry.

Help us keep the space clean and tidy by taking care of your trash and cleaning up after yourself.

The whiteboards are for staff approved messaging only. Please check with staff for an appropriate space for any fliers you wish to share. Note: only promotional materials from non-profit or school organizations are allowed. Commercial promotional materials advertising a business or service will be removed.

Beverages:

You are welcome to bring a beverage with you to your work area however we do ask that it is covered by a lid or cap. You will find cups and lids in the volunteer gathering area near the refrigerator.

Lockers & Cell Phones*:

You are welcome to store personal belongings while you are volunteering in any locker in the gathering area. You may also choose to bring your personal cell phone with you to your work area; if you do so, please be sure to keep use to a minimum. You are always welcome to utilize the volunteer gathering area for extended phone use but please be respectful of others and do not place your phone on speaker while in use. **Additionally, any pictures or video of participants, staff, or volunteers are prohibited on VEAP premises.**

* Please note: VEAP is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Key Cards:

VEAP utilizes a security system which requires key cards to access some portions of the building. The volunteer greeter at Door #2 will supply volunteers with a key card should one be required for your volunteer role. Please return key cards after each shift.



VOLUNTEER SAFETY

For all emergencies call **612-348-5111** to contact Hennepin County Security Operations Center (SOC). There is on-site security for both VEAP and Hennepin County. They are here for our safety and will respond to any accidents, injuries, or other concerns.

What is Hennepin County Security Operations Center (SOC)? SOC is the central dispatch location for emergencies in HC-owned or leased spaces. In an emergency, SOC will respond and alert/dispatch onsite security personnel to assess situations and contact additional local emergency personnel if needed (e.g., police, fire dept, ambulance, etc.).

Our onsite security personnel through Hennepin County are equipped with...

- Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) Certification
- Crisis Intervention Team Certification (De-escalation Training).
- Oxygen & Medical Bag including an AED device.

And more! If you are aware of a medical situation that requires immediate assistance, please call the HC security office for help. Also call VEAP staff as well so we are aware of the situation and can assist if needed.

Fire/Tornado Drills – VEAP periodically tests its fire and building evacuation protocols. You are expected to follow Staff instructions when exiting the building.

First Aid/AED – there are First Aid and AED stations in various locations in the building. Please make sure to locate the one nearest to your workspace.

Smoking/Vaping – VEAP is a non-smoking facility.

Accident/Injury – please notify Staff immediately in case of accident or injury. No matter how seemingly minor. Staff will then fill out an incident report and may also notify SOC if additional medical attention is required.

It is everyone's responsibility to maintain a safe and accident-free environment. Please make sure to bring unsafe conditions or maintenance issues to Staff attention.

Weapons – VEAP does not allow weapons of any kind on the premises.



VOLUNTEER SCHEDULES

Self-Scheduling & Schedule Viewing:

You are encouraged and empowered to choose a shift schedule that best fits your lifestyle. You can log into your **Get Connected** account to view your schedule, cancel, or sign up for individual shifts, reserve your spot for events, and view other volunteer-related information.

Managing your shift schedule is your responsibility. We are happy to assist you in learning to navigate the Get Connected system, or if you have physical limitations. There are multiple helpful guides and resources in your Get Connected account!

Schedule Changes:

We completely understand that life can be unpredictable and sometimes changes to your schedule must be made. That said, please provide as much notice as possible to prevent an interruption of quality service to our visitors.

Again, it is your responsibility to manage your schedule.

1. Adding Shifts:

- a. You can self-schedule a shift through Get Connected. Open shifts are posted in 3 month increments to allow all volunteers an opportunity to sign up for preferred shifts. There is no need to inform us when you pick up shifts. **If there is no shift available, or you are unsure, please do not just come in. If in doubt, call the Volunteer Dept @ 952-955-8323**

2. Cancelling shifts:

- a. **If it is a same-day cancellation**, please call the volunteer check-in desk at 952.955.8323, or email volunteerdept@veap.org to ensure staff are informed in a timely manner.
- b. **Cancellations 1 day or more in advance:** There is no need to inform us of cancellations unless it is same day.

Please note: our operational workflow depends upon the expectation that you will show up for your shift as scheduled. Beginning in 2026 – your Get Connected account will be inactivated after 3 no show/no calls.



VOLUNTEER HOURS

ALL volunteers are required to sign in and out at the Volunteer Check-In Desk prior to volunteering. Not only are your hours important for funding purposes, but signing in allows us to know who is in the building in case of emergency or evacuation AND can be spent in our Volunteer Store.

Please Note: Beginning 2026 we will no longer manually enter hours if you forget to sign in. It is your responsibility to sign in/out for your shift. We will of course credit your hours in the event of a system outage or other unforeseen event.

VOLUNTEER STORE

The **VEAP Volunteer Store** is our way to THANK YOU for your service by providing you with exclusive VEAP branded items you can proudly use.

How it Works:

1. Your volunteer hours are automatically tallied in your **Get Connected** account when you sign in/out

2. Your hours can be redeemed as follows:
25 Hours = Tier 1 Incentive Item
50 Hours = Tier 2 Incentive Item
100 Hours = Tier 3 Incentive Item

3. Spend your points at the online **VEAP Volunteer Store** which opens quarterly.

4. **Get Connected Benchmarks** help you keep track of the hours you are earning.

5. All individual Adult and Youth Volunteers are eligible to earn/redeem points.
(Group Volunteer members are not eligible for this program.)

6. Hours do not carry over from year to year.

7. Hours are exclusive to you and cannot be exchanged, given, or sold.

8. Bonus Hours and special promotions become available at certain times of the year.
Watch the Volunteer E-Newsletter for more information!

Questions??? Please contact volunteerdept@veap.org



COMMUNICATION

Volunteer e-newsletter:

The VEAP Volunteer e-newsletter arrives in your inbox every Friday. It contains valuable volunteer-related information including VEAP's biggest shift needs for the upcoming week. Please make sure you keep your email address updated and check your spam or junk folder if you are not receiving the newsletter. We use Mailchimp to produce and send the newsletter.

Get Connected VEAP e-blasts:

From time to time, we will send out e-blasts via Get Connected that are either time sensitive and cannot wait for the next newsletter or are specific to a particular user group. We try to keep the e-blasts to a minimum, however, please make sure you have set your account to receive these e-blasts. They will come from Galaxy Digital, the parent company of Get Connected. You can also opt in to receive a text message in case of emergency closing.

Get Connected Auto-Generated emails:

The system is set up to automatically send you a confirmation when you sign up or cancel a shift. It also will send you a shift reminder a week before, and the day before your shift. You can opt-out of receiving these emails while still allowing the important VEAP generated e-blasts.

Volunteer Recognition & Appreciation:

We routinely invite our volunteers to participate in recognition and appreciation activities. Our annual Volunteer Appreciation Week takes place every April during **National Volunteer Week**. Other forms of recognition and appreciation will be offered throughout the year.

CODE OF CONDUCT

All VEAP volunteers eighteen and older are required to sign our Code of Conduct annually. VEAP uses a progressive performance improvement process for actions or behaviors contrary to this code. The process is outlined in the Code of Conduct documents. Youth volunteers sixteen and older sign a slightly abbreviated version. Youth under sixteen are exempt from signing however Parents/Guardians are reminded youth are expected to behave in a manner consistent with VEAP's values while volunteering with us.