Community Food Initiatives Volunteer Handbook

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Community Food Initiatives

Athens Ohio CFI

community food initiatives



Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Community Food Initiatives! For more than 20 years, volunteers have been a valuable resource for our clients and staff. By volunteering, you will be helping us strengthen the Appalachian Ohio community, providing everyone with access to healthy, local food.

The following handbook provides a guide about our organization, expectations, and your role as a volunteer. We ask that you read this handbook carefully, and refer to it whenever questions arise. Your supervisor will be available to answer most additional questions, but feel free to contact me with any other questions or concerns at 740.593.5971 or cfi@communityfoodinitiatives.org.

Welcome, and thank you for volunteering!

Mary Nally Executive Director Community Food Initiatives

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1.1 Our Mission:

Community Food Initiatives (CFI) is a membership based grassroots organization in Appalachian Ohio formed in 1992. **We work to ensure that everyone has access to healthy, local food.** Our vision is to develop a resilient region in which everyone in our community has access to an equitable, inclusive, and thriving local food system. Our values are as follows:

- Culture & Community: We value naming our assets-soil, seeds, and an Appalachian heritage of food production and preservation-so that everyone can see their place in strengthening our assets and our community.
- Education & Empowerment: We believe that by sharing the knowledge to grow and prepare wholesome foods, people become empowered to feed their families, improve their health, and their community.
- Justice: We are rooted in the belief that equitable access to fresh and nutritious local food leads to a safe & clean environment, meaningful work with living wages, and fulfills the needs & rights of all people.
- Collaboration: We believe in the strength of collaboration and doing better together.

Our initiatives assist individuals and families to grow food, develop cooking skills, and reduce their health risks by eating whole foods. Our work is supported by regional farmers and food producers, partnering non-profits, local government and foundations.

1.2 Why We Do Our Work:

Poverty and health disparity are long standing problems in Athens County, more so than the majority of Ohio and the United States. Research increasingly shows that high rates of poverty and food insecurity correlate with negative health impacts such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease. By sharing the knowledge to grow and prepare fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains and wholesome foods, people become prepared to feed their families, improve their health and their community. All of CFI's programs come together to make one unique mix that combats the many sides of these issues.

1.3 Program Areas:

The Donation Station Program collects fresh local food at the Athens Farmers Market, Chesterhill Produce Auction and farms and then distributes it to area food pantries and social service agencies. During the year 2016, over 84,000 pounds of local produce were distributed to those in need. Additionally, the *Discovery Kitchen* program teaches healthy cooking classes to food pantry patrons, and the public, using seasonal produce.

The Community Garden Program manages five community gardens throughout Athens County, community orchards, and coordinates gardening and food preservation workshops throughout the year. During the spring months, we coordinate seed and plant start giveaways open to the public.

The School Garden Program offers support for school gardens and youth gardens, working with all five Athens County school districts, day care centers, and youth social service agencies such as Athens County Children Services. CFI provides resources, consultation, volunteer coordination and curriculum integration resources for teachers.



The Ridge & Hollow Seed Alliance: The Ridge & Hollow Seed Alliance advances regional seed saving practices and increases market demand for locally saved seeds by providing the technical training for seed growers while increasing awareness on the importance of safe guarding seeds to address long-term food security and bolster agrobiodiversity. Through our growing network of seed savers, Ridge & Hollow Seed Alliance is helping make locally adapted seeds available in retail markets and building public awareness of seed sovereignty. CFI maintains an annual inventory of regional open pollinated heirloom seeds, hosts annual seed exchanges, and provides seed saving workshops to the public.

Chapter 2: Application Procedures

2.1 Application Process

- 1. Submit a Volunteer Interest Form (<u>www.communityfoodinitiatives.org/volunteer.html</u>)
- 2. Complete an Initial Orientation/Interview with the Volunteer Manager. The purpose of the initial orientation and screening process is to:
 - Determine the suitability of individuals for volunteer services at Community Food Initiatives
 - Acquaint prospective volunteers with Community Food Initiatives and its volunteer program
 - Match the skills and interests of prospective volunteers to activities/tasks for which they are best suited
- 3. Complete an Initial Training session with the Volunteer Supervisor

2.2. Assignment and Placement

Volunteer assignments are made by CFI with input from the volunteer. Consideration is given to the type of volunteer experience being sought by the individual and to current organizational needs. The volunteer supervisor is responsible for the education and training of CFI's staff about the volunteer program and its policies and procedures.

Volunteers will receive an e-mail or phone call about upcoming volunteer opportunities at least once a month from the volunteer's supervisor. For a calendar of events that will be happening: https://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=volunteer%40communityfoodinitiatives.org&ctz=America/New_York

It is then the volunteer's responsibility to contact that supervisor by e-mail or phone with any questions about the upcoming events and/or to sign up to volunteer. There are times a CFI staff member may also call with last minute or special requests.

Once a volunteer has expressed interest in an assignment, if needed the volunteer manager will facilitate a meeting with the volunteer and other CFI staff (as appropriate). The purpose of this meeting will be to explain the volunteer opportunities available, why there is a need or use for a volunteer, and to outline the volunteer's primary focus. During this meeting, the terms of the volunteer relationship and volunteer expectations will be established. The supervisor is expected to provide the appropriate direction and support for the volunteer. The volunteer is expected to abide by his/her commitment to provide feedback and maintain an open line of communication with the supervisor. Both the supervisor and volunteer are expected to discuss potential issues pertaining to a volunteer assignment.

Once an assignment has been made, the volunteer may renegotiate the assignment if it is not meeting their service or personal needs, appears to be too demanding, critical problems arise, or it is determined that another volunteer could best provide the needed service.



2.3 Development and Training

Volunteer orientation and training is designed to acquaint volunteers with CFI's programs, goals, structure, and mode of operation. Upon completion of orientation, a volunteer is matched to a volunteer opportunity at CFI. All volunteers are expected to receive an orientation prior to their assignment, and on-site training. Each training will be coordinated by the volunteer manager and the volunteer's direct supervisor depending on the needs of the volunteer assignment.

2.4 <u>Role Definition and Responsibilities</u>

A. Volunteer Manager

The Volunteer Manager provides information regarding CFI policies and procedures. The Volunteer Manager assumes responsibility for providing volunteers with information about and access to CFI trainings and volunteer development opportunities. The Volunteer Manager is also required to be available for consultation regarding the volunteer assignment. Correspond through email: volunteer@communityfoodinitiatives.org, or calling the office at 740-593-5971.

B. Volunteer Supervisor

The Volunteer Supervisor provides ongoing supervision of the volunteer. The Volunteer Supervisor is to be available for consultation with the volunteer on a regular basis. Supervisors are also responsible for approval of volunteer forms. The Volunteer Supervisor will complete an end-of-experience evaluation of each volunteer or will evaluate annually from the volunteer's starting date for ongoing volunteers, as needed.

C. Volunteer Responsibilities

The volunteer is responsible for following through with requests from the Volunteer Manager and the Volunteer Supervisor. In the event that the volunteer is unable to fulfill the volunteer commitment, he/she must notify the Volunteer Supervisor of this fact. The volunteer is to discuss areas of concern or provide feedback, suggestions or ideas regarding the assignment with the Volunteer Supervisor.

2.5. End of Service

Community Food Initiatives reserves the right to end a volunteer's service with CFI at any time for any reason.

Chapter 3: Standards of Conduct

3.1 Equal Opportunity Employment:

CFI is committed to providing a volunteer environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

If you believe you have been the victim of harassment, or know of another volunteer who has, report it immediately. Volunteers can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Volunteers with questions or concerns about discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their supervisor, the Executive Director or a Board of Directors member.



3.2. Standards of Conduct:

The work rules and standards of conduct for CFI are important, and CFI regards them seriously. All volunteers are urged to become familiar with these rules and standards. In addition, volunteers are expected to follow the rules and standards faithfully in doing their own jobs and conducting CFI's business. Please note that any volunteer who deviates from these rules and standards will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of volunteer opportunity.

While not intended to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable when volunteering, the following are examples of rule infractions or misconduct that may result in disciplinary action, including termination of volunteer opportunity:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property;
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of organization-owned or customer-owned property;
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct;
- Violation of safety or health rules;
- Smoking in the workplace;
- Unauthorized disclosure of proprietary or confidential information;
- Unauthorized use of telephones, or other organization-owned equipment

3.3. Expectations

The volunteer has the right to be treated as a colleague, to be given sufficient information to complete an assignment successfully, to have meaningful assignments, to have access to a supervisor for clarification of assignments and to have a comprehensive volunteer job description upon placement at CFI.

The Volunteer Supervisor has the right to expect the volunteer to abide by his/her commitment, to cooperate with staff, to solicit staff input in problem-solving, to keep a timesheet, and to request clarification of assignments or transfers.

The Volunteer Supervisor has the right to expect the volunteer to abide by his/her commitment, be punctual, and maintain a professional demeanor, to request clarification of any assignment and to be available for consultation concerning assignments.

3.4 Policy Against Workplace Harassment

CFI is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

If you believe you have been the victim of harassment, or know of another volunteer/employee who has, report it immediately. Volunteers can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Volunteers can speak with the supervisor, Executive Director or Board Vice-President.

Anyone who becomes aware of possible harassment should promptly advise their Executive Director or Board Vice-President who will handle the matter in a timely and confidential manner.



3.5 Dress Code

A professional appearance is important anytime that you come in contact with the public. Additionally, volunteers must also dress appropriately for the volunteer environment that includes commercial kitchens, and gardens. Volunteers should be well groomed and dressed appropriately for volunteer work and for their position in particular. Volunteers are expected to wear clean, well-fitted clothing and shoes.

The following items are considered NOT appropriate volunteer attire for CFI:

- Open-toed sandals (must wear closed-toes shoes for any garden or kitchen work)
- Spaghetti-strapped shirts
- Revealing shirts
- Short mini skirts
- Sheer clothing
- T-shirts with inappropriate or offensive words/gestures, or alcohol/tobacco advertisements
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Any clothing that reveals midriff, cleavage, or other private areas

Consult your supervisor if you have any questions about appropriate attire.

3.6 Drug and Tobacco Free Workplace

Tobacco use of any kind by volunteers is prohibited during any and all volunteer hours. Volunteers are permitted to do so during scheduled lunch and breaks, but must remain at least 10 feet from any building entrance, and away from other persons to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke.

If an employee of CFI has cause to believe a volunteer is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs during any and all volunteer hours, they have the right to dismiss the volunteer from the event. The volunteer will also be subject to disciplinary action in the event that this occurs.

3.7 Cell Phone Use

Volunteers are expected to refrain from use of cell phones (talking, texting, etc.) during service for any purpose, unless there exists an emergency or for a service-related purpose.

Chapter 4: Mileage Reimbursement

All approved expenses incurred must be in accordance with your program budget and your specific CFI program tasks. If you are unclear on what is approved, please contact your supervisor prior to incurring any expenses.

4.1 <u>Responsibility</u>

The traveler is responsible for complying with Volunteer Handbook Policies. The supervisor who approves and signs expense reports is responsible for accurately reviewing expense reports for compliance. CFI will reimburse volunteers for all reasonable and necessary expenses while traveling on authorized work business. CFI assumes no obligation to reimburse volunteers for expenses that are not in compliance with this policy. CFI Executive Director must approve any deviation from this policy.

4.2 Enforcement



Volunteers who do not comply with this policy may be subject to delay or withholding of reimbursement and/or, disciplinary action.

4.3 <u>Reporting Guidelines</u>

Volunteers must file expense reports no later than 30 days following the completion of the trip or of incurring the expense.

4.4 Cell Phone Use While Driving

Use of a cell phone while driving is not recommended in any situation and volunteers are expected to refrain from using their phone while driving. Employees are strongly encouraged to pull off to the side of the road and safely stop the vehicle before placing or accepting a call. If acceptance of a call is unavoidable and pulling over is not an option, employees are expected to keep the call short. CFI strictly prohibits employees from using a cell phone without a hands-free device while driving. There shall be no texting while driving.

4.5 Vehicle and Driver Safety

- 1. The driver must have a valid driver's license.
- 2. The driver must carry liability insurance on the vehicle as required by law.
- 3. The driver must have no pending traffic violations.
- 4. The driver and any passengers must wear a seat belt.

5. The driver must provide photocopies of their driver's license and auto insurance in the event that they will be driving other CFI volunteers, staff, or constituents to events or activities. Should your Driver's license or insurance policy expire during the time you are volunteering with CFI, updated photocopies showing their renewal are required before you are eligible to transport others.

6. The driver must follow all driving laws, including not operating an automobile while impaired, whether due to alcohol, drugs (prescription or nonprescription), lack of sleep, or distraction of any kind.

7. The driver will agree to not operate a vehicle they have reason to believe may be mechanically unsafe or that may become unsafe due to weather or other natural conditions.

8. In the event of an accident, CFI does not cover, nor is CFI responsible for, any expenses resulting from the accident including bodily injury, property damage, fines or insurance deductibles.

4.6 <u>Reimbursement Rate</u>

Reimbursement is available for approved travel outside of Athens City limits (must be at least 10 miles or more from ACEnet) but within Athens, Morgan, Meigs, Washington, and Vinton County. Any travel to other areas needs pre-approval.

1. The first point-of-origin should be the traveler's work site.

2. If you begin your travel from an alternate location, you may list that location only if the mileage to the destination is less than the mileage from your work site to the same destination.

3. If your home is not located in the same city as your primary work site: If you begin your business travel from home, mileage between work and home cannot be included in mileage reimbursement totals. Travel from your home to a point between your home and your primary work site cannot be submitted for mileage reimbursement.



4. Mileage is reimbursed at \$.45/mile. This mileage allowance goes towards actual expenses for gasoline, oil, repairs, tags, insurance, and depreciation. Therefore, actual expenses for those items will not be reimbursed when your personal vehicle is used for volunteer work.

5. To be reimbursed for the use of your personal vehicle for work, volunteers must complete the mileage reimbursement full in its entirety (including odometer readings).

4.7 Carpooling and Alternative Transit

Volunteers are strongly encouraged to carpool with co-workers and others whenever possible. It is not possible, however, for AmeriCorps ComCorps staff members to transport volunteers in their vehicle, per their policy. *Please* notify your volunteer supervisor if you plan on traveling separate from those you had originally planned, as so others aren't waiting on you. Volunteers are also strongly encouraged to bicycle to work whenever feasible, to reduce our organization's ecological footprint. If riding a bicycle (or motorcycle/scooter, for that matter), to or from your volunteer site, a volunteer must wear a helmet, have proper lights and reflectors, and abide by all road laws.

Chapter 5: Safety and Security

5.1 <u>Safety</u>

There are hazards associated with some volunteer work at CFI. Volunteers are responsible for providing their own medical insurance coverage in case of accidental injury. Volunteers will be asked to sign a Release of All Claims before they begin volunteering.

Each volunteer is expected to obey safety rules and exercise caution and common sense in all volunteer activities. Volunteers must immediately report any unsafe conditions to their supervisor. Volunteers who violate safety standards, cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or fail to report, or where appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action including termination of volunteer opportunity. In the case of an accident that results in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, volunteers should notify their supervisor.

5.2 Inclement Weather

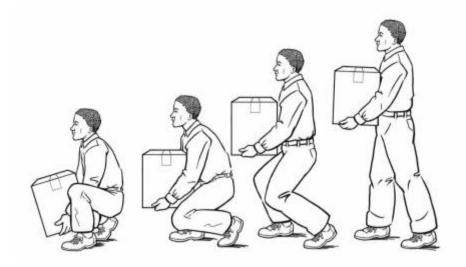
At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, or power failures can disrupt organization operations. The decision to close the office or cancel volunteer work will be made by the Executive Director or individual overseeing volunteer activity. When the decision is made to close the office, volunteers will receive official notification from their supervisors.

5.3 Locking and Keys

All volunteers who are issued keys to the office are responsible for their safekeeping. These employees will sign a Key Disbursement Form upon receiving the key. The last volunteer, or a designated employee, who leaves the office at the end of the business day assumes the responsibility to ensure that all doors are securely locked and all appliances and lights are turned off with the exception of the lights normally left on for security purposes.

5.4 Our Lifting Technique is Unstoppable!





1. Plan ahead before lifting.

Knowing what you're doing and where you're going will prevent you from making awkward movements while holding something heavy. Clear a path, and if lifting something with another person, make sure both of you agree on the plan.

2. Lift close to your body.

You will be a stronger, and more stable lifter if the object is held close to your body rather than at the end of your reach. Make sure you have a firm hold on the object you are lifting, and keep it balanced close to your body.

3. Feet shoulder width apart.

A solid base of support is important while lifting. Holding your feet too close together will be unstable, too far apart will hinder movement. Keep the feet about shoulder width apart and take short steps.

4. Bend your knees and keep your back straight.

Practice the lifting motion before you lift the object, and think about your motion before you lift. Focus on keeping your spine straight--raise and lower to the ground by bending your knees.

5. Tighten your stomach muscles.

Tightening your abdominal muscles will hold your back in a good lifting position and will help prevent excessive force on the spine.

6. Lift with your legs.

Your legs are many times stronger than your back muscles--let your strength work in your favor. Again, lower to the ground by bending your knees, not your back. Keeping your eyes focused upwards helps to keep your back straight.

7. If you're straining, get help.

If an object is too heavy, or awkward, make sure you have someone around who can help you lift.

8. Wear a belt or back support.

If you are lifting in your job often, a back belt can help you maintain a better lifting posture.

Tips:

- 1. Never bend your back to pick something up.
- 2. Hold the object close to your body.
- 3. Don't twist or bend.
- 4. Keep your eyes up.

5.5 <u>Emergency Procedures</u>



In the event of an emergency, if a staff member or another individual with authority (for example: Donation Station Manager, Volunteer Manager, Community Garden Coordinator) is present, defer to that individual for guidance on how to proceed.

In many cases, facilities in which programs are held have their own emergency policies and procedures. When possible, especially in cases where the threat of harm is not imminent, those policies should be followed.

If an individual with authority is not present and there exists a serious medical emergency or threat of violence, the volunteer should contact 911 immediately.

In the event of any emergency, no matter how small, as soon as it is possible to do so safely, the volunteer should contact their volunteer staff supervisor, the Executive Director, or Board President to inform them of the situation.

Chapter 6: Office Equipment Use

6.1 <u>Computer Use</u>

CFI volunteers are expected to use the Internet (email, web browsing, social media, etc) for work related tasks only. Volunteers are responsible for using the internet in a manner that is ethical and lawful. Internet messages are public and not private. Volunteers with a private social media account are advised to have secure private settings. CFI reserves the right to access and monitor all files and messages on its systems.

6.2 <u>Photocopies and Office Supplies</u>

Volunteers are expected to use office supplies wisely and sparingly for conservation and economic efforts. Photocopies cost the organization money, and should be work related only and used minimally.

6.3 <u>Storage</u>

Only CFI program food may be stored in the designated CFI area in the *Walk-In Cooler*. No personal items may be stored at any time. All food items must be stored on the shelves. In the event of overflow, items must be at least 6" above the floor and labeled.

Only CFI program items may be stored in the *Storage Area (Building C and Shed)*. All storage items must be pre-approved by the Executive Director and labeled.

Chapter 7: Volunteer Schedules

7.1 Absence Policy

CFI staff deeply appreciate volunteers, as they are the backbone of our organization. It is vital that volunteers are dependable. CFI expects that every volunteer will be regular and punctual in attendance. This means being at their volunteer site, ready to work, at their designated starting time. Absenteeism and tardiness places a burden on other volunteers and on CFI.

If you are unable to report for a volunteer shift for any reason or are going to be late, notify your volunteer advisor before regular starting time or call the main office at 740-593-5971.



7.2 Holidays

CFI observes the following holidays per year in which the office is closed: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

7.3 Workshop Policy

All non-members must pay \$5 to attend CFI workshops. Exemptions: CFI Staff, ComCorps service members, CFI Community Gardeners can attend at no cost. Volunteers are not considered staff.

7.4 Communications

Communication between CFI and volunteers is mainly done by email, and through our volunteer e-newsletter. Volunteers should check their email regularly to ensure they receive important communications from their supervisor. If a volunteer requires another method of contact, they should inform their supervisor.

7.5 Media Relations

Members of local media occasionally attend events and programs held by CFI. Volunteers should consult their staff supervisor or someone else with authority before speaking with the media or allowing photographs to be taken. If members of the media arrive at your site unannounced, please inform your supervisor or the Executive Director as soon as you are able.

Chapter 8: Volunteer Recognition and Benefits

The scope of a volunteer's relationship with CFI is limited to a volunteer position and no financial compensation is provided for service. However, based on the discretion of your supervisor and the Executive Director, and the quantity and quality of the work you provide CFI, you may become eligible for the following benefits: CFI sticker, honorary CFI membership, marketed shout-outs, CFI T-shirt or tote bag, and complimentary lunch.

Volunteers are welcome to request Letters of Recommendation or References for jobs from their supervisor or the Executive Director. Staff will determine whether or not they are comfortable providing such references.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

The volunteer policy handbook will be reviewed on an annual basis. Volunteers will receive notification of any change in policy in a timely fashion. Volunteers are encouraged to provide input into policy changes or adjustments, by contacting their direct supervisor.



Appendices

Staff & Board Contact List

Offices: 94 Columbus Rd, Athens OH 45701 740-593-5971

Staff:

Mary Nally	Caitlin Garrity
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740-591-0964	614-572-7501
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Community Engagement Manager	Americorps-COMCorps, Donation Station &
engage@communityfoodinitiatives.org	Discovery Kitchen Coordinator
volunteer@communityfoodinitiatives.org	discoverykitchen@communityfoodinitiatives.org
740-352-3027	614-596-1354
Raina Schoonover	Javi Devia
SEO FOODLINK Coordinator-AmeriCorps	Americorps-COMCorps,
VISTA	Community Garden Coordinator
raina@communityfoodinitiatives.org	gardens@communityfoodinitiatives.org
740-818-4534	330-812-0004
Katie Conlon	Jessica Markowitz
Strategic Plan Coordinator-AmeriCorps VISTA	Americorps-COMCorps,
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724-991-9395	schools@communityfoodinitiatives.org
Jess Chadwell	440-317-0058
Ridge & Hollow Seed Association Developer jess@communityfoodinitiatives.org 937-925-2554	Margaret Hoff Fiscal Administrator mmrah@hotmail.com 937-515-8154



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