



Volunteer Handbook



Welcome

We are so glad you have chosen to volunteer with us. You are a vital member of our team, and we value your time and skills. Please take the time to read this handbook, as it contains important information and will help prepare you for your service at the Mission.

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Dear Volunteers,

You are the backbone of Seattle's Union Gospel Mission and without you the Mission couldn't continue to do all that we do.

Over 4,000 volunteers are currently reaching out and touching lives at the Mission. Every volunteer enables us to reach more individuals with the Good News. As a volunteer, you are part of a community, an army of individuals, who are making a very strong statement. You are saying you care. You are saying that you are willing to roll up your sleeves and give of yourself, whether it's serving food or stuffing envelopes or coaching a team, tutoring the men at the Men's Shelter-whatever it might be, you are a force that's making a difference in the city of Seattle.

James 1:22 says, ". . . Be ye doers of the Word, not hearers only." Truly you are demonstrating that you are doers, individuals that will personally reach out to have an impact in our city.

As the President of Seattle's Union Gospel Mission, I would like to thank each one of you for volunteering. You are a vital and important part of all that we are doing. And thanks from the Board of Trustees, the staff, and the thousands of homeless people we serve.

May God richly bless you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Lilley", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeff Lilley
President
Seattle's Union Gospel Mission

About the Mission

History

Seattle's Union Gospel Mission is a private faith-based organization that helps the community reach out with compassion to those who have lost hope. And as a community, we empower one another to build, lead and give back.

The Mission has taken a collaborative, partnership approach from the start. The Mission was born of necessity during the Great Depression when hundreds of people were going hungry and homeless in Seattle. Local business leaders and churches came together to change all that.

Seventy-eight years later we're still a change agent. Our expertise, trustworthiness and faithful commitment to service have brought us national recognition.

Mission Statement

To serve, rescue, and transform those in greatest need through the grace of Jesus Christ.

DOVE

The Department of Volunteer Efforts (DOVE) enrolls individual volunteers as well as groups from supporting churches, businesses, and other organizations, placing them throughout the Mission facilities to best maximize our resources. As God moves people to partner with us, Seattle's Union Gospel Mission welcomes volunteers in a wide variety of positions according to their interest and skills, working side by side with staff to rebuild the lives of people in need.

You can reach us:

Online: dove@ugm.org

By phone: 206.723.0767

Or via our website: UGM.org



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Commonly Used Acronyms

ADMIN	Administration Offices
DOVE	Department of Volunteer Efforts
MS	Men's Shelter
HP	Hope Place, (Women and Children's Shelter)
SSI	Son Shine Inn
YS	Youth Services
YROC	Youth Reach Out Center
SM	Senior Ministries
PM	Prison Ministries
RP	Riverton Place
SRH	Son Rise House
ODLS	Open Door Legal Services
DC	Dental Clinic
GIK/OPS	Gift in Kind/Operations

Our Commitment to you

We highly value our volunteers, and will endeavor to:

- Treat you as a co-laborer in the ministry of the Mission
- Offer you a suitable assignment with consideration for personal preferences, temperament, life experience and skills
- Provide effective training for your tasks
- Offer you constructive feedback about your work from a staff supervisor
- Inform you as much as possible about Seattle's Union Gospel Mission, including policies, staff and programs
- Offer you information about new developments and opportunities
- Help you receive sound guidance and direction by staff who are experienced, well informed, patient and thoughtful
- Provide an orderly designated work place
- Offer you a variety of experiences
- Allow you to be heard, to feel free to make suggestions, and have respect shown for an honest opinion
- Give you recognition and appreciation for your generous service

Volunteer Pledge

I believe that I am a valued and necessary part of the ministry of Seattle's Union Gospel Mission and that there is a real need for my services.

Therefore, **I will:**

- Be timely and reliable in the fulfillment of my duties and accept supervision graciously
- Conduct myself in a professional manner, with courtesy and consideration
- Speak and behave in a manner consistent with the faith and values of the Mission
- Hold in confidence any information gained about guests at the Mission
- Be supportive of Mission staff and their decisions
- Take concerns or suggestions to my site supervisor or the volunteer manager
- Be flexible when changes are needed
- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with children and/or youth.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
- Report suspected abuse to staff, administrator, or appropriate supervisor.

As a volunteer, **I will not:**

- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while volunteering.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Volunteer when I have a fever or other contagious conditions.
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap children and/or youth.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade children and/or youth.
- Touch a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children and/or youth.
- Use profanity while volunteering at the Mission.

Ten Tips for Happy Volunteering

1. Follow your heart

Look for a position doing something you really care about. Do you have a heart for the elderly, prisoners or children? Is education your passion, or the arts, or gardens? Bring your heart, sense of humor and enthusiasm to your volunteer service. What you'll get back is immeasurable.

2. Consider your skills

Think of work or hobby related skills. They may match you to a particular task at the Mission. For instance, some positions require computer literacy, others athletic ability, or knowledge of power tools. A good fit will allow you to help people by using your talents, without having a lot of training for the assignment.

3. Consider volunteering as a family

Think about looking for a volunteer opportunity suitable for parents and children to do together, or for husband and wife to take on as a team. When a family volunteers together, the experience can bring them closer, and teach children the value of giving of themselves. Volunteer service also introduces family members to people and experiences never before encountered, giving them lifelong family memories. We will be happy to supply you with some ideas for family volunteering with children of all ages.

4. Are you tired of the "same old"?

If you're looking for novelty or change, let volunteering be an adventure. Stretch yourself by exploring volunteer positions in something you've never done. Tutor, preach at a chapel service, be a pen pal to a prisoner, cook dinner for 50 middle-schoolers. The Mission has a wide variety of opportunities.

5. Don't over-commit your schedule

Make sure your volunteer commitments fit into your busy life. Volunteering should be rewarding – not exhausting or frustrating. Think about whether you want a long-term assignment, or something temporary. If you are unsure about your availability, let us know. You may want to see how the work suits you before making a commitment for an extended period of time. DOVE is flexible and will work with your schedule and needs.

6. We have questions too.

Seattle's Union Gospel Mission has learned by experience that it's important to get the right information up front. We'll ask you to fill out an application form, and answer questions regarding your legal history. The Mission conducts an on-line criminal history check with every volunteer application. We also ask about your skills, commitment and interests. Some openings will require references and permission for a national criminal history search. Also, because we are a Christian agency, your faith will be a consideration for certain volunteer positions.

7. Did you ever think of this?

Sometimes there are volunteer needs that are unique, that no one would think of offering to fill. At various times the Mission has needed an air-conditioning repairman, a welder, a clown, and a hairdresser. You may be surprised to find that a lion costume is just the thing we are looking for. Feel free to share your ideas or abilities with us. You could have a lot of fun and provide a wonderful service for someone else.

8. Are you a leader?

Volunteering at the Mission can give you an opportunity to leverage your leadership skills. If you're a scout looking for an Eagle badge project, or a student looking for a Senior Project, there's a good chance our Volunteer Department can help you. Leaders are needed to organize and supervise projects like holiday food baskets, and other special events. If you are skilled, or want to grow in the area of recruiting, organizing and leading a team, here's a productive avenue for developing your people skills.

9. If you don't get out much

Volunteering from home is an option. The Mission has ways to help people right from the comfort of your own home. Volunteers may send birthday cards to low-income seniors, be a pen pal, grade correspondence courses, and PRAY! Pray for: the people we serve, the staff and for our leadership to have wisdom and guidance from the Lord.

10. Be a year-round volunteer

We all tend to think more of those in need during the holidays, but volunteering is welcome and necessary every day. The need for compassion doesn't stop with the New Year. Because the needs continue 365 days a year, there is always something we can be doing to help. In fact, summer is often when our food pantries get lowest. Homelessness is always in season, so don't wait till the holidays. Get involved now.

DOVE POLICIES

Enrollment

It's easy to get started volunteering at Seattle's Union Gospel Mission. Simply fill out a [volunteer application](#).

The enrollment process will usually take 1 to 2 business days after you submit the completed form. Once you've been cleared to volunteer, you will receive a confirmation email. Contact the [DOVE office](#) for scheduling

If you prefer to use a hard copy application form, call DOVE at 206.723.0767.

The Mission will perform a Washington State Patrol screening for criminal history. We may, in addition, conduct a national background screening, as we deem necessary for volunteers who might work in contact with vulnerable populations such as children, women or senior citizens.

Exceptions to the Background Requirement

Volunteer applicants with a criminal history may still be eligible to volunteer with Seattle's Union Gospel Mission. Applicants with a criminal history are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the past offenses, and the type of volunteer tasks requested.

Decisions to allow or disallow a volunteer due to criminal history are made by the Volunteer Director and the Director of the department where volunteer work is requested.

Applicants planning to bring a corporate, church, family, civic or casual group to volunteer, should complete the background-check form with his/her own, personal information. Once the applicant is cleared, the rest of the group may usually serve with him/her under his/her enrollment, without submitting separate enrollment forms.

Some volunteer applicants may not be required to submit a background check form because of their profession. These are:

- If you are employed by a Police or Fire Department
- If you are employed by any law enforcement agency
- If you are a public official
- If you are a dentist volunteering in our Dental Clinic
- If you are an attorney volunteering in our Legal Department

Group Enrollments

There are many volunteer opportunities for groups -- families, school, church, corporate, etc. and the Mission welcomes these groups.

It is usually not necessary for each group member to submit enrollment forms, but only one individual representing the group may enroll for the entire group.

The group's name, if there is one, should be entered on the front page of the enrollment form. The applicant's personal information (name, and date of birth) should be entered on the background-check form. The background clearance for the contact person will in most cases enable the rest of the group to serve along with him/her, however, we reserve the right to conduct national background screening for any volunteer working in contact with vulnerable populations, as we deem necessary.

Once the enrollment process, which usually takes 1 or 2 business days, has been completed your group is ready to start volunteering. For group volunteer ideas, visit our [Volunteer Opportunities](#) page or call us at 206.723.0767.

Community Service Work

There is opportunity for individuals to complete their court ordered community service at Seattle's Union Gospel Mission. Court ordered community service hours are only accepted from "municipal" courts. If you are interested in doing your community service with us, please complete the volunteer application form online or using a hard copy and submit them to the volunteer office.

Hard copy application forms are available by mail, or you can [apply on line](#). The enrollment process usually takes 1 to 2 business days from the day we receive your forms.

Once you have been cleared to do your community service with us, you will be contacted by phone or email. The volunteer office will work with you to set up a schedule.

Volunteer Orientation

A general orientation is conducted twice monthly for new volunteers and those interested in learning more about volunteering. Orientations are held on Saturday mornings and Monday evenings at the [Youth Reach Out Center](#). Upcoming dates and times are available [online](#). We strongly recommend that all new volunteers attend an orientation however, it is optional for some service tasks. For certain key, relationship-building positions a general orientation is required. Contact the [DOVE office](#) to ask if the position you are considering requires attendance at an orientation.

Placement

After we have received your application and the background check has cleared, then we will consider your placement. To do so, we survey the interests, skills, and availability that you indicated on the application. Based upon these and our knowledge of ongoing or current volunteer needs at the Mission, we will try to find a mutually agreeable match.

As you consider what opportunities interest you, there are a number of helpful things to know regarding placement:

- **Skills:** Some volunteer positions do require specific skills, education, or certification.

- **Court-ordered Community Service:** For [municipal court-ordered community service](#) you will be assigned to the Men's Shelter.
- **Faith:** We welcome those of any faith to come and volunteer. You need not be a Christian, but we do ask that you be supportive of our programs, which are based upon Christian principles. We also expect volunteers to support the work, [mission](#) and [statement of faith](#) of Seattle's Union Gospel Mission while donating time. There are a few volunteer tasks that, by their very nature, really necessitate the volunteer holding a personal belief in Christ. Contact the DOVE staff if you have questions, 206.723.0767.
- **Availability:** Placement often depends greatly upon your availability (time of day, days of the week, frequency, and duration). Positions that center around relationship building, such as tutoring, will be matched with volunteers who can make an ongoing commitment. At the same time, there are other opportunities that are well suited to one-time or occasional volunteering arrangements.
- **Age:** Age can also be a factor in placement. If you are under the age of 18, wherever you are placed, it is required that you be accompanied by an adult. According to food service laws in Seattle, if you are under the age of 10, we are unable to place you in a kitchen position at our facilities.
- **Disabilities:** There are some areas of our facilities not yet equipped for those who have disabilities. Please let us know if you have a disability, so we can be sure to direct you to a volunteer position at one of our facilities that will be safe and accommodating.
- **Needs of the Department:** The need for volunteers can change with a variety of factors. Some are seasonal, and some vary depending upon workload, staffing, the clients we are serving, etc. New needs and special opportunities also come up from time to time. The staff in the volunteer department is available to apprise you of any changes. Also, a listing of new openings is frequently updated on the [volunteer page](#).
- **Scheduling:** **If you have** submitted your application materials and received back a confirmation email or letter from us, then you are free to call (206.723.0767) or [email](#) the volunteer office at any time to schedule your service. For some volunteer opportunities we will be able to schedule directly. For other volunteer opportunities we will refer you to the specific program staff that would be supervising you.

See also ***Ten Tips For Happy Volunteering*** (page 7) when you are considering which position you might like.

On-Task

Dress code

This dress code is addressed to all volunteers. To prevent accidental injury, and because we disciple a variety of people with various moral vulnerabilities, it is important to observe a comprehensive dress code. Please comply with the following guidelines while present at Seattle's Union Gospel Mission facilities.

- **Dress Code for Men**
Long or short sleeve shirt, (a tee shirt is acceptable), pants to the knees or below. Closed-toe shoes when working in the kitchen.
- **Dress code for Women**
Long or short sleeve shirts or blouses, pants to the knees or below, closed-toe shoes in the kitchen, dresses with modest necklines, hemlines to the knees or below. Please no sleeveless dresses, tank tops, or halter tops, no tight fitting or low necklines, or bare midriffs.

Non-Fraternization

People in our recovery programs have agreed to restrict fraternization with people outside the program. We welcome volunteers to interact in a friendly manner while maintaining a respectful and courteous reserve. By using caution when relating to the program guests you will protect their place in the program as well as yourself. Do not give out your last name, phone number, address, or email address. Do not make plans with a program guest to meet outside the Mission unless agreement from the case manager has been given.

Non-Harassment

Seattle's Union Gospel Mission seeks to maintain a work environment free from all forms of harassment. Conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment is considered harassment. Such behavior on the part of a volunteer will result in the volunteer assignment being terminated. (See Reassignment or Termination) If you believe you have been subjected to any type of harassment while volunteering at the Mission, you are encouraged to bring the matter to the immediate attention of your supervisor, the department head, or the volunteer manager. Harassment complaints are investigated promptly and appropriate action will be taken.

Confidentiality

The Mission's staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting the privacy of Mission clientele. No information about Mission clients is to be given verbally or in writing to anyone, including news agencies, and no photos are to be taken of clientele without a signed release from the Mission and client involved. We take confidentiality very seriously, as it can be a life and death issue for some of our guests.

Notice of impending absence

The staff of Seattle's Union Gospel Mission rely on volunteers to accomplish many tasks, and it is important to be there as scheduled. However, we understand that some changes are unavoidable. As soon as you learn you are not able to volunteer as planned, please call the DOVE office during business hours, 206.723.0767. On weekends, evenings or holidays, call the facility you were scheduled to serve, and get a message to your site supervisor. Last minute changes to the volunteer schedule are a hardship to the Mission staff and to the program clients. Please make every effort to keep your volunteer commitments.

Gifts to clients

Guests at the Mission shelters have most of their physical needs provided for by the shelter. If a volunteer learns about a guest's unmet need, the most productive way to respond is to alert the guest's case manager to the need. At no time should a volunteer give money to a resident or visitor at one of Mission's facilities. A card or small gift may be appropriate on special occasions or at significant milestones, such as the client's graduation from a class or program, but it is not expected, and giving such a gift is entirely voluntary.

Supervision

Volunteers working on site at a Mission program will be supervised by one of the paid staff. The supervisor will be available to answer questions and provide aid at all times. If the volunteer is ever unclear as to who is the supervising staff person, or where the supervisor is, the volunteer should request that information. Supervision will include making the volunteer(s) familiar with the location of restrooms, drinking water/coffee, emergency exit routes, the volunteer's work area, exactly what work is expected, the location of supplies, and any other applicable information and working guidelines.

Guidelines to working with children

Volunteers who will be working with children will complete a background-check form, a background disclosure form, and may be asked to submit to a national background screen. DOVE will clear the background check before the volunteer begins his/her service. The volunteer can expect DOVE to contact the references provided on the enrollment form.

For the protection of the volunteer as well as children, volunteers should not be alone with a child at any time. If a need arises that requires another exception, advance permission from the volunteer's on-site staff supervisor is required.

Meals

Meals are available daily at residential facilities, and volunteers giving service at one of those facilities during mealtime are welcome to eat. Individuals, please give advance notice to the cook or kitchen staff if you wish to eat. Groups, please notify the DOVE office 3 days or more in advance, if you wish to eat. The facilities where meals are available are: MS, HP, SSI, and RP.

Hours reports

Volunteers are asked to keep a record of the time they serve the Mission. The record-keeping method varies from site to site, but usually a computer log-in and a sign-in sheet will be provided. It is important to the Mission for volunteers to record their time consistently.

It is also important in case of emergency (fire, earthquake, etc.) for the Mission to have a record of all persons in the building, and the sign-in sheet provides that record.

Smoking policy

All buildings operated by the Mission are non-smoking facilities. Smoking is not allowed on the property at Riverton Place.

Personal belongings

Volunteers are responsible at all times for their own personal belongings. We encourage you **not** to bring purses, wallets, cameras, large amounts of money and other valuables when you come to serve. The Mission is not responsible for lost or stolen items. If something is missing, please report it to your supervisor.

Reassignment or termination

If a volunteer is unable to provide a satisfactory or useful service, or if the volunteer assignment is not currently needed, DOVE will attempt to reassign the volunteer to an appropriate task.

The volunteer relationship may be terminated in the case of non-compliance with volunteer policy, or behavior that is angry, threatening, harassing or disrespectful of staff or clients.

Safety Procedures

Earthquake

If you are inside one of our facilities when an earthquake commences, take cover under a sturdy desk, table, or bench or against an inside wall, and hold on. If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.

- Minimize your movement during an earthquake to a few steps to a nearby safe place.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture.
- Use a doorway for shelter only if it is in close proximity to you and if you know it is a strongly supported, load-bearing doorway.
- Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Most injuries during earthquakes occur when falling objects hit people while entering or exiting from buildings.
- Be aware that the electricity may go out or the sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.
- DO NOT use the elevators.

If you are outside one of our facilities when an earthquake commences, stay there. Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.

If you happen to be trapped under debris after an earthquake, cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing. Do not light a match. Do not move about or kick up dust.

(Information taken from FEMA, www.fema.gov)

Tsunami

If there is a tsunami watch or warning, do not come to our Men's Shelter downtown.

- If you become aware of a watch or warning while volunteering it is advisable to evacuate.
- Move inland to higher ground immediately and stay there.
- There can be multiple waves. Do not return until officials say it is safe.
- If there is a noticeable recession in water away from the shoreline, this is nature's tsunami warning and it should be heeded. You should move away immediately to high ground.

Fire

When you first begin volunteering at one of our facilities, take a few moments to survey the posted fire evacuation routes and note the location of the various building exits. If you are unclear about the exits or fire evacuation routes, please ask the facility staff for that information. It may also be helpful to ask the staff to make you aware of the location of first aid supplies.

- If you are alerted to a fire (by fire alarms, staff, or public officials) while volunteering, evacuate as quickly as possible by following the posted routes. Do not worry about locking doors, shutting down, etc.; there are staff designated with these responsibilities.
- Once outside the building, stay in relatively close proximity, so that we can keep track of those who successfully evacuated the building.

Food

- According to Washington state food code, children under the age of 10 are not allowed to be in food preparation areas during the preparation of foods. [WAC 246-215-151 (5)] So, we can only allow volunteers over the age of 10 to help serve food in our shelter kitchens.
- It is unlawful for any person afflicted with any contagious or infectious disease that may be transmitted by food or beverage to work in or about any place where unwrapped or unpackaged food and/or beverage products are prepared...(RCW 69.06.030)
- Volunteers in the kitchen should receive information or training regarding safe food handling practices prior to the commencement of volunteering. (RCW 69.06.050) This may come in the form of a short video shown at the beginning of a kitchen volunteer shift.
- If the volunteer works more than 14 consecutive days in the calendar year in a kitchen position, they need to obtain a food and beverage service workers' permit. (RCW 69.06.050)
- Kitchen volunteers should always wear closed-toe shoes and long pants to provide protection. Long sleeves are also recommended.

Personal Safety While Volunteering

- Volunteers are expected to remain in their assigned work area. Please do not enter other areas of the shelters without the knowledge and permission of your supervisor.
- Do not give out personal information to anyone other than Mission employees while volunteering.
- Be alert and aware of your surroundings. The Men's Shelter dining room can be crowded and noisy during a public meal, so please pay attention to the people around you and give plenty of personal space to the guests.
- Dining room guests should be treated with respect and courtesy. Take care not to startle them or get involved in an argument. Move away from any guest who begins to use a loud voice or seems agitated. Alert a staff member to any situation that concerns you.