

Shalom Farms

*Together we grow...
...healthy food, families & friends.*

Volunteer Policy Manual



United Methodist Urban Ministries of Richmond, Inc.

1010 W. Laburnum Ave. · Richmond, VA 23227

804.266.9350 · 804.266.9399 (fax)

www.umumr.org

God comes to the hungry in the form of food. –Gandhi

Who We Are

Shalom Farms is a volunteer-based farm dedicated to the systemic improvement of food security in Metro Richmond. The farm is located on the property of Camp Westview on the James in Goochland County, Virginia. Primary goals of Shalom Farms and its Metro Richmond neighborhood networks are providing healthy food to the food insecure, providing farming and nutritional education to children, families, and community members, and empowerment-based community development using the Communities of Shalom model.

Shalom Farms results from a collaborative partnership between United Methodist Urban Ministries of Richmond (UMUMR), the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE), and Camp Westview on the James. Utilizing educational and distribution partners in Richmond, the farm will serve as a hub of community conversation and catalyst for improving local food systems – particularly food access and security.

A Word of Thanks...

Without the help of volunteers, this project would be impossible. The work you do helps provide healthy food to people in the urban center and fosters community growth and empowerment. Thank you!

Volunteer Roles

Gardeners – Volunteers to work on the farm itself, maintaining and growing food, ensuring growth and maintenance cycles are upheld. Watering, weeding, planting, preparing, cleaning – all the tasks related to the running of an agricultural system in a healthy and sustainable way.

Coordinators – Volunteers who oversee and direct groups and individuals in farm work, managing people who want to be involved with the farm for a day, a week, a month, or a year. Coordinating efforts so that a weekly schedule is maintained across the available labor pool.

Educators – People with an interest in discussing the science, philosophy, spirituality and systemic interconnectedness of farming. Creating educational opportunities for young children, young adults, and families to help bring the farm back to the home.

Builders – Creative individuals who can construct and design various farm systems, from wash tables to distribution systems. Creating ecologically friendly and sustainable systems that help the farm blend in with the environment and operate efficiently and creatively.

“You give them something to eat.”—Jesus in Mark 6:37

Volunteer Policies

- all volunteers offering their services to UMUMR and Shalom Farms will have their offers dealt with promptly and be given a warm welcome, which reflects the value we give to volunteers
- UMUMR recognizes that volunteers play a very important role in the development and maintenance of Shalom Farms and their efforts contribute highly to the overall success of this project
- the involvement of UMUMR and Shalom Farms volunteers will be encouraged and supported whenever possible
- the role of volunteers will be clearly defined. In every situation where a volunteer is to be involved, an agreed statement of tasks should be drawn up and volunteers should be adequately prepared for the tasks which they will be undertaking
- having a clearly defined and agreed role for a volunteer helps the volunteer to understand what is expected of him/her. As far as possible specific activities should be identified for which a volunteer can take responsibility
- training will be given to all volunteers and will be reviewed and updated regularlyⁱ

Volunteer Management Procedures

1.1 Maintenance of Records

A system of records on each volunteer or leader from a partner organization will be maintained by UMUMR, including dates of service, positions held, duties performed, evaluation of work, and awards received. Volunteers, group leaders and appropriate staff will be responsible for submitting all appropriate records and information to the Volunteer Manager in a timely and accurate fashion.

Volunteer personnel records will be accorded the same confidentiality as staff personnel records.

1.2 Representation of the Agency

Volunteers are not authorized to obligate, make statements on behalf of, or take action as a representative of UMUMR or Shalom Farms, except as expressly authorized to do so by the appropriate UMUMR management staff. These actions may include, but are not limited to, public statements to the press, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations. Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the agency only as specifically indicated within their job descriptions and only to the extent of such written specifications.

1.3 Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of information made known to them to be confidential.

1.4 Worksite

An appropriate worksite and schedule will be established prior to the enrollment of any volunteer. This worksite will contain necessary facilities, equipment, and space to enable to volunteer to effectively and comfortably perform their duties.

1.5 Dress Code

As representatives of the agency, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to clients and to the community. Volunteers will dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. For the safety of volunteers, when engaged in farm-related activities closed-toe shoes and other work-appropriate clothing are required.

1.6 Drugs & Alcohol

UMUMR is committed to the health and safety of our volunteers and program participants. The use of drugs or alcohol on the site is strictly prohibited. Reporting to volunteer under the influence of drugs or alcohol is also prohibited.

1.7 Timesheets

Individual volunteers are responsible for filling out volunteer timesheets. Group leaders will be responsible for having their teams fill out timesheets.

1.8 Inclement Weather

Shalom Farms is an outdoor site. Volunteers should contact the Site Coordinator or Volunteer Coordinator for specific operating plans in the event of rain or severe weather conditions.

1.9 Safety & First Aid

Volunteers must always use farm equipment and tools properly and with attention paid to personal safety and the safety of others. In the event of minor injury, a first aid kit will be provided on site. For serious incidents, call 911.

Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

2.1 Position Descriptions

Volunteers will be provided with a clear, complete, and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the position which they are expected to fill. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a position description shall be developed for each volunteer position. This position will be given to each accepted volunteer and utilized in subsequent management and evaluation efforts. Position descriptions should be reviewed and updated at least every two years, or whenever the work involved in the position changes substantially.

2.2 Recruitment

Volunteers will be recruited by the agency on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding the volunteer involvement of the community. Volunteers will be recruited without regard to gender, handicap, age, race, faith perspective, or other condition. The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment will be suitability to perform a task on behalf of the agency. Volunteers may be recruited through either an interest in specific functions or through a general interest in volunteering which will later be matched with a specific function.

2.3 Recruitment of Minors

Volunteers who have not reached the age of 18 shall have the written consent of a parent or guardian prior to being considered for a volunteering. For volunteer groups from partner organizations, such as children and youth science education field trips, the group coordinator/facilitator from the partner organization shall secure this written permission and provide continuous site supervision for their group. Volunteer services offered to and undertaken by a minor shall be performed in a non-hazardous, age-appropriate, environment and shall comply with all appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

2.4 Criminal Records Check

For the protection of minors, handicapped, and elderly, volunteers in assignments that require contact with these at-risk groups shall submit to a comprehensive criminal background check as a condition of their acceptance and assignment as a volunteer. Partnering agencies shall conduct comprehensive criminal background checks on their potential volunteers and staff that will come into contact with minors, handicapped, and elderly, as a condition of volunteer's acceptance and assignment as a volunteer. Potential volunteers not submitting to criminal background checks, as required above, are immediately disqualified as a volunteer and will be refused assignment.

2.5 Placement

In placing a volunteer in a position, UMUMR will endeavor to match the interests and capabilities of the volunteer to the requirements of the work. No placement will be made unless and until the requirements of both the volunteer and the supervising staff can be met: no volunteer should be assigned to a 'make-work' position and no position will be offered to an unqualified or uninterested volunteer.

2.6 Professional Services

Volunteers shall not perform professional services for which certification or licensing is required unless currently certified or licensed to do so. A copy of such certificate or license shall be maintained by the Volunteer Manager.

2.7 Length of Service

All volunteer positions will have a set term of duration. This term will not be longer than one-year, with an option for renewal at the discretion of both parties. All volunteer assignments will end at the conclusion of their set term, without expectation or requirement of re-assignment of that position to the incumbent.

Volunteers are neither expected nor required to accept further service in a position at the end of their set term, although they are welcome to do so in most cases, but may instead seek a different volunteer assignment within the agency, or may retire from volunteer service.

Volunteer Training and Development

3.1 Orientation

All volunteers will receive a general orientation on the nature and purpose of the agency, an orientation on the nature and operation of the program or activity for which they are recruited, and a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of the position which they are accepting in that effort. Individuals involved in leading other, i.e. partner, volunteer groups will be given additional site-specific training.

3.2 On-the-Job Training

Volunteers will receive specific on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. The timing and methods for delivery of such training should be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.

3.3 Staff Involvement in Orientation and Training

Staff members with responsibilities over delivery of services should have an active role in the design and delivery of both orientation and training of volunteers. Those staff that will be in a supervisory capacity to volunteers will participate in the design and delivery of on-the-job training to volunteers assigned to them.

3.4 Volunteer Involvement in Orientation and Training

Experienced volunteers should be included in the design and delivery of volunteer orientation and training.

3.5 Continuing Education

Just as staff, volunteers should attempt to improve their levels of skill during their terms of service. Additional training and educational opportunities will be made available to volunteers during their connection with the agency. This continuing education may include both additional information on performance of their current volunteer assignment as well as more general information, and might be provided either by the agency or by assisting the volunteer to participate in educational programs provided by other groups.

Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation

4.1 Requirement of a Supervisor

Each volunteer who is accepted to a position with the agency or with a partner agency, will have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor will be responsible for management and guidance of the work of the volunteer, and will be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

4.2 Volunteers as Volunteer Supervisors

A volunteer may act as a supervisor of other volunteers, provided that the supervising volunteer is under the supervision of a paid staff member and is trained and exhibits the knowledge, skills and abilities to serve in the role of supervisor.

4.3 Volunteer/Staff Relationships

Volunteers are partners in implementing the mission and programs of UMUMR and Shalom Farms, with each having an equal but complementary role to play. It is essential for the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.

4.4 Volunteer Involvement in Staff Evaluation

Examination of their effective utilization of volunteers will be a component in the evaluation of staff persons who are assigned to work with volunteers. In such cases, supervisors should ask for the input and participation of volunteers in evaluating staff performance.

4.5 Staff Involvement in Volunteer Evaluation

Affected staff shall be involved in all evaluation and work assignments of volunteers with whom they are connected.

4.6 Lines of Communication

Volunteers are entitled to all necessary information pertinent to the performance of their work assignments, except as protected by HIPAA regulations.

Except as protected by HIPAA regulations, volunteers should be included in and have access to all appropriate memos, materials, and meetings relevant to the work assignments. To facilitate the receipt of this information on a timely basis, volunteers should be included on all distribution schedules and should be assigned a site or mailbox for receipt on information distributed in their absence. Primary responsibility for ensuring that the volunteer receives such information will rest with the direct supervisor of the volunteer.

Lines of communication should operate in both directions, and should exist both formally and informally.

Volunteers will be consulted regarding all decisions which would substantially affect the performance of their duties.

4.7 Absenteeism

Volunteers, including those from partner agencies, are expected to perform their duties on a regular scheduled and timely basis. If expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers shall inform their staff supervisor as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements may be made. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer's work assignment or term of service and may include re-assignment or dismissal of the volunteer.

4.8 Substitution

Volunteers may be encouraged to find a substitute for any upcoming absences which might be filled by another volunteer. Such substitution should only be taken following consultation with a supervisor and care should be taken to find a substitute who is qualified for the position. Substitutes may only be recruited from those who are currently enrolled and approved as eligible volunteers with the agency.

4.9 Evaluations

Volunteers will have the opportunity to evaluate the experience in written format at regular intervals during and after volunteer services are performed. Additionally, volunteers may participate in periodic in-person evaluation sessions. The evaluation session is utilized to review the performance of the volunteer, to suggest any changes in work style, to seek suggestions from the volunteer on means of enhancing the volunteer's relationship with the agency, to convey appreciation to the volunteer, and to ascertain the continued interest of the volunteer in serving in that position. Evaluations should include both an examination of the volunteer's performance of position responsibilities and a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have concerning the position or project with which the volunteer is connected.

The evaluation session is an opportunity for both the volunteer and the agency to examine and improve their relationship.

4.10 Written Basis for Evaluation

The position description and standards of performance for a volunteer position should form the basis of an evaluation. A written record will be kept of each evaluation session.

4.11 Staff Responsibility for Evaluation

It will be the responsibility of each staff person in a supervisory relationship with a volunteer to schedule and perform periodic evaluation and to maintain records of the evaluation.

4.12 Corrective Action

Corrective action may be taken, at the discretion of UMUMR management, following an evaluation. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, re-assignment of a volunteer to a new position, suspension of the volunteer, or dismissal from volunteer service.

4.13 Dismissal of a Volunteer

Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of the agency or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment or fail to follow a supervisor's verbal or written instructions are subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with supervisory staff. Prior to dismissal of a volunteer, staff should seek the consultation and assistance of the Volunteer Manager (804-266-9350 or info@umumr.org). If dismissal occurs, a Volunteer Dismissal Form must be filled out and maintained on file with the Volunteer Coordinator.

4.14 Reasons for Dismissal

Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of agency equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of clients or co-workers, failure to abide by agency policies and procedures, failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

4.15 Concerns and Grievances

Decisions involving corrective action of a volunteer may be appealed by the volunteer to the next level UMUMR staff for review. If the volunteer is not satisfied, he or she may appeal to the UMUMR Executive Director. All decisions made by the Executive Director are final.

4.16 Notice of Departure or Re-Assignment of a Volunteer

In the event that a volunteer departs the agency, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, or is re-assigned to a new position, it will be the responsibility of the Volunteer Manager to inform those affected staff and clients that the volunteer is no longer assigned to work with them.

4.17 Resignation

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the agency at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance written notice of their departure and a reason for their decision.

4.18 Exit Interviews

Exit interviews, where possible, should be conducted with volunteers who are leaving their positions. The interview should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving the position, suggestions the volunteer may have to improving the position, and the possibility of involving the volunteer in some other capacity with the agency.

4.19 Evaluation of Agency Volunteer Utilization

The Volunteer Manager will conduct an annual evaluation of the utilization of volunteers by the agency. The report of this evaluation will include information gathered from volunteers, staff, and partner organizations.

Volunteer Support and Recognition

5.1 Access to Agency Property and Materials

As appropriate, volunteers will have access to agency property and materials necessary to fulfill their duties, and will receive training in the operation of any equipment. Property and materials will be utilized only when directly required for agency purposes. All materials, equipment, and supplies are the property of UMUMR and shall be returned at the conclusion of each day of volunteering.

5.2 Insurance

Volunteers assume full liability and risk for their volunteer activities. Accident insurance is not provided for volunteers engaged in work on or in connection with Shalom Farms. Volunteers are encouraged to consult with their own insurance agents regarding the extension of their personal insurance to include community volunteer work. Specific information regarding such insurance is available from the Volunteer Manager.

5.3 Recognition

An annual volunteer recognition event will be conducted to highlight and reward the contribution of volunteers to the agency. Volunteers will be consulted and involved in order to develop an appropriate format for the event.

5.4 Informal Recognition

All staff and volunteers responsible for volunteer supervision are encouraged to undertake ongoing methods of recognition of volunteer service on a regular basis throughout the year. These methods of informal recognition should range from verbal and written "Thank You's" to a concerted effort to include volunteers as full participants in program decision making and implementationⁱⁱ.

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ⁱ (Adapted from Volunteer Policy - Barnado's)

<http://www.cidb.ie/comhairleVCS.nsf/0/20d0c0572e430431802567b6002df8eb?OpenDocument>

ⁱⁱ Adapted from "Sample Volunteer Management Policies" <http://www.casenet.org/program-management/volunteer-manage/sample-manage.htm#Volunteer%20Recruitment%20and%20Selection>