



## **Volunteer Handbook**

### ***Core Values***

Along with our mission, Bethel Area District Exchange and Food Pantry, BADE&FP's shared values are essential to our continued success. These values give us a common language and foundation to grow on. Our Core Values: ***Partnership, Agility, Inclusion***, drive how we accomplish our goals and conduct ourselves to execute and achieve our mission.

### ***Partnership***

We endeavor to provide the best possible experience to everyone we engage with, basing interactions on a foundation of equity, integrity, and humility.

### ***Agility***

We promote an organizational culture that encourages new ideas, improvements, flexibility, and innovations, and turns challenges into opportunities.

### ***Inclusion***

We respect the breadth of life experiences across the communities we partner with, holding people struggling with hunger and in need of clothing at the center of our decisions and actions.

### ***A Brief History***

In 1992 Maryvonne Wheeler, Cathy Newell, and Madeleine Henley founded both the District Exchange where used clothing can be donated and purchased and the Food Pantry to feed those Oxford county residents in need.

The District Exchange was without a home for three years. We reopened in August 2023.

The District Exchange programs include sales of used clothing, emergency clothing, and clothing closets at SAD44 schools.

The Food Pantry programs include shopping in our market or using OrderAhead to shop from your vehicle with all food delivered to the vehicle or to our Neighbors home, emergency food, snack program and backpack program in SAD44 schools and Andover School, Repant! Program, Senior Boxes, and Farm to Pantry Program.

We served 1400 families, over 4,000 individuals in 2022.

We support five food pantries and five farms in Oxford county with our Farm To Pantry Program.

We work with Good Shepherd Food Bank on many programs in Oxford county.

### ***Food and Clothing Insecurity in Maine***

Food and clothing insecurity is understood as a lack of consistent access to enough food and clothing for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life. This can be a temporary situation for a household or it can last a long time. (Feedingamerica.org)

Food and Clothing insecurity leads to many other complications:

- Families are forced to decide if they will spend money on food and clothing or other necessities such as rent or medications.
- Not having access to nutritious food and ample clothing leads to health conditions, resulting in an increase in medical bills among other factors.
- Children's abilities to learn and grow are affected.

Maine has the highest rate of food insecurity in New England and has one of the highest rates in the nation. The problem behind food insecurity is not the lack of food, but access to nutritious food. Volunteers like you enable us to continue increasing access to nutritious foods and ample clothing.

For current statistics on food insecurity see [www.FeedingMaine.org/hunter-in-maine](http://www.FeedingMaine.org/hunter-in-maine).

### ***Volunteer Values***

BADE&FP benefits from the generous support of community volunteers who serve on our board, help our staff deliver programs, and assist with special events and fundraisers. Volunteer involvement extends our capacity to meet the increasing demands of our services. Volunteers are equipped to carry out their work effectively within the community and recognized for their valuable contributions.

### ***Benefits of Volunteering***

- A meaningful way to contribute your time and unique talents to strengthen our community.
- An opportunity to meet others from your community with a shared interest. It is also an important and interesting way to meet people who you might not normally connect with, such as people from different age groups, ethnicities or social groups.
- Counteracts the effects of stress, anxiety, and depression by providing you with a new sense of purpose. Human beings are hard-wired to give to others, and researchers have found that being helpful to others can make you feel happy.
- An opportunity to practice important common skills used in the workplace, such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, planning, and organization. It shows potential employers that you can take initiative and that you care to improve the world for other people.
- A relaxing escape from your day-to-day routine, renew motivation and creativity in your personal life. It can also give you a sense of pride and identity, helping to boost your self-confidence further by taking you out of your comfort zone.

### ***Volunteer Rights***

As a volunteer, you have the right to:

1. Accurate and complete information about BADE&FP.
2. Have your personal information kept confidential.
3. A suitable assignment based upon your interests, skills, and availability.
4. Orientation and training to help you perform assigned tasks.
5. The support you need to perform assigned tasks, including providing the necessary equipment, supplies, workspace, and supervision.
6. The comfort of choice and confidence to say “no” to a request.
7. An inclusive, clean, and safe work environment.
8. The chance to grow and develop as a volunteer through participation in special training events, meetings, and other BADE&FP sponsored activities.
9. Receive recognition for your contribution.
10. The opportunity to give feedback about your volunteer experience.

### **Code of Conduct**

1. Speak and behave in an appropriate manner.
2. Be respectful of cultural differences.
3. Be reliable and responsible.
4. Communicate any issues or concerns which are likely to affect your volunteer duties.

5. Follow the directions as given by Directors.
6. Accept guidance from the Directors.
7. Be willing to learn and participate in orientation, training programs, and meetings.
8. Understand the role of paid staff, maintain a smooth working relationship with them and stay within the bounds of the volunteer role.
9. Comply with the policies and procedures of the organization, including following our Core Values.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### ***Drug-Free Workplace***

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of controlled substances on and in the BADE&FP property is prohibited. Additionally, volunteers may not be under the influence of any controlled substance while serving. Such action may result in your immediate dismissal from the volunteer position.

### ***Tobacco-Free Workplace***

Smoking by our employees, volunteers, clients or vendors in any interior offices or spaces of any building occupied by the District Exchange or Food Pantry is prohibited. Smoking is not permitted within 20 feet of any entryway, vent or doorway to interior buildings.

### ***Dress Code***

Volunteers are responsible for presenting a positive image to our community as representatives of BADE&FP. You should dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of your duties. BADE&FP respects and embraces different cultures and religions with different clothing requirements and will make reasonable accommodations if needed.

### ***Safety***

We will provide volunteers with information on facility safety plans and safety protocols related to the assigned volunteer positions at the time of registration. These guidelines are also posted on our volunteer bulletin board for you to review at any time. Any inquiry that concerns the volunteer while fulfilling the duties of their volunteer position, must be reported to the Director immediately.

### ***Inclement Weather***

In the event of inclement weather, please prioritize your safety and use good judgment. If you do not feel safe traveling to the BADE&FP please cancel your shift on the volunteer signup page of the website. If you are missing your shift on short notice, additionally please contact the Director.

### ***First Aid***

First aid treatment is provided by staff that are first aid and CPR certified. Staff rely on local resources including the Bethel fire department and ambulance service.

### ***Emergency Situations***

- During an emergency situation you may need to follow emergency instructions and/or evacuate the facility. Our staff will communicate instructions on what to do during an emergency situation by combination of verbal communication.
- You are responsible for ensuring your own safety and following Police, Fire, Rescue, and staff instructions when applicable.
- Always be aware of your surroundings during an evacuation. The meeting location for all facilities is the front parking lot grass or tree line outside of the main entrance. Please gather with other volunteers and do not leave the premises until you have been accounted for by a Director.
- First-Aid treatment will only be provided in the designated meeting location described previously.

### ***Age Restrictions***

To protect the safety of all workers, individuals must be 18 years or older to volunteer. Volunteers can be younger if they are working outside the hours when Neighbors shop.

The work assigned to volunteers is performed in an environment with minimal hazards, compliant with appropriate federal and state labor laws. To that end, youth volunteers may not be permitted to perform some safety-sensitive tasks involving the operation of machinery and equipment.

### ***Liability and Insurance***

In May of 1997 Congress approved legislation that shields volunteers for nonprofit organizations from liability lawsuits. HR911 limits the occasions when volunteers, as well as directors, officers, and trustees, may be sued in connection with their actions on behalf of a nonprofit while the legislation removes a volunteer (but not the nonprofit) from liability if an individual commits negligent acts or omissions while acting within the scope of his or her responsibility. It does not protect the person if such acts were caused by willful or criminal misconduct or gross negligence.

### ***Confidentiality***

BADE&FP recognizes confidentiality as a living principle based on the sanctity and dignity of the human person. Therefore, BADE&FP will respect the privacy of personal information of those it serves or employs. You are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of all information to which you are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves staff members, clients or the organization overall. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in corrective action, suspension or dismissal.

### ***Harassment, Discrimination, and Violence Prevention Program***

We are committed to a work environment that is professional and harassment-free for all employees and volunteers. Harassment includes, without limitations, verbal, physical, visual, and innuendo. Harassment also includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact and other verbal or physical conduct or visual forms of harassment of sexual nature when submission to such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment or is used as the basis for unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidation, hostile or offensive work environment for employees and volunteers.

Volunteers should report any issues to their Director.

### ***Corrective Action***

In certain situations, corrective action may follow an incident or evaluation. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, re-assignment to a new position, and suspension or dismissal from volunteer service.

### ***Concerns and Grievances***

Volunteers have the opportunity to report any problems without retaliation or adverse action. BADE&FP maintains an open-door policy regarding volunteer concerns and grievances. If you have a problem or complaint, you should feel free to email the Director or speak directly to the Director. If your concerns can not be settled at this level, you have the option of emailing in or speaking with our Executive Director.

## **Ending Volunteer Service**

You are free to end your volunteer service with us at any time. Because volunteers are so important to us, we request that you provide advance notice of your departure and a reason for your decision.

### ***Termination***

You may be terminated from your position as a volunteer for a variety of reasons. Some of these include gross 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 coworkers, failure to abide by policies and procedures, failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

### ***Grounds for Dismissal***

- Discrimination, Harassment, Violence
- Unauthorized use of BADE&FP property
- Misrepresenting the Organization
- Misuse of Social Media

### ***Exit Interview***

When you end your service, you will be given an opportunity to give us any further comments about your experience and to provide any potential ideas for improvements.

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Heidi Holt, Bethel, ME  
Heather Hale-Nivus, Bethel, ME  
Hope Schroy, Newry, ME

#### STAFF

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