



## **DCV's Volunteer Handbook**

### **Welcome to Dupont Circle Village**

Dupont Circle Village is a nonprofit neighborhood organization that connects residents to one another through educational, health and wellness, cultural and social activities as well as volunteer supports and service recommendations. Membership in the Dupont Circle Village is all about neighbors helping neighbors, maintaining independence at home, enjoying the community, and preparing for and enjoying the benefits of aging, while benefiting from a range of supports that address the challenges of aging.

### **About Villages**

The first Village began in Boston more than a decade ago with the launch of the Beacon Hill Village. It has grown to become a vibrant national movement, with more than 200 Villages operating across the nation. There are more than 40 Villages in the Washington metropolitan area.

The concept has gained the attention of national, federal, state and local agencies, universities, foundations, and organizations. The first national study of Villages is currently underway at the University of California at Berkeley. AARP Magazine, which has a circulation of more than 22 million, recently included an article that featured a quote from Dupont Circle Village.

Volunteers are a critical element of the success of many Villages, providing help with tasks that encourage and assist residents to remain comfortable in their homes. Neighborhood volunteers, ranging in age from 16 to over 90 comprise a robust network that offer support along a continuum that includes small discreet tasks as well as on-going large projects. Volunteers also provide in-kind support and their professional expertise to perform administrative tasks (marketing, website administration, newsletter production, office work, and accounting) for the Village.

Villages are generally 501 (c)(3) organizations that are overseen by a board comprised of local residents. Many hire an administrator or executive director. Operations are often funded by membership dues, donations, and grants.

## **Why Volunteer?**

Volunteers are a critical cornerstone of the Village. Volunteers touch the lives of residents throughout the Dupont Circle area. Members range in age from 50 to over 90. Therefore, our volunteer program provides opportunities for individuals of all ages to be a part of our Village community, helping with specific requests and attending social activities and events.

Volunteers are a necessary link to community. They enable the Village to fulfill its mission, providing needed services that support independence. The Village recognizes the special skills, talents and experiences volunteers bring as well as a desire to share and serve this community. We attempt to match the needs of our members and organization with the interests of each volunteer whenever possible.

We appreciate and are very grateful for the generosity and the gift of time of each volunteer. Every volunteer, even those who participate only a few hours each year, contribute immeasurably to sustaining our Village. We could not meet the needs of our members without volunteer help.

Volunteering with Dupont Circle Village is more than an opportunity to work with an aging population. Rather, it facilitates interaction with and greater knowledge of neighbors, while it promotes an enriched sense of community. In addition, volunteering is an opportunity to learn new skills and information, share expertise, and gain useful experience.

In addition to working with members, volunteers assist the Executive Director, working individually or in small groups on selected administrative tasks ranging from website maintenance, marketing and promotion, special program support, and office management.

Village educational, cultural and social activities are generally scheduled weekdays and evenings. Accordingly, weekday, weekend and evening volunteer requests are quite common. Some projects are most conveniently accomplished on weekends or after business hours and are scheduled to accommodate the member and volunteer. With such demands and needs in mind, it is important for volunteers to keep the Volunteer Coordinator informed of changes in status, contact information, and preferences for job tasks.

## **Becoming a DCV Volunteer**

1. Complete and submit a Volunteer Application form, found on our website at [www.dupontcirclevillage.net](http://www.dupontcirclevillage.net). This form captures contact information as well as skills, interests, and availability.

2. Complete and submit a “Release of Information” form, which authorizes the Village to perform a background check at no charge to you. We employ an online service, IntelliCorp, to ensure that volunteers are appropriately screened to provide security clearance for everyone’s safety.
3. Submit these two forms to **Michael Gould, Volunteer Program Coordinator, Dupont Circle Village, 2121 Decatur Place, NW, Washington, DC 20008.**
4. Once an application is received and reviewed, a security clearance is performed. Your personal references will be contacted for their comments.
5. An interview will then be scheduled, usually with the Volunteer Program Coordinator.
6. Once vetted, new volunteers receive a welcome email and volunteer handbook.
7. New volunteers are placed on the DCV volunteer roster. Requests are generally emailed to all volunteers who are encouraged to accept assignments by replying to the Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteer@dupontcirclevillage.net](mailto:volunteer@dupontcirclevillage.net).
8. There are no minimum hours to serve.
9. If you have provided additional volunteer services that were not processed through the DCV office, you are asked to submit a Volunteer Hours Report Form to the Volunteer Program Coordinator.
10. The Village maintains a master list of all volunteers for program administrative purposes. This list is neither used nor distributed for proprietary purposes.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

The following is a sample list of volunteer opportunities and areas where we have most frequent requests with assisting members and supporting Village operations.

### *Assisting Members:*

- Administrative Tasks
- Downsizing and Donations
- Electronic Support
- Escort, Companion, and Special Assistance
- Home Maintenance (heavy)
- Home Maintenance (light)
- Home Safety Awareness
- Inclement Weather Support
- Meals
- Neighborhood Errands
- Technology Support
- Transportation

### *Supporting Village Operations:*

- Committee Support
- Food Support
- Marketing and Communications
- Member and Volunteer Relations
- Newsletter Assistance
- Office Assistance
- Office Receptionist
- Outreach
- Program Coordinator
- Project Manager
- Resource Management
- Training
- Website and Social Media

## **Volunteer Rights, Responsibilities and Prohibitions**

### ***You have a right to:***

- Receive suitable assignments that match the volunteer's interests and abilities;
- Obtain orientation and training for safe performance of duties as appropriate;
- Decline any volunteer opportunity;
- Get direction and support from the Executive Director and Volunteer Coordinator;
- Receive updates from the Executive Director and Volunteer Coordinator through appropriate regular communication and feedback; and
- Obtain information about DCV programs and policies on request.

### ***You have a responsibility to:***

- Maintain confidentiality of members consistent with your undertaking in the Volunteer Agreement;
- Perform volunteer activities in a safe manner for yourself and others;
- Communicate any personal or physical limitations to the Volunteer Coordinator in advance of a volunteer assignment;
- Participate fully in training programs offered by the DCV;
- Perform volunteer activities in a positive and constructive manner and give feedback on a regular basis to the Volunteer Coordinator;
- Be on time for volunteer assignments;
- Inform the Volunteer Coordinator if you are unable to make your commitment if at all possible at least 24 hours before your assignment;
- Complete monthly time reports;
- Contact the Volunteer Coordinator if you are feeling uncomfortable with a situation, are concerned about the health or well-being of a member being served or need advice on how to proceed; and
- Call 911 in the event of a medical emergency and inform the Volunteer Coordinator of such an event.

### ***You are prohibited from:***

- Administering medications or medical treatment;
- Attempting to lift or carry a member (or anyone else);
- Accepting gifts or compensation from members;
- Witnessing documents;
- Referring members to other services or vendors without prior approval of the Executive Director or the Program Coordinator;
- Using alcohol or drugs during a volunteer assignment; and
- Signing any agreement that involves DCV in any organizational or financial obligations.

## **Volunteer Reporting and Follow Up**

Dupont Circle Village gratefully recognizes and honors the contributions and efforts of our volunteers. We track and follow-up all assistance provided by volunteers. Accurate accounting of volunteer time given is important to us because volunteer hour records provide valuable data used in our fundraising efforts and in our reporting to our membership.

## **Emergency Situations and Accident Reporting**

If a medical emergency occurs when you are volunteering, **call 911 immediately** to get assistance. Please then call the Executive Director, Eva Lucero, at 202.510.0523.

It is a rare event that a volunteer is involved in an accident of any type while performing volunteer duties. An accident report must be completed by the Executive Director with input from the member and volunteer. All accidents will be investigated by the Executive Director, the Volunteer Program Coordinator and the Board of Directors.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What if I am uncomfortable answering a question posed by a member?**

Tell the member you are not comfortable answering the question and you will have someone from Dupont Circle Village get back to them.

### **I travel for several months during the year, may I still volunteer?**

Absolutely, just let us know in advance of your schedule, when possible.

### **What if I am asked to do something I just do not want to do?**

It is perfectly acceptable to decline an assignment. The goal is to find the right match for you. Volunteering must be a rewarding experience and something that you love!

## **Volunteer Tips**

- **Know what you want to get out of volunteering.** You can volunteer to make a contribution, advance your career, meet new friends, gain recognition, or simply enjoy the personal satisfaction that comes from helping others.
- **Check the time it takes to do a particular volunteer job.** How does the time commitment fit your schedule and lifestyle?
- **Tell us about your skills, interests, and life experiences** and how they could be useful in a volunteer setting.
- **Be willing to give and take honest feedback** in your volunteer job, and when necessary, to be an advocate for change.
- **Respect confidentiality** related to your volunteer assignment.
- **It's okay to say no** to a request if you are asked but feel unable to commit to an assignment.

- **Most important of all, bring your heart and your sense of humor** to your volunteer service, along with an enthusiastic spirit which is, in itself, a priceless gift.

### **Release of Volunteers**

Dupont Circle Village reserves the right to refuse or release volunteers for reasons of incompatibility with our mission and/or carrying out responsibilities.

### **For More Information – Contact:**

*Michael Gould*, Volunteer Program Coordinator: [volunteer@dupontcirclevillage.net](mailto:volunteer@dupontcirclevillage.net)

*Eva Lucero*, Executive Director: [execdir@dupontcirclevillage.net](mailto:execdir@dupontcirclevillage.net); 202.436.5252

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[5/2016]