



Volunteer Handbook

A comprehensive resource for LVC Volunteers

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** Subject to updates prior to the start of the 2018-19 LVC Year*

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I. WHO ARE WE?

A. *Welcome and Introduction to LVC*

Welcome to Lutheran Volunteer Corps! We are excited that you have accepted our invitation to journey with us. You are joining a community of former Volunteers, nonprofit partners, congregations, and Supporters who live out the mission of LVC. Your desire to explore and live into your own internal work through LVC's Core Practices and your spirituality will impact you in many ways. There will be transition, moments of joy and grace, and we are committed to walking alongside you in this journey. We believe that the LVC experience has the potential to be life-changing. This Volunteer Handbook provides context, logistics, and additional information for your LVC year.

Mission Statement

Lutheran Volunteer Corps is a community of faith that unites people to work for peace with justice.

Values Statement

As the Lutheran Volunteer Corps, our values are:

- Simple and sustainable living honors the abundant resources that God provides. These resources must be shared equitably so all can thrive.
- We are unique individuals, yet we are bound to each other. Living in intentional community creates the supportive space to engage in social justice, live sustainably, and explore meaning and vocation.
- Exploring spirituality in community promotes understanding of diverse beliefs and values.
- Our journey to inclusive community must confront racism and oppression through intentional and often uncomfortable personal and institutional transformation.
- Social justice compels us to strive for a peaceful world where basic human rights are met.

B. *The Three Core Practices*

Working for social justice, living in intentional community and living simply and sustainably are LVC's Core Practices, introduced at National Orientation and discussed throughout the year. LVC sees each of the Core Practices as spiritual practices. Volunteers make a commitment to explore these both in community and individually during LVC.

Intentional Community

Volunteers make a commitment to live in intentional community, sharing material resources, spirituality, recreational time, and the joys and challenges of daily life for the full program year. Community can provide strength to work for social justice and challenges us to be open, compassionate, and willing to change. LVC expects Volunteers to affirm their interdependence and responsibility to one another, to express vulnerability, nurture trust, and build authentic relationships. Community life requires effective communication, conflict resolution, self-care, and commitment. Communities are expected to have at least one regularly scheduled night each week that is designated as community night.

Simple and Sustainable Living

Living simply and sustainably is more than not spending much money. At LVC it is an invitation to strive to be intentional about the use of money, time, and material possessions and to live in ways that value relationships over objects. Living simply is a process of examining how our use of time, consumer power, and resources impact the earth, people who are oppressed and marginalized, and our own quality of life. Simplicity also relates to community and spirituality: simple/sustainable living is a process of re-examining what we really value and trying to live that out.

In more practical terms, this means a commitment to:

- Become more aware of the materialism of society and ourselves, including the use of cars, cell phones, and wi-fi.
- Be conscious of our use of natural resources: water, energy, recycling, fuel, composting.
- Make food choices that are healthier and more creative: e.g. cooking from scratch rather than using processed foods and eating out, eating less meat, fewer exotic foods or alcohol.
- Live less hectically to focus on community relationships and spiritual life.
- Seek creative entertainment choices, and finding free and low-cost activities in your community.

Working for Social Justice

LVC understands social justice to be both working directly with people to meet their immediate basic needs such as food, shelter, and education as well as addressing the root causes of injustices. Part of this commitment is expressed through our placement organizations that either indirectly or directly have made a commitment to address injustice. We understand the work of social justice to be both external and internal, which means being aware of our own experiences with oppression, privilege, and being open to discussion about racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, and economic justice. Understanding how social justice and how your actions impact others is important to keep in mind as you make decisions related to both intentional community and simple and sustainable living. Throughout this year, we invite you to share with one another what you are learning at your Placement, exploring your relationships to privilege, oppression, and institutional injustice.

C. The L in LVC

LVC was founded in 1979 by Luther Place Memorial Church in Washington, DC. During that time, Luther Place was creating a variety of ministries on N Street, including a free medical clinic, a food pantry, and a continuum of day and night programs for women experiencing homelessness. Luther Place created these ministries by reaching out to other religious communities, including Roman Catholic and Jewish congregations, as well as organizations without any particular religious affiliation like the Community for Creative Non-Violence. The congregation's work and alliances with these religious and non-religious communities shaped the congregation and its ministries such as LVC in profound ways.

This brief history of LVC's beginnings can help to put our affiliation with the Lutheran Church in context. Many important factors in the early formation of LVC continue to shape the way we claim a Lutheran affiliation within a spiritually diverse community. LVC was founded by a particular Lutheran congregation steeped in a context of deep Christian and interfaith relationships with other organizations. Although LVC borrowed its Core Practices (with permission) from other religious traditions, LVC found these practices to be well matched with the Lutheran tradition.

For more information visit our [website](http://www.lutheranvolunteercorps.org). (www.lutheranvolunteercorps.org)

D. Spirituality and Faith at LVC

Spirituality and faith are important components of the LVC experience. Therefore, LVC Volunteers commit to exploring how community, social justice, and sustainability are expressions of spirituality. Volunteers commit to engage in dialogue with one another, to explore their own unique expressions of faith and spirituality in ways that respect, honor and support the journey of each person. LVC Volunteers in each house community commit to a monthly dialogue about religion, faith and spirituality referred to as Journey Conversations and Spirituality Nights.

E. Journey to an Inclusive Community

LVC is committed to fighting oppression in all its forms, and we have a particular focus on racism and white privilege through the Journey to an Inclusive Community. LVC is on a Journey to an Inclusive Community, forming and strengthening relationships with people of many cultures and communities, and by intentionally dismantling racism within LVC, the church, and society. LVC realizes that institutional racism profoundly impacts the social landscapes in which we live and work. LVC is dedicated to working toward becoming an inclusive community as an organization. LVC promotes inclusiveness and community within its board of directors, committees and staff, as well as among donors, Placements, Volunteers and the greater community.

F. Reconciling in Christ

Since 1999 LVC has been recognized by [Reconciling Works](#) as a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) program. LVC is committed to welcoming people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer. Volunteers join us in our effort to make LVC a place that is open, affirming, and safe for persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

G. Administration of LVC

Lutheran Volunteer Corps is a 501c3 organization, governed by a national Board of Directors. The Board includes representatives from Local Support Networks, congregations, and the community. The Board meets one time per year in person, in addition to conference calls and subcommittee meetings.

LVC's National Office is located at Luther Place Memorial Lutheran Church, in Washington, DC. The President, who oversees the work of the entire staff, assumes the day-to-day administration of LVC. The President also supervises the Program team, who are located across the country in field offices. A complete listing of the staff is also available in Section XI of this handbook.

II. LVC COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS

Your participation in LVC revolves around every aspect of the program– serving at your Placement, being an active part of your house community, making a sincere effort to live simply, being aware of your personal and spiritual needs, joining the larger LVC community at retreats and program days, and connecting within your local context. This year will be challenging. Realizing this, LVC expects you to remain committed to the program even when aspects might feel overwhelming or difficult, and likewise we are committed to supporting you through these aspects so that you may remain committed. Time after time, Volunteers who have struggled at different points in the year have expressed their appreciation for completing the program in its entirety.

A. Community Covenants

Each house community will be introduced to the idea of a Community Covenant, which you will share within your region at Fall Retreat. You will begin to explore the structure of your community and prepare for your year together at National Orientation before creating the Community Covenant. A covenant is a living document that should be modified, added to, and allowed to grow. It is a powerful guide and tool for volunteers to use throughout the whole year.

Each house community shares their hopes, goals, expectations, and commitments with one another in two forms: a written and a creative/artistic covenant. Each community is different, and so each will come up with a covenant that expresses its uniqueness.

Important aspects of a covenant often include:

- The community's understanding of what community means to them
- Expectations and goals for community life and simplified living
- Commitments on how members of the community will relate to each other, to the neighborhood and larger community - defining how much time is dedicated to each other, and how they will engage with police, safety, and risk
- The organization of cleaning roles and house tasks
- How money is handled in the community
- Methods for resolving conflicts, such as reconciliation, Restorative Justice practices, non-violent communication, etc.
- House meetings: what are they for and when do you have them?
- The community's understanding of how spirituality will be a part of their year both individually and together

Does your covenant:

- Bring out the best in your house and each individual, meeting everyone's needs?
- Challenge and motivate your house community for the year?
- Communicate your goals, your vision, and your values? Are your values at the center?
- Address the various roles you play as a community?
- Represent the unique contribution your house community can make to placements, the broader community, or congregations?
- Make room for forgiveness and flexibility while being firm and holding each relationship in the house accountable?

Groups typically begin work on their covenant within 2-3 weeks of arrival in their placement city, recognizing that as you settle in, pieces will be in flux. The written portion of your covenant will be due at Fall Retreat, and shared with Program Manager. Program Staff will refer to your commitment to the covenant during the year and in reviews.

B. Community Nights

Community nights are for you to build community together, largely as you choose. The goal of community is not for housemates to become best friends, but rather to find ways to support one another across differences. The intentionality of creating a structure and schedule for community nights supports your ability to hold each other accountable and ask for support in challenging situations. House community night activities are your responsibility to plan and schedule.

Of the four or five community nights that happen each month:

- One should be Journey Conversations model, led by your Spirituality Mentor
- One will be for addressing community building and concerns, led by your Community Mentor
- One should focus on a social justice topic or activity
- One should be fun

Business and nuts and bolts meetings might take place in conjunction with a community night but should not take the place of another activity that you participate in with your house.

Community night activities ideas might include:

- volunteering at a neighborhood organization or Placement
- playing a game (find them used at thrift stores!)
- going to a free concert, movie or poetry reading
- discussing a current news topic
- going on a hike or participating in an outdoor activity
- attending a public lecture or community presentation
- doing an art activity or craft
- holding your own spirituality night

Many LVC houses are located in communities with active neighborhood organizations working for justice locally. You are encouraged to find your own ways to become involved!

C. Journey Conversations - Spirituality Nights

LVC is an opportunity for each participant to understand and act on their own truths more faithfully through their experience with LVC. In order to achieve this goal, LVC trains and engages its Volunteers in the Journeys Conversations discussion model, facilitated by the Spirituality Mentor. A journey conversation creates an occasion for participants to listen deeply.

- Listen within – to your heart and your deepest truths;
- Listen to your life – to your lived experience and where you are finding purpose and meaning;
- Listen to one another – to what you can discover and discern in community.

An introduction on how to engage these conversations is offered at National Orientation and each community will be paired with a Spirituality Mentor to begin these in September.

LVC will also provide resources to Volunteers as requested to build relationships with individuals and religious communities that can support your spiritual practices. Your house community will not meet all your spiritual needs; we encourage you to take initiative to meet your own needs in this area (such as joining a local faith community, exploring other faith communities, meditating, creating your own spiritual practice, etc.).

LVC is open to people of all religious backgrounds. Volunteers do not have to be a part of any religious group in order to participate. On average, about 1/3 of LVC Volunteers are practicing Lutherans, 1/3 claim agnosticism, spirituality, or atheism as their beliefs, and 1/3 are from other Christian denominations or faith practices. LVC contends that its religious diversity is the product of a Lutheran theology of radical hospitality.

D. Important Situations to Discuss as a Community

Guest Policy

Only LVC Volunteers may live in an LVC house on a permanent basis. Visits of one week or longer must be discussed with and approved by program staff.

It is important for a community to spend time solely together and also to provide hospitality in the process of growth. Important pieces for consideration:

- During the first month and the last two months of the LVC program year, visitors are only allowed to stay for a couple of nights (preferably on the weekend) in the house, and the host must be around and available.
- Anytime you have a visitor, you must talk with all your housemates about their stay before they plan to visit
- We discourage multiple back-to-back visitors staying in the house. Prolonged visits with guests are generally a detriment to community development and growth

Significant Relationships

Maintaining a significant relationship while living in a community has its joys and its difficulties. Romantic relationships, and even friendships, can place demands on your time and energy that need to be balanced with your commitments to your housemates. While in a significant relationship with a person outside or within your community, we recommend that you address the following concerns individually and as a community:

Talk with your housemates about the effect of the relationship on the community and vice versa. Also be aware that staying as a guest away from the house can be detrimental to community, particularly early in the year. It is critical to discuss how to balance this type of outside relationship with the needs of community.

It is important that these conversations be ongoing, and that they address all community members' needs. Your relationships with one another, as well as with a significant other, will go through stages and changes over a year period. Housemates need to feel privacy within their own home, with some limits set for outside parties' involvement. Likewise, maintaining an outside relationship requires time and space separate from the rest of the community. Keep lines of communication open so that all may express their preferences and concerns.

Security

Living in any city brings joys and challenges. Think critically about what security and risk means for you, especially in the context of your anti-racism work. Be aware of your safety and the safety of your belongings. Much of this is about communication and the development of good habits. For example it is a good idea to discuss how closely you will inform each member of your community your individual schedules. Questions to keep in mind:

- If you decide to stay out late with a friend, will you inform your community members?
- Will you meet each other at the bus stop if someone has a late meeting?
- Will you consider getting renter's insurance either individually or as a house? (LVC does not replace stolen items)
- Sometimes the Core Practices and your values can seem in conflict with each other. If one is attempting to live simply, is it wrong to leave lights and/or radios on when the house is empty?

The above questions are not simple ones to answer. You are encouraged to discuss these situations about safety and other aspects of community living early on with your community

If you are harmed or a crime is committed contact program staff immediately. We want to help you through a difficult situation. We will also need to document when things happen with incident reports so that you and LVC have a record of how things were handled. This helps us to have a sense of the history of a neighborhood and safety considerations in that area, and to be sure that you are supported as well as possible.

III. EVERYDAY CHOICES

A. Living Simply and Sustainably on a Budget

Living simply and sustainably provides an opportunity to think intentionally about how you spend money and use resources and time, as well as how you can focus on being present to your community, your Placement, and be aware of your impact. Accepting our invitation to live simply and sustainably is accepting a desire to be aware of how your choices affect others and the world around you. This is an opportunity to challenge how you live with one another from choices about food, spending, and resources, to an examination of your impact and motivation through a critical lens.

People enter LVC with varying degrees of experience with living simply and sustainably, and there is no formula for living simply. We assume and expect that you will live on your stipend during your LVC year and not on life savings or money from your parents, friends, etc. Part of the LVC experience is learning to live on this amount, to wrestle with questions of privilege, and engage in this process as a community. If you have a concern about finances, please let your Program Manager know before anything becomes a serious issue.

B. Being Present to Community

Developing intentional community takes time, effort, and commitment from everyone. At LVC we also see this as an integral component to the spiritual practice of living simply and sustainably. During the first weeks in LVC, you will be transitioning into a new environment and will be experiencing many exciting and also challenging moments. With this in mind, your commitment to community will require a desire to establish common agreements as a community. These conversations will happen in spaces that are planned during your community nights to informal times such as walking to work or buying groceries together. It is important that each person enters community with a desire to get to know one another, set-up household routines, and learn about the local context you will find yourselves in throughout the year. LVC expects Volunteers to make a sincere effort to develop and work at building community, to do what is necessary for the household to function efficiently, effectively and lovingly during the course of the year. Giving your time to each other and to the community in these early months will set a firm foundation for the rest of the year.

When making decisions that affect your being present in and to your community, please reflect on the following questions:

- Am I focused on the present or am I only focused on my past relationships and my future plans?
- How much time am I spending away from my community (on the phone, social media, email, graduate school applications or test preparations, making frequent trips to visit friends and family)?
- How is this impacting my relationships with each person in my community?
- Am I giving and receiving support from my community, or am I relying on outside resources (e.g. family, friends, a significant other) to give me the support I need as a LVC Volunteer?
- If I am relying on people outside of my community, why?

C. Physical, Emotional, and Mental Health

There are times where Volunteers might encounter challenges related to their physical, emotional, or mental health that can make it difficult to fully participate in their work and/or their community life. LVC staff is available to direct Volunteers to mental health resources in their region if requested by the Volunteer. If issues such as eating disorders, depression, anxiety, or other health concerns arise for any Volunteer during the year, the Program Manager for the respective region will do their best to direct Volunteers to the appropriate professional services that are available.

Program Managers can assist a Volunteer on how to discuss their particular needs and possible accommodations with their community and Placement agency. When a Volunteer or the community member become aware of a health issue, it is important to communicate this to the Program Manager, and if appropriate, to someone from the Local Support Network. The situation will then be collectively addressed by the volunteer and national program staff to determine the support most suitable to the Volunteer (and community).

D. Self-care Plan

A self-care plan is a tool for each LVC Volunteer to optimize during their terms of service throughout the year. These are developed from the idea that a Volunteer who commits to serving in the LVC program enters with their whole self, and thus attention to holistic care is critical to a healthy, meaningful LVC experience. This process is not only designed to assist the LVC Volunteer in their self-awareness and articulation of support needs (i.e. physical, emotional, etc.), but also to be used as a communication tool for sharing these needs with others (including but not limited to Program Staff, LVC community members, and local support).

E. Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy

Lutheran Volunteer Corps prohibits the illegal use and abuse of alcohol and drugs, and we encourage volunteers to examine their relationship with these substances. Because of the serious problems related to the misuse of alcoholic beverages and illicit drugs, and because this practice can harm an individual's effectiveness in their Placement and their ability to live in community in a healthy way, we will not tolerate the misuse of alcoholic beverages and illicit drugs. LVC urges all Volunteers to use mature judgment and social responsibility when making decisions about using alcohol or drugs.

1. Offenses on LVC Property

Unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, and use of drugs, or excessive use of alcohol is prohibited on property owned or leased by LVC. LVC further prohibits the misuse of drugs including but not limited to narcotics, depressants, stimulants and hallucinogens whether criminalized or not. A Volunteer must also notify LVC if she or he is convicted of any criminal drug statute violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after the conviction.

2. Offenses off LVC Property

Unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, and use of drugs, or excessive use of alcohol is prohibited off of LVC Property. Such use may adversely affect a Volunteer's performance, impair judgement, cause harm to the Volunteer and others, and reflect unfavorably upon public or governmental confidence in the manner in which LVC carries out its activities. Volunteers must comply with the rules and regulations regarding alcohol consumption of any facility used for LVC-sponsored activities. Volunteers must comply with state and federal laws regarding the consumption of alcohol.

3. Volunteer Assistance

Program Managers will help volunteers locate resources for drug and alcohol abuse or addiction, but are not trained substance abuse counselors. Your health insurance may provide coverage of certain expenses associated with the treatment of drug and alcohol abuse or addiction. While LVC encourages Volunteers to get help for alcohol and drug abuse or addiction, LVC also reserves the right to determine if a Volunteer should continue in the program regardless of treatment.

4. Disciplinary Action

LVC will take action with Volunteers who violate these policies. These actions may include verbal or written warnings, a probationary period to examine behavior, and dismissal from the program. LVC Program Staff will determine the actions take. (see section IX.D for an outline of this process).

F. Confidentiality

While confidentiality in community is an important part of respect for housemates and privacy, it is also important to keep in mind the value of making harmful behavior known. Confidentiality is not as important as someone's safety. One way to respect confidentiality would be to inform the person ahead of time about your concerns and plans to contact program staff about the situation.

From the perspective of the program staff, confidentiality is an important part of Volunteer support. In the case of a serious community issue, you can expect program staff to talk with other relevant staff members about the situation. A program staff member will not share your personal concerns with another Volunteer without discussing it with you in advance.

G. A Note about the Core Practices in Community

Each Volunteer enters LVC with their particular interests, hopes for and expectations about what living out the Core Practices will look like for them as an individual and in community. Sometimes, you may not realize what hopes and expectations you hold until an experience with a housemate or someone at your Placement brings these expectations to light

Every year, frustrations arise in house communities around perceptions of some Volunteers not fulfilling the Core Practices in the way that housemates expect. At times, in fact, a kind of "scapegoat" dynamic can develop, where one Volunteer is singled out by several of their housemates for somehow failing to meet expectations. If that one person leaves, the remaining housemates often find that their community issues have not, in fact, been resolved by that person's absence.

If you are not sure if a housemate's behavior constitutes a serious and harmful breach of community expectations, take a moment to consider if there are significant cultural, gender, class or racial differences that might lead to very different expectations about community between housemates. This is not to say that someone who is different from the rest of the house cannot be responsible for a serious and harmful breach of LVC's expectations, only that a "scapegoat effect" can more easily develop when one person is already significantly different in some way from the others in the house.

Generally speaking, Volunteers are not asked to leave LVC for failing to fulfill the Core Practices in the way that their housemates expect. While LVC discourages living beyond the stipend (i.e. dining out or buying expensive items), such behavior is not generally considered a serious community issue that leads to immediate removal. However, such spending is a cause for continued conversation within the community by Program Managers in the respective region.

IV. PROGRAM SPECIFIC

A. National Orientation

National Orientation is a yearly gathering for all incoming Volunteers who are serving across the country. It is also a time where local supporters, board members, alumni, and other community members join as we prepare for the start of the year together. National Orientation has four core objectives:

- To provide a foundation that defines LVC program expectations for Volunteers and their journey throughout the year

- To provide Volunteers a space to understand, take ownership of, and live into LVC's mission and Core Practices
- To describe and introduce spirituality as a practice in the context of LVC's mission
- To create a reflective, empowering space in which Volunteers are able to engage their own story and others'

B. LVC Retreats and Program Days

LVC Fall and Spring Retreats are intended to:

- Continue engagement with anti-oppression and spirituality curriculum begun at National Orientation
- Spend time with other people in your house/city/region
- Reflect on your experience and orient to the unique joys/challenges of the coming months
- Give you a chance to have fun and relax, stepping outside of your day-to-day context.

Topics may include: self-care, spirituality, oppression and privilege, house and community dynamics, and understanding self in community. **You are required to attend and participate in ALL LVC retreats and program days.** We may look for your leadership in guiding and leading the topics that interest you.

If it is absolutely necessary that you miss a retreat or program day for a compelling reason, you must fill out the "Retreat Absence Request Form" available in Appendix D and have this absence approved by your Program Manager one month in advance. Compelling reasons may include: a death in the family, severe health issues, or a prior scheduled major family event. If a Volunteer misses a retreat without formal approval from LVC, Program Staff will identify an appropriate alternative assignment for the Volunteer to complete. Failing to do so may be grounds for termination from the program.

Unless otherwise noted, houses will be responsible for preparing meals at retreats. Your house is responsible for the cost of ingredients and food preparation. The houses may also lead spirituality times. Program Staff will notify you if this is the case in your region and provide meal and spirituality assignments to each house prior to the retreat time. This is one of many ways that Volunteers practice radical hospitality and sharing community in LVC.

Your Placement is required by the 3-Way Contract to give you retreat or program days off, and not count it against vacation or comp time. Please advise your Program Manager if you are charged vacation or comp time.

We strongly encourage carpooling and/or the use of borrowed vehicles. See Appendix G for the mileage reimbursement form. Program Managers are responsible for ensuring you have the transportation to retreat, but you will be asked to help secure transportation from your Placement or Local Supporters, if possible. Since it takes effort to round up vehicles, we strongly suggest talking with program staff about transportation options several weeks before the retreat/program day.

C. Fundraising

One of the Lutheran Volunteer Corps' main objectives is to help launch people into a lifetime of service to the cause of social justice. In order to sustain our ability to accomplish this goal year after year, LVC relies upon a network of people who donate funds to LVC to support a year of service. Because Volunteers' experiences are one of the best tools with which to raise funds and share about our important work, **all LVC Volunteers are expected to participate in LVC Fundraisers in order to help underwrite the cost of a Volunteer in the following program year.**

V. LVC SUPPORT OF VOLUNTEERS

A. Program Staff Role

Each LVC region has a Program Manager designated to work specifically with Volunteers, Placements, and Local Supporters. Although Program Managers work individually in each region, they meet regularly to support each other's work. Although we are committed to confidentiality as we work with you (section III.F), please know that Program Managers consult with each other, the President, and other LVC Staff as needed to support Volunteers.

Responsibilities of the Program Staff include but are not limited to:

- Facilitating program support through Local Supporters
- Coordinating retreats
- Conducting reviews, evaluations, and meetings with Volunteers and Placements
- Networking and recruiting Placement organizations
- Coordinating Local Supporters and alumni in planning fundraisers, church visits, and social events

Program Managers are available to provide resources for mediation and conflict resolutions for community and Placement difficulties. You will see Program Staff during retreats, during your one-on-one reviews, and at times they meet with your house community.

Please contact your Program Manager immediately if:

- Your house community is not meeting weekly
- You are subject to a crime, injury or a major medical emergency
- You are considering leaving LVC or your placement
- You are considering interviewing for employment and would leave LVC
- You are having serious problems at your Placement or in your house community

B. Reviews

Reviews are kept low-key and casual. These are intentional touch-point meetings to reflect on where you are in your year as it relates to community, your Placement and your own experience.

Beginning of Year Dinners: Your Program Manager will coordinate a meal with your house within a month of your arrival to the city. This will be a chance to socialize and touch base on how things are going so far. If you'd like to meet one-on-one with your Program Manager, let them know directly and they will schedule a time to talk.

Fall Review: The first review will occur between October and November and will include your Placement supervisor. This is a chance to see if the position description, supervision and workload are meeting the Volunteer's and Placement supervisor's expectations. It is also a chance for you and your Placement supervisor to reflect on your experience with LVC's Core Practices. This is an important touch-point for reflection on your experience in LVC as it related to your community, support, and other aspects of your time thus far.

Mid-Year Review: This is another designated touch-point that usually happens between February and April. During this time, we ask you and your Placement supervisor to complete a written feedback form. This provides program staff with an opportunity to review your experience at a different stage of the year and provide support as you continue through the year. The Volunteer and program staff will then meet to discuss the written comments.

End-of-Year Review: Finally, there will also be a review between the program staff and the Volunteer. This will happen in June or July and is an opportunity for the Volunteer to reflect on the year. How did living by the Core Practices go? What were high points? Low points?

Subsequent reviews and other touch-points may happen as needed throughout the year.

Placement supervisors are expected to give Volunteers time off to meet with Program Managers for all reviews.

VI. LOCAL SUPPORT

A. Local Support Networks

Local Supporters and alumni assist Volunteers with getting acquainted with their LVC city, support occasional social events and fundraisers, and help locate household furnishings. Local Supporters also service the overall LVC program by assisting in the areas of recruiting Volunteers, assisting program staff with locating housing, publicity and fund development. Local Support Networks in each LVC are unique and their experience will differ from the experience of Volunteers and alumni in another LVC city.

B. Community Mentors & Spirituality Mentors

Each community will have at least a two-person support team - a Community Mentor and a Spirituality Mentor. This support team will be designated by program staff associated with the house. Community Mentors facilitate community sessions in the beginning of the LVC year and generally keep in touch with Volunteers. Spirituality Mentors facilitate monthly spirituality nights throughout the LVC year and generally keep in touch with Volunteers to support them in their spiritual growth. The role of Community Mentors and Spirituality Mentors will vary as each community is different.

Community Mentors will act as a resource for the community, help Volunteers with initial questions about the city, work through issues that arise, or simply be available when Volunteers need a listening ear. Community Mentors can also serve as a link between the Volunteers and other Local Supporters. Spirituality Mentors facilitate monthly journey conversations to help guide Volunteers in their conversations around spirituality in community. Community and spirituality sessions will guide Volunteers through discussion of conflict, the process of forming a covenant and enriching Volunteers' spirituality nights. Through these sessions, we hope Volunteers will establish a relationship with their support team.

C. Local Host Congregations

Each LVC community is supported by one or two local support congregations that have agreed to be in touch with the community throughout the year. Contact with support congregations is unique for each community. Some host congregations have local commissioning services for the Volunteers in their city. In the past, host congregations have provided food to a house at the beginning of the year, invited Volunteers to worship services, asked Volunteers to speak with members of the congregation, and assisted Volunteers with pastoral support in times of crisis.

D. When to Contact Local Supporters

1. If Volunteers are having a problem at work and needing a listening ear, Volunteers are encouraged to contact members of their Local Support Network. Be sure to contact the LVC program staff if the problem is significant.
2. If a Volunteer would like someone to come and talk with their community, to present information on a particular issue or to talk through how a Volunteer's community life is going.

3. If Volunteers are looking for someone to talk with or to explore topics of spirituality, Local Supporters can assist in locating resources.
4. If Volunteers need something for the house. For example, if additional furniture or important household items are needed, Local Supporters will assist in locating someone to donate the items. Program Staff can also be utilized for guidance.
5. If Volunteers want to borrow a car for a LVC retreat/program day.
6. When Volunteers want suggestions for fun/cheap things to do in LVC cities.
7. When things are going well and Volunteers want some great people with whom to celebrate.

E. Non-LVC Support

The LVC year can be a wonderful and life-changing experience; it may also be a time in your life when you're dealing with a complex issue, or set of issues. LVC staff, Local Supporters nor the support congregations are able to provide the guidance of a trained counselor. It is a very healthy step to seek professional help in dealing with difficult issues. Program Managers will be happy to help you locate low-cost counseling services in your area.

VII. LVC LOGISTICS

A. Living in LVC Housing

LVC Staff and Local Supporters have worked hard to obtain housing and furnishings for Volunteers' use during their LVC year. Although the LVC President has signed the leases for all the LVC houses, we consider each LVC house to be the Volunteers' responsibility during their year. Volunteers will move into their LVC house on Wednesday, August 15, 2018 and must vacate the house by July 21, 2019. If a Volunteer should leave the program early, they must vacate the house two days subsequent to the last day at their Placement. Volunteers are collectively responsible for the upkeep and cleanness of each LVC house. The house is not a dormitory and each Volunteer should care for the property as they would any property they actually lease themselves. A few tips:

- **Please designate one house member as the primary contact person with the property owner or property manager.** Since the specific circumstances for each LVC house are unique, we recommend that the primary contact for the house be in contact with the property manager and LVC Program Manager regularly.
- Contact the property manager or property owner, as well as your regional program manager, when major repairs are needed/requested (i.e. broken toilet, cracks in the ceilings), there are physical problems with the house/apartment.

The property owner or property manager is responsible for general maintenance (plumbing, utilities, pest control, but the requirements differ by state).

This does not include damage caused by residents (the Volunteers). Volunteers are responsible for the condition of their house. If the house is damaged beyond "normal wear and tear" at the end of the year, all Volunteers living on the premises for the year will be charged for repairs. If the property owner or property manager is unresponsive to a particular request, please contact the Program Manager to update them on the situation.

DO NOT contact the property owner or property manager for questions regarding rent or anything other than the physical condition of the house.

All Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the house and keeping the yard clean and in good shape. This includes shoveling snow, mowing lawns and weeding (if applicable).

NOT ALLOWED

Pets of any kind (including but not limited to dogs, cats, hamsters, fish, snakes, lizards, chickens, goats, sheep, pigs, cows, etc.) are NOT allowed on the premises within the house or yard. This is generally a requirement of the lease agreements.

Even if everyone in the LVC house agrees or the property owner/manager provides a specific exception to the Volunteers, one of next year's Volunteers may be unable to live in a house recently occupied by a pet due to allergies or other factors that are not sustainable for a community that is transitional and living in a LVC house for only a year.

All Volunteers are responsible for year-end clean-up of the house. Volunteers will be billed for damage done to their house.

Volunteers should NOT assume that they will be reimbursed for home improvements or repairs. Before investing in the LVC house, make sure that the property owner/property manager is willing to provide a reimbursement AND is okay with changes/improvements that are made. There are no specific funds designated in the LVC budget for home repairs or improvements. When in doubt – ask first.

Recommended House Settings

As part of living sustainably, consider the resources you use in your physical house setting. A comfortable range for temperatures during the winter is thought to be 68 degrees when you are at home and awake, and between 62 to 68 overnight when you are asleep. During the colder winter months, you can also apply insulating window plastic to reduce draft and heat loss - it can also help in the summer when air conditioning is used. In the summer, an appropriate range of temperature would be 76 to 80. If your house has a programmable thermostat, it can be used as a more sustainable option to automatically set temperatures. If a LVC house has an air conditioning unit please consider using fans instead.

B. Rent Information

Volunteer monthly rent is due on the first day of each month. However, LVC acknowledges that most Volunteers must mail their check to the DC office and will consider mail postmarked by the 10th of each month on time. For each month that rent is late, each Volunteer will owe an additional \$10 for the next month's rent. Houses **MUST** either pay with one check through a joint bank account, or designate one person and have them send a single check with the total house rent amount. Money orders are also acceptable, but cash is unaccepted.

- Send check or money order to: ***Lutheran Volunteer Corps, 1226 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005***
- The amount to be paid must be clearly legible and the check must be signed. In the memo line, please include HOUSE NAME, CITY and MONTH.
- Use **black ink** to write checks. We do electronic deposits; lighter colors will not be read by the machine.
- If a Volunteer is unable to submit their rent check to LVC's DC office by the 10th of the month, call or write to us and explain (prior to the 10th), and we will consider the situation and possibly not charge a late fee.

The amount of rent due is found in section IL.A.2 of the 3-Way Contract, under Volunteer Responsibilities. This amount may be different than the amount in the lease.

NOTE: Rent is different in each LVC city due to the varying cost of housing. Volunteers will receive their rent through the monthly stipend from their Placements. Monthly stipends are determined in part by the amount of rent Volunteers will owe individually.

C. Year-End Cleaning Guidelines

These guidelines are intended to ensure that each house is cleaned well at the end of the year in preparation for the new Volunteers. These tasks need to be done before the Final Year-End Walk-thru.

LVC has created a list of cleaning expectations so that incoming Volunteers may enter their LVC year feeling “at home,” to start their year without having to worry about cleaning up after the previous community.

Throughout the year, please feel free to get rid of the “junk” in the LVC house that will not be of use to future Volunteers, but do not get rid of furniture or appliances without consulting the program staff and Local Supporters.

Cleaning Guidelines

General

- Recycling removed from house
- Trash emptied
- Removal of personal items or house projects (a dead or weed ridden garden is not a nice gift)
- Blinds dusted and cleaned

Kitchen

- Stove and oven cleaned, including broiler and underneath stovetop (range) where food drips
- Refrigerator cleaned. Outside wiped of prints, inside washed and free of food stains on shelves and in drawers (leftovers, mostly used condiments, and other items that can spoil removed). Freezer defrosted. Drip pan emptied and cleaned
- Cabinets cleaned, food items stored in the pantry that cannot be passed on must be given away or thrown away
- Kitchen floor and wall by stove scrubbed thoroughly
- Compost emptied

Bathrooms

- Tub/sink/toilet scrubbed
- Tile (floor, tub or shower stall) scrubbed of mildew and dirt

Bedrooms

- Swept/mopped/vacuumed
- Emptied - no personal effects in drawers or closet once a Volunteer leaves. (Anything left will be given away or thrown out.)

Lawn and Garden

- Final mowing/raking, as determined by the lease

E. Fall & Spring Retreat Mileage Reimbursement Policy

It is expected that everyone will carpool. Therefore, LVC will not reimburse one person driving alone to a retreat, except in cases it is negotiated in advance with the Program Manager.

Mileage Reimbursement Forms

Before or after each retreat, LVC staff will provide mileage reimbursement forms to the drivers. A copy of the form is provided in Appendix G. Volunteers will be reimbursed at .24 cents per mile. You will be reimbursed for gas and

tolls if you are borrowing a car or van and for mileage and tolls if you are using your own vehicle. If a Volunteer is using a borrowed car and requesting reimbursement for mileage, we expect that the owner of the car will receive the amount being reimbursed (minus whatever has been spent on gas). Any reimbursements must have attached receipts and/or a map of the route driven showing mileage. **These must be submitted to your Program Manager for reimbursement no later than one month after the retreat, or a reimbursement will not be provided.**

VIII. PLACEMENT INFORMATION

LVC expects Volunteers to accept the responsibilities and duties assigned by the Placement and fulfill them to the best of their abilities. The responsibilities are outlined in the Position application and are reviewed by the Volunteer during the admissions process. Volunteers will serve 40 hours per week. Compensatory time off will be given to the Volunteer if the service hours exceed this amount. Volunteers cannot claim unemployment benefits from their Placements upon departure or completion of the program because they are not in an employer/employee relationships, but rather Volunteers in a program.

A. Highlights from 3-Way Contract

The 3-Way Contract is an important LVC document that we take very seriously - Volunteers are expected to take it seriously as well. While a list of “rules” may seem formal, LVC strives to be flexible, and has learned from experience that it benefits all to set basic expectations. A generic copy of the 3-Way Contract may be found in Appendix G.

Key highlights from the 3-Way Contract:

- **The monthly stipend covers:**
 - The cost of rent (that the Volunteer will send to LVC)
 - \$130 food stipend, \$130 personal stipend (\$150 personal stipend for second years)
 - Transportation stipend for commuting and incidental travel
 - Car insurance reimbursement as applicable - submit receipts/invoice based on actual expense to Placement
 - If you pay your insurance premium on a non-monthly basis (every 6 months, yearly, etc.), your Placement may choose to reimburse the expense on a monthly basis or in a lump sum
- **Your term of service with LVC runs from August 11, 2018 through July 21, 2019**, with your last day of service at your Placement being July 19, 2019. You will receive 1.5 months of your stipend on your first day of service (August 20). Departures earlier than July 21, 2019 will be considered early departure, and will require prior consultation and written agreement.
- **You are responsible for rent from mid-August through July.** If you depart and/or are terminated from LVC, you will retain sole responsibility for any rent payments due to LVC.
- **You are required to attend and participate in all LVC retreats.** (See section IV.B, “Retreats/Program Days”).
- **We also ask you to NOT take on any additional jobs or for-credit classes during your LVC year.** Also, please limit housesitting stints to no more than one-week periods. Life in the LVC program is a very full undertaking. We know from experience that additional commitments like part-time jobs or classes generally make people too busy and compromise community relationships.

Your Placement is required to provide ten (10) days of **paid vacation** during your year. (“Paid” means you’ll still get your full stipend).

- You may not “save” your vacation time to leave the program early, unless you have negotiated this with both LVC and your Placement before June 1.
- Your Placement supervisor must approve vacation days *before* they are taken.
- Holidays and sick leave will be given to you in accordance with the policies of the Placement. An exception is made when sick leave and vacation are combined at the Placement and are only 10 days. In this

circumstance, you will be granted a minimum of 3 days for sick leave to avoid using vacation days for sick leave.

As a Volunteer, it is a requirement that you are on a health insurance plan. Health insurance plan options include 1) the plan provided through your Placement, 2) the plan offered to your Placement by LVC, or 3) if applicable, the plan provided to you through your parent or guardian's insurance. Your Placement pays for your health insurance policy from September 1, 2018 to July 31, 2019. If your Placement provides dental insurance for other employees, they must also provide it for you at no extra cost. Your health insurance may or may not include vision coverage.

B. Health Insurance Reimbursements

Volunteer responsibility:

- You are responsible for the first \$100 of health related deductibles, co-payments, and prescription costs that you incur while serving at the Placement. Save these receipts in case you need to verify payment.
- If covering the \$100 or any other cost becomes a problem, talk to your program staff to seek any available financial assistance.
- Costs incurred beyond \$1,000 are the Volunteer's responsibility.

Placement's responsibility (after \$100 is paid, up to a maximum of \$900):

- Health related deductibles, co-payments, dental care, and prescription costs (not including corrective devices) after the first \$100 including dental costs up to a maximum of \$900.
- Provide receipts (with prescriptions and diagnoses blocked out) for the above-listed health costs, and provide those to your Placement when you have reached the \$100 limit to prove you have spent that amount.
- If you stay on your previously-held health insurance plan and you waive your Placement's responsibilities for health insurance as outlined in the 3-Way Contract, you will still be available to receive the \$900 health reimbursement.

C. Consideration for Leaving LVC

If, for some reason, things are not working out at your Placement or in your community, please contact your Program Manager. DO NOT quit or otherwise propose changes in your position status before consulting with your Program Manager. Since Volunteers have signed a Contract for a specific position with a specific Placement, all three parties must be involved in any changes. If your Placement makes or suggests changes, please notify your Program Manager as soon as possible.

If, for some reason, a Volunteer chooses to leave the LVC program early (prior to July 21), please keep the following in mind:

- By leaving earlier, Volunteers are breaking the 3-Way Contract. Before a Volunteer makes such a decision, they need to discuss the situation with their Program Manager
- Leaving early will have a significant impact upon the Volunteer's LVC community. We ask Volunteers to be open about why they are considering breaking their commitment to LVC and that Volunteers listen to and consider community and Placement needs as well.

Financial Agreement: Volunteers will still be expected to pay rent each month through the remainder of the year and forego any reimbursements. Possible exceptions to these financial consequences are extenuating circumstances such as the death of an immediate family member, or the Volunteer is unable to fulfill his/her commitment due to serious health concerns.

D. Dating Between Supervisor & Volunteer

Lutheran Volunteer Corps strongly discourages dating between the supervisor and Volunteer. If dating or a physical relationship does begin between the supervisor and Volunteer, both parties must immediately inform both the Program Manager for Lutheran Volunteer Corps and the HR director or equivalent person in the Placement and sign a copy of the *Acknowledgement of Harassment-Free Workplace Policy and Dating and*

Relationship Agreement (Appendix E). Additionally, a new supervisor will be required and assigned to the Volunteer for the Volunteer to continue at the Placement.

IX. PROCESSES FOR ADDRESSING CONCERNS

LVC promotes healthy relationships at all levels of the program. LVC staff, board members, and Local Supporters work hard to prepare the way for you and to support you during your LVC year. However, there are times when Volunteers need to discern whether LVC is the right place for them. Sometimes, LVC may initiate this process of discernment and reassessment because a Volunteer's participation in the program may not meet our expectations, and/or may be detrimental to LVC, the Volunteer or the Placement. Sometimes, a Volunteer may initiate this process due to personal struggles, Placement issues, or community and program challenges, where LVC does not meet the volunteer's expectations. We consider these times as opportunities to provide you further support.

This section outlines the following:

- Addressing concerns with LVC
- Addressing concerns at your Placement
- Addressing concerns in your community
- Addressing harmful Volunteer behavior in community

A. Addressing Concerns with LVC

1. If you have a concern with an LVC staff member speak directly to that person to address the situation.
 - a. Every effort will be made to find an acceptable solution by informal means.
 - b. If speaking informally does not solve the problem, set up a formal meeting to discuss the situation. You should document the agreed upon expectations and a timeline for revisiting the issue. You will send this documentation to the LVC staff person's supervisor and keep a copy for yourself (Program Staff are supervised by the President. The President is supervised by the Chair of the Board).
 - c. If the conflict is not resolved after revisiting the issue, you can involve his/her supervisor to facilitate a conversation between the two of you. The supervisor will document the agreed upon expectations and a timeline for reviewing the issue.
 - d. If the conflict is still not resolved after review, describe your concern in writing and send it to the President (or the Chair of the Board if your concern is with the President).
 - e. The President (or the Chair of the Board if your concern is with the President) will respond within 10 working days of receiving the concern.
2. If you disagree with an LVC policy or decision and want to contest that decision, speak directly with your Program Staff.
 - a. Every effort will be made to find an acceptable solution by informal means.
 - b. If you cannot come to mutual understanding with your Program Manager through informal conversation you should describe your grievance with the policy or decision in writing and send it to the President, who supervises your Program Manager.
 - c. The President may facilitate a conversation between the two of you to consider your grievance/request or may talk with you directly about it.
 - d. If the grievance is still not resolved the President will respond to the grievance in writing.
3. If you are still not satisfied with the response you will have 5 days to submit a written appeal to the President after receiving the response. The President will respond within 10 working days of receiving the appeal.

B. Addressing Concerns at your Placement

1. Review your Placement personnel policies for addressing concerns about work conditions or treatment by administrators, supervisors or co-workers. Regarding most concerns, you should speak directly with your supervisor.
2. If you have a concern with someone at your Placement speak directly to that person to address the situation.
 - a. If the situation is not resolved after speaking directly to the person, speak with your supervisor to get advice about how to proceed.
3. If you have a concern with your supervisor speak directly to them.
 - a. If speaking informally about this does not solve the concern, set up a formal meeting with your supervisor to discuss the situation. Document and determine agreed upon expectations and a timeline for revisiting the issue. Send documentation to your Program Manager.
 - b. If the concern is not resolved after revisiting the issues, talk with your Program Manager about the possibility of having them facilitate a conversation between you and your supervisor. During or after the facilitation, the Program Manager will document the agreed upon expectations and a timeline for reviewing the issue and send copies to all parties involved.
 - c. If you have been unable to reach a solution even after facilitation or on-going conversation and you are considering leaving your Placement or the entire LVC program, set a time to talk to your Program Manager about the pros and cons and the process for leaving.
4. If you are unhappy with your position responsibilities, work schedule, other details of your position description or work environment speak directly with your supervisor, and loop in your Program Manager as well.
 - a. If changes to your position description are agreed upon by you and your supervisor, confirm with the Program Manager that these changes are acceptable and send documentation of those changes to them. Any changes in the position description need to be approved in writing by all three parties.
 - b. If changes cannot be agreed upon, have a conversation with your Program Manager about setting up a three-way meeting between you, your supervisor and the Program Manager. They will facilitate a meeting at the Placement. The Program Manager will also document the conversation, expectations agreed upon, and timeline in writing; both the Volunteer and the supervisor will receive copies.
5. If your Placement supervisor has a conflict with you, or is unsatisfied with your work or position performance they will follow similar steps.
 - a. If speaking informally does not solve the problem, your supervisor will set up a meeting with you to discuss the situation. Your supervisor will document the agreed upon expectations and a timeline for revisiting the issue. Your supervisor will send documentation to your Program Manager.
 - b. If the conflict is not resolved after revisiting the issue, your supervisor will talk with your Program Manager about the possibility of having them facilitate a conversation between the two of you. The Program Manager will document the agreed upon expectations and a timeline for reviewing the issue and give a copy to all parties involved.
 - c. If you have been unable to reach a solution even after facilitation or on-going conversation your Placement may terminate your work with them.
 - d. Your Program Manager, in consultation with the President, will determine if helping you find a new Placement is appropriate or if you will be asked to leave the LVC program.
 - e. See steps A through C in scenario number three.

6. If you decide to leave your Placement or LVC, you must contact the Program Manager, have a final conversation with your Placement supervisor, and give at least two weeks notice with your letter of resignation. Please see the termination of contract section in your 3-Way Contract for financial and other obligations for leaving the LVC program.

7. If you do not want to leave the LVC program, and LVC offers to facilitate the process of helping you find a new Placement, set up a time to meet with your Program Staff to determine the next steps:

a. You are responsible for finding a new Placement organization in close contact with the Program Manager in your region. You must take the initiative and be pro-active in searching for Placement possibilities, applying for positions and setting up interviews. Program Managers will assist you by providing suggestions or lists of Placements to potentially contact. Program Managers will need to ensure that a prospective Placement has the capacity to meet LVC's Placement financial and programmatic expectations and the needs of the Volunteer.

b. You have one month to find a new Placement, during which time LVC will cover your rent. If you previously selected the LVC/CVN health insurance plan, LVC will cover your health insurance. During this month of locating a new Placement, LVC will also cover the cost of your health insurance reimbursement up to \$900. You are responsible for covering your food stipend. If this is not possible, talk with your Program Manager about alternatives.

c. If an organization is interested in becoming an LVC Placement, the potential Placement must fill out and turn in an LVC Placement application, have a site visit with the Program Manager and become an approved LVC Placement.

d. Once a Placement has been approved you will review and sign a new 3-Way Contract with your new Placement supervisor and begin your time of service with them.

e. If you are unable to secure a new Placement, you will have to leave the LVC program. Please see the termination of contract section in your 3-Way Contract for financial and other obligations for leaving the LVC program.

C. Addressing Concerns in your Community

If you have concerns with one or more persons in your community, speak directly to them. If this concern regards dangerous or unlawful behavior, contact your Program Manager immediately.

1. Discuss areas of concern, using "I statements."
2. Review your community covenant and discuss remedies.
3. Ask another housemate, your spirituality or community mentor, or your Program Manager to join you and help you listen to one another.
4. If the concern is still not resolved after the presence of the third person, then take the concern to the entire household community.
5. If you have continued to discuss the problem and you are unable to reach a solution, talk with your Program Manager about facilitating a conversation or finding an appropriate facilitator (e.g. a professional trained in mediation). During this facilitation establish a timeline for changes and a date for revisiting concerns. The Program Manager (or outside facilitator) will document the conversation, expectations agreed upon, and timeline in writing; both Volunteers and the Program Manager will receive copies. The Program Manager will advise the National Office of the conversation and send a copy of the documentation.
6. If you have been unable to reach a solution even after facilitation or on-going conversation and you are considering leaving the program, set a time to talk to your Program Manager about the pros and cons and the process for leaving LVC.

7. If you decide to leave LVC, you must also have a conversation with your Placement supervisor and give at least two weeks' notice with your letter of resignation.
8. If the situation has not improved and LVC determines your presence is detrimental to community you may be asked to leave the program immediately.
9. Please see the termination of contract section in your 3-Way Contract for financial and other obligations for leaving the LVC program.

D. Addressing Harmful Volunteer Behavior in Community

From time to time, Volunteer behavior in community is harmful or serious enough that LVC must make a decision about whether or not a particular person is allowed to continue in the program.

Harmful community behaviors may include:

Harmful community behaviors may include:

- Threatening or abusive behavior toward housemates
- Sexual harassment or housemates (see the specific Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures)
- Drug abuse
- Alcohol abuse
- Severe, untreated mental illness, including talk about suicide
- Other illegal or harmful activities

If a Volunteer notices that one of their housemates is behaving in a way that is harmful to themselves or the rest of the community, they should take these steps:

1. Address the matter with the Volunteer directly, if possible
2. Confer with the other housemates to see what they have noticed
3. Call and make an appointment to meet with Program Staff, ideally as a group

At the initial meeting, the Program Manager will ask questions to find out more about the depth and seriousness of the problem and make an initial determination about the best approach for handling the situation. This may include assessing how much time it will take to appropriately address the issue, and what steps the housemates should take after the meeting.

After the initial meeting, the Program Manager will be in ongoing contact with the Program Staff. To gather information, the Program Manager will generally do these things:

1. Write a summary of the initial conversation
2. Talk with each housemate individually about their perspective on the situation
3. Talk with the Volunteer's supervisor to see if there are any issues spilling over to work.

Depending on the circumstances, the Program Manager may also:

1. Talk individually with the Volunteer under review
2. Ask the housemates to put their experiences in writing.

In their conversation, Program Staff will determine next steps for assessing the situation with the Volunteer under review, based on information gathered. Part of the decision-making process for the Program staff involves deciding how quickly the situation needs to be addressed. They may also discuss a plan for supporting the Volunteer under review.

Possible outcomes for the Volunteer under review and their housemates might include:

- A community meeting with or without an outside mediator
- An individual meeting with or without an outside mediator
- Probation or a trial period for the Volunteer under review
- Removal from the community while a decision is made
- Removal from the program after a notice period
- Immediate removal from the program

The Program Manager and Program Team will also develop a plan for supporting the housemates and the Volunteer under review. This may include:

- Meeting personally with the housemates, possibly with other LVC Staff members
- Assigning a staff person as separate support for either the Volunteer under review or for the housemates
- Asking Local Support members to talk with the housemates informally
- Finding counseling, a mediator or other person to meet with the house as a group
- Finding individual counseling resources
- Logistical support specific to the situation

Program Managers will be in close consultation with other staff as needed, throughout the process. If you have concerns about LVC's process, please see "Addressing Concerns with LVC."

X. OTHER POLICIES

A. *Termination by LVC*

If you have concerns with one or more persons in your community, speak directly to them. If this concern regards dangerous or unlawful behavior, contact your Program Manager immediately.

1. Discuss areas of concern, using "I statements."
2. Review your Community Covenant and discuss remedies.
3. Ask another housemate, an Local Supporter, your Spirituality or Community Mentor, or your Program Manager to join you and help you listen to one another.
4. If the concern is still not resolved after the presence of the third person, then take the concern to the entire household community.
5. If you have continued to discuss the problem and you are unable to reach a solution, talk with your Program Manager about facilitating a conversation or finding an appropriate facilitator (e.g. a professional trained in mediation). During this facilitation establish a timeline for changes and a date for revisiting concerns. The Program Manager (or outside facilitator) will document the conversation, expectations agreed upon, and timeline in writing; both Volunteers and the Program Manager will receive copies. The Program Manager will advise the President of the conversation and send a copy of the documentation to them.
6. If you have been unable to reach a solution even after facilitation or on-going conversation and you are considering leaving the program, set a time to talk to your Program Manager about the pros and cons and the process for leaving LVC.

7. If you decide to leave LVC, you must also have a conversation with your Placement supervisor and give at least two weeks' notice with your letter of resignation.
8. If the situation has not improved and LVC determines your presence is detrimental to community you may be asked to leave the program immediately.

Please see the termination of contract section in your 3-Way Contract for financial and other obligations for leaving the LVC program.

B. Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC) does not discriminate in program admission based on race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, military discharge, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic unrelated to the ability to perform the essential functions or basic tenets of LVC, or any bona fide occupational qualifications.

LVC is founded and rooted in the tradition of the Lutheran church. The program has a distinct Christian heritage, which all applicants will understand is the spiritual foundation of the LVC. Yet individuals of all faith perspectives are welcome to apply.

LVC will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities, as long as the accommodation does not impose an undue hardship on LVC. This policy governs all aspects of the program, including selection, Placement assignment, compensation, and access to benefits and training.

LVC strives to ensure that its Placements have similar non-discrimination policies. Any Volunteers with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in their Placement workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor, LVC Program Staff, and/or President. If the Placement organization is found to be engaging in such activities, removal of the organization as a Placement can result.

Discrimination on the part of fellow LVC Volunteers, staff members, or Local Support Network members will also not be tolerated. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful or harassing discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from the program. Harassers may also face civil and/or criminal charges.

LVC will not tolerate harassment of any kind. Harassment includes threatening or insinuating that the refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect admission or program benefits. Harassment may also include conduct such as: unwanted sexual flirtation or touches, abusive or degrading language, graphic or suggestive comments, or displaying inappropriate objects or pictures.

Any Volunteer who believes they have been subject to harassment of any kind, or who has knowledge about harassment of others, should report the harassment as soon as possible to an immediate supervisor, the LVC Program Staff, and/or the President.

C. Sexual Harassment Definitions & Guidelines

What does it mean to be Sexually Harassed?

Sexual harassment is:

1. Any unwelcome verbal or physical advance or suggestion of a sexual nature (you can be sexually harassed by someone you are currently dating or previously dated),
2. Any sexually explicit derogatory statement or display of inappropriate sexual material, or

3. Any pattern of sexually discriminatory remarks
4. Made by someone in the workplace or in the LVC program that is offensive or objectionable to the recipient, causes the recipient discomfort, creates a hostile atmosphere, or interferes with the recipient's job performance or participation in the LVC program.

Sexual harassment may include:

1. Verbal abuse or demeaning jokes.
2. Subtle pressure for sexual activities.
3. Unwelcome touching; leering or brushing up against a person's body.
4. Displaying sexually explicit or degrading materials, such as posters, calendars, graffiti, internet pornography, X-rated movies, or signs with offensive messages.
5. Demanding sexual favors.
6. Threats or physical assault.

Sexual harassment violates LVC's policies when:

1. You must submit to implicit sexual demands in order to get or keep your Placement, or
2. Your submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for evaluation of work performance,
3. The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Placements are responsible for harassment caused by supervisors regardless of whether officials of the organization knew or should have known of the incident.

If the harassment is by co-workers or by non-employees temporarily at your place of work (for example clients or donors), the Placement can be held responsible if the Placement knew or should have known and you have informed a supervisor or other manager of the incident, and the Placement has failed to take immediate and appropriate action. Placements have a duty to try to prevent sexual harassment.

How do you prevent sexual harassment?

The motivation behind sexual harassment is power and control. Ignoring the problem won't make it go away. If you remain silent, harassment will continue to be seen as a personal problem rather than a social-justice issue.

Placements should provide, publicize and enforce a policy forbidding sexual harassment. The policy, which should be published in personnel manuals and circulated to employees and LVC Volunteers, should include a grievance procedure for reporting harassment.

What can you do if you are sexually harassed?

1. **REPORT THE SITUATION TO LVC.** Call or email your Program Manager or the LVC National Office to let LVC know what is happening to you. You can use any of the reporting procedures described in the next section.
2. **Document the unwelcome behavior.** Keep a diary or log of what is happening to you in a bound book in which sheets of paper cannot be added. Take accurate notes of what is said or done, including dates, times, and places. Include direct quotes. Save any letters, cards, notes or materials sent to you. Keep the log and notes in a secure place. If the harassment happened on the job, for example, keep the log book at home – not in your desk or locker at work.
3. If possible, deal with the harassment directly and firmly at the time it occurs, or prepare by practicing in case it happens again by saying, "I'm not interested," or "I prefer you do not touch me when we talk." Say it firmly, without smiling or apologizing, making it clear that the behavior is inappropriate.

If you were too shocked to say or do anything at the time, you can go back and say something to the harasser a few days later, using a nonviolent-confrontation technique.

When you confront harassers, they may apologize and back off immediately – or they might try to put you on the defensive. Stick to your own agenda. Don't get tangled up in anything the harasser might say to try to justify or excuse his/her unwelcome behavior. Just repeat your own statement, calmly and firmly (repetition is powerful).

4. Talk to your co-workers or housemates about the incident(s) to learn if anyone else witnessed it or if anyone else has been harassed. Perhaps someone left a job because of this behavior. Witnesses and documentation help provide evidence/proof of sexual harassment. Otherwise, the only evidence may be your word against the harasser's word.
5. If the harasser persists, you may state in writing that you object to this behavior. This will allow you to organize and communicate your feelings without being interrupted.

Your letter to the harasser should be short and clear:

Paragraph 1: Report the facts of what has happened without evaluation, e.g., "During the meeting you commented on my appearance," or "You brush against me when you pass in the hall."

Paragraph 2: Describe the effects of the unwelcome behavior, e.g., "My stomach turns into knots when I come to work," or "I am thinking of asking for a transfer."

Paragraph 3: Explain what you want to happen from now on, e.g., "I want our relationship to be purely professional and I do not want to meet outside the office for any reason," or "I want you to stop making remarks about my appearance."

In most instances, the recipient of a letter says nothing but the behavior does change. The harasser rarely writes back. The recipient of the letter is often astonished that this behavior is viewed in the way the writer sees it. The harasser may also be fearful of a formal charge and worry about whom else has seen the letter. You may decide to send a copy to a supervisor if the letter does not initially get the harasser to stop. Keep a copy of this letter for your files. Should it fail to achieve its purpose, the letter can later be used in support of a formal complaint or lawsuit.

6. If you are uncomfortable confronting the unwelcome behavior yourself with a verbal statement or a letter to the harasser, you don't have to do so. Just document the behavior and report it to LVC, using any of the following procedures.

REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR LVC VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

How do you report sexual, racial, or any other type of harassment?

1. If the harassment happens at your Placement organization, use the formal complaint procedures where you work. Document the behavior and report the harassment to the designated human resources (HR) representative or to your supervisor. If you are being harassed by your supervisor, report the harassment to that person's supervisor and the HR representative.
2. Report this information to your LVC Program Manager and/or the LVC National Office, so LVC can follow up with the Placement agency.

3. If you encounter harassment of any kind within LVC (inappropriate behavior by an LVC staff member, Board member, Local Supporter, or Volunteer), document the behavior and call or email your LVC supervisor, your Program Manager, or the LVC National Office as soon as possible.
4. You can call or email your LVC supervisor or Program Manager and talk about the situation even if you're not sure whether it's really harassment. They can help you to sort out what's going on. Don't wait until the problem becomes unbearable.
5. If you are not comfortable talking to your LVC supervisor or Program Manager about this, you can report the incident(s) directly to the President.
6. You can also talk to any LVC staff member or Local Supporter you know and trust. They have been instructed to help you report harassment of any kind, at your Placement agency or within LVC, to the LVC President, so LVC can take appropriate action.

XI. LVC CONTACT INFORMATION

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XII. APPENDICES

Appendix A: LVC'S Emergency Preparedness

Introduction

The purpose of this is to help LVC Staff and Volunteers prepare and respond when you, your neighbors or co-workers suffer from accidents, crime or natural disasters. Emergencies, disasters, accidents, injuries, and crime can occur at any time without warning. Being physically and psychologically prepared to handle unexpected emergencies is an individual as well as a community responsibility. There could be emergencies that we haven't thought about and in any emergency situation contact your Program Staff. You'll receive a list of ways you can respond to specific emergencies in your house packet at orientation. If there is an emergency follow these guidelines. Please put the emergency preparedness document in a place where all housemates know where it is. Remember to create an emergency contact lists for your housemates and to come up with a procedure for meeting and contacting each other if a disaster strikes. Remember call your Program Staff in case of emergencies! Remember the three words- Prepare, Respond, Report.

Prepare: What You Can Do Now to be Prepared?

- Post emergency procedures information in a visible location in your home or office.
- Get to know your neighbors and co-workers. Develop relationships that build neighborhood and workplace community and increase your ability to quickly respond together. Exchange contact information with one or more neighbors and/or co-workers to be used in case of emergency.
- Review your house, neighborhood and workplaces to identify potential hazards; work with housemates, neighbors and co-workers to reduce the hazards.
- Develop an Emergency Contact list for your housemates (have a list of personal emergency contacts and pertinent health information in a commonly located place in case you need to connect with each other's family or loved ones on their behalf)--post this in your house and have a copy at your workplace. Basically list one emergency contact person for each housemate in case the housemate has an emergency that prevents them from calling.
- Develop a procedure for contacting and meeting your housemates in case a disaster suddenly strikes your entire neighborhood or city. What will you do if cell-phones don't work? Where will you meet if you can't get back to your house
- Choose your house emergency codeword (ex: CANTALOUPE!)
- Also the CDC website uses this general description: Be prepared: assemble an emergency supply kit, make your emergency plans, stay informed, and be involved in helping your family, your business, and your community to be ready
- Become familiar with the quickest exit routes from your building.
- Locate the nearest fire extinguisher.
- Prepare a plan for yourself and your community specifying what to do, where to go, and how to cope during an emergency.
- Look up and make a list of your county or state's office of emergency management/procedures and office of homeland security.
- Make sure you have an emergency supply kit
 - <https://www.ready.gov/kids/build-a-kit>
 - <https://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/>
 - http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_239_00.html

- https://www.fema.gov/pdf/areyouready/areyouready_full.pdf

General Response

During an emergency:

1. Stay calm
2. Evaluate the situation and take appropriate action
3. Get to a safe area and stay there
4. Call for help loudly

Report

Once you and your housemates, neighbors and co-workers are safe call your Program Staff. If you can't reach your Program Staff, call the National Office. Program Staff will work with you and other LVC staff to respond further to the emergency situation. The Program Staff will also complete an Incident Report for LVC's records.

Appendix B: Community Standards Policy

The mission of Lutheran Volunteer Corps, a community of faith, is to unite people to work for peace with justice. To effectively accomplish LVC's mission, it is crucial that all the members of the LVC community share a set of behavioral standards while working, living, learning and growing together. Members of the LVC community agree to abide by LVC's governing documents. Each specific part of the LVC Community (e.g. Board, Volunteer household communities, Staff, Local Support Network) has its own applicable set of roles, responsibilities, and policies. The following standards are agreed to by all the members of the LVC community.

A special note to LVC Volunteers: During the first few months of the LVC year, Volunteers will create a specific covenant as a household where they will further define their common household expectation for community living. These Community Standards, in addition to the other policies outlined in the Volunteer Handbook, will serve as the foundation for your household community covenants.

LVC community will be formed and sustained with the following in mind:

I. Commitment to the Core Practices

Members of the LVC community commit to building a sense of shared purpose around the Core Practices of building intentional community, working for social justice and living simply and sustainably. Recognizing that each of us understands and expresses the three Core Practices differently, members commit to discussing their views and learning from each other.

II. A commitment to welcoming each other's gifts and accommodating each other's needs, including:

- Dietary requirements
- Physical/medical needs
- Personal space
- Spiritual practices

III. Respect for all persons: Honoring individual differences, including:

- Economic background
- Ethnicity
- Gender identity
- Nationality
- Race
- Religious background and practice
- Sexual orientation
- Ability/Disability
- Age

LVC will not tolerate harassment, racial or ethnic epithets, slurs, derogatory, disrespectful or degrading remarks or threats to physical or emotional safety by anyone in the LVC community.

IV. Individual and Group Integrity

Members of the LVC community are expected to be fair, honest and ethical and assume responsibility for one's actions. They are expected to provide an environment that encourages and supports open sharing of information, empowerment and shared responsibility for decision-making. In our words and actions, we seek non-violent resolution of conflict and just treatment for all.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix C: Names and Meanings of LVC House Communities

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor and participant in the German resistance movement against Nazism during WWII. Theologically, he was noted for outlining a need to talk about God in a secular language appropriate for a 'world come of age.' (Washington, DC)

Dag Hammarskjöld, a Swedish diplomat and the second secretary general of the United Nations, had a deep commitment to the cause of peace and a rich personal spiritual life. (Washington, DC)

Venice Williams, is a current Milwaukee community leader and founder of Alice's Garden, which nurtures families and organizations to reclaim and nourish cultural and family traditions connected to land and food. (Milwaukee, WI)

Junia House (Washington, DC)

Hillstrom House, renamed by the Lutheran Service Corps (LSC) in honor of Alice Hillstrom and her investment in the mission and community of LSC, her work with the Red Cross during WWII, and her service to the Lutheran community of Omaha. In 1994, two years after Lutheran Service Corps' first Volunteer came to live and work in Omaha, LSC received a gracious donation from Alice Hillstrom to purchase the old convent we were renting. (Omaha, NE)

Imani means faith in Swahili, and is the seventh night of Kwanza. In the rhythms of life North Minneapolis, we keep faith with our neighbors. (Minneapolis, MN)

Koinonia comes from a Greek word (κοινωνία) that means **communion by intimate participation**. Koinonia – Communion, Community, Relationship, and Full Participation. (Wilmington, DE)

Óscar Romero, an archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church in El Salvador, witnessed numerous violations of human rights and began a ministry speaking out on behalf of the poor and victims of the country's civil war. In 1980, he was assassinated by gunshot while consecrating the Eucharist during mass. His death finally provoked international outcry for human rights reform in El Salvador. (Chicago, IL)

Simunye, a Zulu word, means **we are one**. (Baltimore, MD)

Paul and Sheila Wellstone were known for their political work for peace and justice, but in 1996, U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone voted in favor of the Defense of Marriage Act. He later asked his supporters to educate him and by 2001, Wellstone admitted that he had made a mistake. We too make mistakes, but through learning from each other, we are made stronger. (Minneapolis, MN)

In Sioux and Dakota, **Winona** means **strong woman**. At the time of its naming, this LVC house was located in a neighborhood with a large Native American population, and its founding members were all women. (Minneapolis, MN)

Redeemer House (Minneapolis, MN)

Over the years, LVC has grown and expanded to new cities and houses. For this reason, there are several years in which we have the **New House** as one of our Volunteer houses. The individuals who live in the New House during its first year have the honor of choosing the house's permanent name.

Appendix D: Retreat/Program Day Absence Request Form

This request form is to be filled out completely and returned to program staff, at least, one month before the first day of retreat. Your request will be considered after reading this form, discussing with program staff, and talking with your Placement Supervisor. Retreat and Program dates are listed in your Yearlong Calendar, which you receive prior to the start of your year, and your Placement should not schedule work for you on those dates.

Attendance at retreats/program days is required and part of the full experience of LVC. Retreats and program days offer time and space for community discussion and bonding, exploration and further learning about the proba of LVC, relaxation and reflection. Missing a retreat or program day is not only detrimental to your continued growth, but also creates an absence in your house community and the larger LVC community. Your absence also affects planning for logistics like transportation, food and lodging. Since attendance at retreats and program days is something you have agreed to in your 3-Way Contract we consider missing all or part of them similar to missing a day at your Placement site.

Your absence from all or part of retreat may mean one or more of the following: an assignment for sessions missed, an additional meeting with your Program Staff and/or housemates to discussed the missed sessions, or a deduction from your end of year reimbursements.

Volunteer Name:
LVC House:
Date(s) of the retreat/program day you will be missing:

Why will you be missing the retreat/program day?

- Placement-related reasons
 - Placement Supervisor needs to sign below to indicate they understand that because of missing this program day, the Volunteer may need to meet with the Program Staff and/or have an alternate day away from the Placement to complete assigned make-up material.
- Personal reasons
 - Placement Supervisor needs to sign below to confirm that the Volunteer has requested vacation days/comp time for the dates above, as if the Volunteer is not participating in the LVC programming days, they need to request those day(s) as vacation/comp days from the Placement.

Details of why you will miss the retreat/program day:
If you are missing only part of retreat/program day and plan to come late or leave early, how will you get to retreat? What day and time will you arrive or leave?

Volunteer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E: Acknowledgment of Harassment-Free Workplace Policy & Dating and Relationship Agreement

Lutheran Volunteer Corps does not tolerate unwelcome or offensive conduct or conduct that creates a hostile work environment that is in any way based upon race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, military discharge, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic unrelated to the ability to perform the essential functions or basic tenets of LVC, or any bona fide occupational qualifications.

In addition, Lutheran Volunteer Corps does not tolerate sexual harassment, which is a form of unlawful discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, subtle or overt requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature including demeaning jokes, unwelcome touching, or displaying sexually explicit material violate LVC's policies when:

- a. submission to such conduct is made, explicitly or implicitly, a condition of a Volunteer's work at the Placement;
- b. submission to or rejection of such conduct by a Volunteer is used as the basis for continuation at the Placement; or
- c. such unreasonable conduct interferes with a Volunteer's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

We, the undersigned, have entered into a personal relationship with each other. We have read and understand Lutheran Volunteer Corps' Harassment-Free Workplace Policy, which is outlined above, and we agree as follows:

1. Our relationship is entirely voluntary.
2. Our relationship will not have a negative impact on our work.
3. We will not engage in any public displays of affection or other behavior that creates a hostile work environment for others, or that makes others uncomfortable.
4. We will act professionally towards each other at all times, even after the relationship has ended.
5. We will not participate in any organizational decision-making processes that could affect the other's pay, promotional opportunities, performance reviews, hours, shifts, or career.
6. We will inform the Placement and Lutheran Volunteer Corps immediately if the relationship ends, or if the conduct or advances of the other person are no longer welcome.
7. We agree that, if the relationship ends, we will respect the other person's decision to end the relationship and not pursue that person or seek to resume the relationship or engage in any other conduct towards the other person that could violate the Harassment-Free Workplace Policy.
8. We understand that, after the relationship ends, one of us may choose to date others in the workplace, and that we will not react with jealousy or spite or in any manner that is less than professional with respect thereto.

Dated this _____ day of _____, ____.

Supervisor Signature

Volunteer Signature

Appendix F: LVC Mileage Reimbursement Form

In general, you will be reimbursed for **either** (A) Mileage and Tolls or (B) Gas and Tolls. You will be reimbursed for gas and tolls if you are borrowing a car or van and for mileage and tolls if you are using your own vehicle. If you borrowed a car or van the owner may receive a mileage reimbursement minus whatever you are reimbursed for gas/tolls. Please fill in both sections if this is the case. Otherwise, fill in only one section. LVC will not reimburse volunteers who drive separately (alone) because they are arriving to retreat late or leaving early.

A: Mileage (attach Google map of route drive):

1. Total miles driven: _____
x .24
Total: \$ _____

B. Gas and Tolls (attach receipts):

1. Total amount spent on gas: \$ _____
2. Total amount spent on tolls: \$ _____
Total: \$ _____

Event: _____

Send reimbursement to: _____

Address: _____

NOTES:

** If you are using a borrowed car and requesting reimbursement for mileage, it is expected that the owner of the car will receive the amount being reimbursed (minus whatever you have spent on gas).

**** Mileage Reimbursement forms must be received in the LVC office or submitted to Program Staff no later than one month after the retreat, or reimbursement will not be provided.**