

Western Avenue Community Center

Volunteer Handbook



Western Avenue Community Center's Business Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Friday: 9:00 a.m. - noon



Our Mission:

Our mission at Western Avenue Community Center is to partner within our diverse community to open doors of hope and love through our faith in Jesus Christ.

Western Avenue Community Center offers comprehensive services in health, welfare, recreation and education coordinated around the family as a unit.

We reach out to help senior citizens, youth, and single-parent, low-income, at-risk and minority families in our community by providing services that encourage academic, social, emotional and financial growth. Our services are provided at low or no cost to families.

We couldn't do what we do without volunteers. Thank you for sharing your time and talents with Western Avenue Community Center.

Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to the Western Avenue Community Center volunteer program. This handbook has been created as an introduction to WACC and as a go-to guide for information, guidelines, and contact information. Please take the time to thoroughly acquaint yourself with this information. If you have any questions or need clarification, please do not hesitate to contact our Volunteer Coordinator or any of the other WACC staff members.

We believe that all volunteers make a positive impact on the center and we appreciate your willingness to share your time with us. We hope you will take pride in being a part of our team. You will enjoy interacting with patrons and participating in programming, all while gaining valuable skills for your future.

Again, thank you for sharing your time with us and supporting the center through your volunteer efforts.

Sincerely,

WACC
Executive Director

Volunteer Policies and Guidelines

At WACC, we believe that treating people as we would like to be treated is key in building healthy relationships and staying true to our mission. We require that all employees and volunteers follow these policies:

- Be on time. If you are going to be late or absent, notify your supervisor as soon as possible.
- Be courteous and respectful of others. It is okay if you do not agree with someone or the way in which something is being done. We do, however, ask that you respect others' opinions and ideas.
- Please dress in clean and job appropriate attire that is suitable for a diverse population.
- Please limit cell phone usage to urgent phone calls, text and e-mails. When you are working, it is important that your attention is given to the matter at hand. We understand that you may be expecting an important call, but keep on-the-job communication to a minimum.
- As with all buildings in Illinois, smoking is not permitted inside the center or within 15 feet of entrances. Please dispose of cigarettes in a receptacle and not on the sidewalks or grass.
- For your privacy and the protection of your belongings, please keep all personal items in the area assigned by your supervisor.
- Use appropriate language and behavior.
- Complete tasks correctly and meet given deadlines. If you are confused, unsure how to complete a task or need something to do, please ask your supervisor.
- Use Western Avenue Community Center resources conservatively and for WACC activities only.
- Complete your time card at the beginning and end of each shift.

Absences / Vacations:

We fully understand that you may have other obligations that will take you away from volunteering. If you will be gone for a day or are taking a vacation, please give us at least one week's notice, if possible, so that we are able to cover your shift. If a situation of an emergency nature arises, please contact your supervisor as soon as possible.

Confidentiality:

At WACC, we are very fortunate to work with a diverse population. We aim to meet the unique requests of every patron, regardless of age, sex, ethnicity or need. It is important that you maintain the confidence of each patron by not sharing information with anyone outside the center. Please do not discuss one patron in front of another while at WACC. When working with someone regarding a sensitive matter, please be conscious of who is around you at the time and adjust your volume accordingly.

Safety:

We strive to make sure that Western Avenue Community Center is clean and safe for everyone. However, we know that accidents happen. In the event that one occurs while you are volunteering or visiting, please notify your immediate supervisor or the first employee you see and report the situation. Even if the accident is minor, such as a cut finger or fall, we would like for you to report it before leaving for the day. If you notice that something is broken or needs repair, please report this as well.

We have a number of children who visit Western Avenue Community Center daily. Please be extra cautious when working with these patrons. If a child is hurt or sick, immediately contact your supervisor so that the family can be notified. If you notice anything suspicious, such as someone different picking up a child from the after school program, please notify one of the employees *immediately*.

Termination:

We hold high standards at Western Avenue. We are a busy operation that serves a significant number of people with a variety of different programs. It is essential that we have a positive, appropriate and responsible volunteer force that continually works to support our mission. We reserve the right to terminate your volunteer status for the following reasons:

- Failure to comply with WACC's policies and guidelines.
- Unsatisfactory or inappropriate attitude, performance or appearance.
- Other circumstances which, in the judgment of the volunteer coordinator or supervising employee, are deemed unsupportive of our mission and incapable of producing a positive and effective volunteer relationship with WACC.

Sign-in Procedure:

Please check-in at the front desk where you will find a file box containing your volunteer card. Please make sure to fill out the volunteer card every time you serve at Western Avenue Community Center.

WACC Programs

After School Program:

Western Avenue's After School Program seeks to provide students in K - 5th grades with a safe, welcoming environment that encourages their social and academic growth. Snacks, recreation, homework help and enrichment activities are provided Monday - Friday from 3:30 - 5:00. We welcome volunteers with a heart for children who are interested in assisting with tutoring, arts & crafts, music and recreation activities.

LINC Youth Fall / Winter Basketball League:

Basketball leagues for grades 2nd - high school are held at the Lawrence Irving Neighborhood Center (LINC) on Monday - Thursday evenings. If you enjoy a fast-paced and exciting environment, our LINC basketball program needs you! Volunteer opportunities include tutoring, mentoring and coaching.

Summer Camp:

Summer Camp is scheduled for 3 two-week sessions in June, July and August from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. for students entering 6th - 8th grades. Campers enjoy sports, art, drama, leadership activities, academic review and fieldtrips. We're looking for volunteers who love hanging out with young teens and who can help with any part of the camp schedule.

Hispanic Outreach Programs:

WACC's Hispanic Outreach Program has been serving the Hispanic community for over 20 years. Spanish-speaking volunteers are welcome during business hours (9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday - Thursday and 9:00 a.m. - noon on Friday) to assist clients with interpretation and translation of government, medical and legal documents and to assist with communicating with landlords, employers, schools and other community agencies. Opportunities are also available in the evenings to facilitate English-language classes. If you enjoy teenagers, consider helping out with Teen Club on Monday evenings.

Senior Programs:

WACC hosts four senior dinner dances throughout the year: FallFest, Christmas Dance, Valentine's Dance and Spring Dance held in May. WACC employees, retirees and volunteers, along with their families, join the celebrations, helping seniors build a network of friends. Volunteers are needed for set-up/clean-up, decorations, music, entertainment, serving dinner and/or providing favors.

Food Pantry:

Western Avenue's Food Pantry is open Tuesday and Thursday from 12:00 - 3:00 p.m. Welcoming clients, distributing food and record-keeping are among the volunteer opportunities.