

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Tri-County
Office on Aging

5303 S. Cedar St., Suite 1
Lansing, MI 48911

**TCOA's Mission:
Promote and Preserve the Independence and Dignity
of the Aging Population**

The Tri-County Office on Aging (TCOA) was founded as an Area Agency on Aging in 1974 by Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties and the cities of Lansing and East Lansing. Since then, TCOA has been committed to providing information and services that older adults, persons with disabilities, and their families need to live independently and remain active in their communities.

As a nonprofit organization, TCOA provides several programs and services that benefit older adults. Our goal is to help them access programs and benefits, improve their health, and remain active in their communities. To accomplish this, we connect people who need help to service providers, volunteers, donors, businesses, and governments in the community.

TCOA provides Meals on Wheels, information and assistance, caregiver supports, the Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program, health and wellness workshops, and much more. Many of our services are provided at no or low-cost.

Letter of Welcome from Executive Director, Andrea Radel

At Tri-County Office on Aging, we are part of the community. Thousands of people - our neighbors, friends, and families - turn to TCOA each year. I am thrilled that you have chosen to make a difference through volunteering. Volunteers are a vital part of our effort to provide independence and dignity to the aging population and those with disabilities. Volunteers play a key role in a number of activities, ranging from delivering meals to participants' homes to helping people learn more about their Medicaid and Medicare benefits. We are also grateful for those helping to coordinate awareness events and performing administrative duties around the office. I hope that you find your particular volunteer activity fulfilling and that your volunteer experience with TCOA is rewarding and positive. This information packet includes details about our organization and the roles and responsibilities of our volunteers. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or the Volunteer and Outreach Specialist at **517-887-1487** or **volunteer@tcoa.org**. You may also contact your program supervisor. Once again, welcome and thank you!

Andrea Radel
Executive Director
Tri-County Office on Aging

Person – Centeredness...

TCOA's person-centered approach to programs and services means that each person's right to choose is honored and valued. By coordinating and providing key services while respecting the participant's preferences, we help people live their lives the way they choose.

...our way of ensuring you live your life your way!

TCOA embraces the philosophy of Person-Centered Thinking. The Person-Centered Thinking philosophy recognizes that all participants are unique individuals with needs, wants, goals, and dreams. Most people want the same things from life - interesting and meaningful daily activities; close relationships with others; opportunities to socialize and enjoy recreation; opportunities to develop talents and abilities; to be a part of and contribute to the community and to feel valued and important. Person-centeredness encourages people to relate to others by honoring their preferences, choices, and abilities.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of a tornado warning, all occupants of the TCOA building will be instructed to move to a sheltered area. If an individual remains within the TCOA premises, they must follow the instructions of an emergency monitor and go quickly and safely to a safe area. Individuals will need to stay in a designated shelter area until the “all clear” signal has been given by a county representative or an emergency monitor.

In the event of a fire alarm, all occupants of the TCOA building must leave the premises. Please follow the instructions of an emergency monitor and go quickly and safely to a designated safe area outside the front entrance of TCOA. Individuals can return to the building when the “all clear” signal has been given by a county representative or an emergency monitor.

Confidential Information/HIPAA

The following information applies to volunteers and has been pulled from applicable HIPAA policies of the agency:

Client Privacy

At TCOA, we are sensitive to the privacy expectations of our clients. We take seriously the high level of confidence our clients entrust to us while we collect and use their information responsibly and appropriately. All volunteers and student interns must protect client privacy in every aspect of client interactions and relationships. Volunteers and student interns are only authorized to access sensitive client information if they have a legitimate business reason. Examples of sensitive information include but are not limited to, names, telephone numbers, email addresses, Social Security numbers, medical records, financial account numbers, date of birth, date of death, and other sensitive information.

HIPAA

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) was designed to guard the Protected Health Information (PHI) and Personally Identifiable Information (PII) of individuals. All TCOA volunteers and student interns are responsible for protecting the PHI/PII of clients and consumers. All volunteers and student interns who have access to client or consumer private information are required to receive training regarding HIPAA's Privacy Rule as it corresponds to their responsibilities. TCOA volunteers and student interns are responsible for knowing and following HIPAA regulations and any HIPAA violation is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of volunteer rights.

TCOA's full privacy policy is available to review upon request and a full copy of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) can be obtained by request from:

Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, D.C. 20201

Additionally, you may contact the OCR toll-free at: 800-368-1019.

All volunteers and student interns are required to sign a confidentiality form as part of their placement at the agency. Volunteers sign this at time of application.

VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a volunteer, you have the right:

- To receive information about the agency's cause, mission, and organizational structure.
- To be fully informed of the extent of duties, time commitment and responsibilities involved in any task before you make a commitment.
- To accept only a responsibility that is worthwhile and meets your needs.
- To expect that your time will not be wasted.
- To be provided with orientation, training, and supervision.
- To know who your project supervisor is. Don't be left hanging out there all alone, not knowing who you can turn to for asking questions.
- To receive available information, assistance, and materials to carry out your responsibility.
- To ask for an additional or alternative assignment when appropriate for you.
- To be informed of any safety issues and procedures in the organization.
- To give feedback about your volunteer experience to the Volunteer and Outreach Specialist or supervisor.
- To receive appropriate appreciation of your volunteer contribution.

As a volunteer, you also agree to be responsible for:

- Realistically knowing your time and energy limitations and how much responsibility you can handle.
- Accepting an assignment only if you have a sincere interest and commitment to doing it.
- Arriving on time and ready to work.
- Notifying the organization if you are not able to attend that day.
- Following through on the commitment you make to the organization.
- Completing assignments to the best of your ability.
- Asking questions when you do not understand something.
- Working as a team with staff and other volunteers.
- Accepting supervision and following the guidelines of the organization.
- Communicating concerns and suggestions to the appropriate person in the organization.
- Respecting the confidentiality of the participants and the organization.
- Representing TCOA in a courteous manner when interacting with the public.
- Keeping an accurate record of your hours of work.
- Referring questions outside the scope of your training to your supervisor.