



Program Policy Manual For Employees and Volunteers Of Help To Home

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Introduction

Welcome to Help to Home (H2H). This manual is intended to help clarify the policies and procedures for H2H volunteers. If you have any questions about it, please ask! We will be asking you to sign a statement indicating you understand and accept these policies.

About Help to Home

Help To Home, Inc. (H2H) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) human services organization whose mission is to provide temporary, supportive housing and life skills development for families with children who are at risk of homelessness.

Purpose Of These Policies

These policies are written to provide overall guidance and direction to employees and volunteers engaged in providing services to Help to Home. These policies do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. Help To Home reserves the exclusive right to change any of these policies at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy. Changes to or exceptions to these policies may only be granted by the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and must be obtained in advance and in writing. Areas not specifically covered by these policies shall be determined by the Chief Operating Officer.

Attendance

Employees and volunteers should strive for perfect attendance and to arrive for work on time. We recognize that, on occasion, you may not be able to come to work or need additional time before you arrive. Sickness and other emergencies cannot always be anticipated and may require you to miss all or part of your workday.

If you cannot report to work as scheduled, you must notify your manager as soon as possible. If your need for time off is foreseeable, you must provide as much notice as possible. If your need for time off is not foreseeable, you must provide as much notice as practicable.

- Severe Weather – When severe weather happens, employees and volunteers will be notified to not report to work. Help to Home wants employees and volunteers to be safe and not be placed in a position of jeopardy.

Background Check Policy

Help to Home also reserves the right to periodically conduct background checks after a person becomes an employee or a volunteer.

All Board members, staff and volunteers are required to have a background check and fingerprints taken.

Vendors will not be required to have background checks, but an employee or volunteer will accompany a vendor who must enter an individual home.

Access and usage to the community room will be left at present for COO to approve all uses.

A background check report showing negative information will not automatically disqualify an applicant or employee or volunteer unless the results show there have been incidences of violence against children. Rather, determinations of suitability will be made based on:

- The contents of the background check report, including the severity and recency of any offenses.
- The nature of the job or other role under consideration.
- The provisions of this policy.

- Full compliance with all local, state, and federal laws or regulations.

Background checks will be administered by the Chief Operating Officer.

Cell Phone Usage Policy

Employees and volunteers use their personal cell phones to interact with Help to Home staff and clients. If the employee or volunteer is uncomfortable giving a client their personal cell phone, then the employee or volunteer should give them their Help to Home email address to communicate.

Code of Ethics Policy

Our professional code of ethics policy is to give guidelines on our business ethics and stance on various controversial matters. We trust you to use your better judgment, but we want to provide you with a concrete guide you can fall back on if you are unsure about how you should act (e.g. in cases of conflict of interest). This policy applies to every employee and volunteer.

Components

We base our code of ethics on common principles of ethics:

- **Respect for Others.** Treat clients as you want to be treated. Be kind, polite and understanding. At the same time, you will need to be authoritative and self-assured. Violence is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate termination for the client, employee or volunteer.
- **Integrity and Honesty.** We all work together to achieve specific outcomes by being honest and transparent when we act in ways that impact our clients. Your behavior should contribute to the goals of Help to Home.
- **Justice.** Make sure you are objective and fair and do not take advantage of clients or fellow employees or volunteers. Be objective when making decisions that can impact clients. Be sure that you can justify any decision with written records or examples. Discrimination of any kind against anyone will not be tolerated and is legally forbidden.
- **Lawfulness.** Know and follow the law – always. You are obliged to follow all laws which apply to Help to Home. For example, you are **mandated** to report any suspicion you may have of children being neglected or harmed. You should also report the situation to the COO. If you're not sure what the law is in a specific instance, do not hesitate to ask the COO. The Florida Abuse Hotline is 800.962.2873
- **Competence and Accountability.** Work hard and be responsible for your work.
- **Teamwork.** Collaborate and ask for help. Be generous with your expertise and knowledge. Be open to learning and evolving. If days go by without you consulting or brainstorming with anyone, you are missing out on opportunities for excellence.

Computer, Internet and Email Usage Policy

The Internet, including the use of email, is a business tool provided to employees and volunteers for them to do their jobs. We expect employees and volunteers to exercise good judgement and remain productive at work while using the internet.

Employees and volunteers are advised to use our internet connection for some the following reasons:

- To complete their job duties.
- To seek out information that they can use to improve their work.
- To access their social media accounts, while conforming to our [social media policy](#).
- To communicate with clients, business partners and agencies, etc.

Any use of our network and connection must follow our [confidentiality](#) and [data protection policy](#).

Employees and volunteers should:

- Always keep passwords secret, except provide the Chief Operating Officer with your login information including when you make updates.
- Log into their corporate accounts only from safe devices.
- Use strong passwords to log into work-related websites and services.

The Internet is not to be used to:

- Download or upload obscene, offensive, or illegal material.
- Send confidential information to unauthorized recipients.
- Invade another person's privacy and sensitive information.
- Download or upload movies, music and other copyrighted material and software.
- Visit potentially dangerous websites that can compromise the safety of our network and computers.
- Perform unauthorized or illegal actions, like hacking, fraud, buying/selling illegal goods and more.

We also recommend that our employees and volunteers be careful when downloading and opening/executing files and software. If they're unsure if a file is safe, they should ask a Staff member or the Chief Operating Officer (COO).

Help to Home may install anti-virus and disk encryption software on our company computers. Employees may not deactivate or configure settings and firewalls without managerial approval.

We won't assume any responsibility if employee or volunteer devices are infected by malicious software, or if their personal data is compromised as a result of inappropriate employee use.

Confidentiality Policy

Employees and volunteers of Help to Home are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as an employee or volunteer, whether this information involves a client, another employee or volunteer, or other person or involves overall Help to Home business. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in termination of the employee's or volunteer's relationship with Help to Home. The exception would be when collaborating with another agency.

Criminal Activity

Employees and volunteers are responsible for reporting any criminal activity to the Bradenton police. Illegal activity includes stealing property or defacing/damaging property inside or outside units or common areas and laundry facilities.

Data Protection Policy

Help to Home is committed to treating the information of employees, clients, stakeholders and other interested parties with the utmost care and confidentiality. As part of our operations, we obtain and process information on our clients. This information includes any offline or online data that makes a person identifiable such as names, addresses, usernames and passwords, digital footprints, photographs, social security numbers, financial data etc.

Help to Home collects information in a transparent way and only with the full cooperation and knowledge of our clients.

To exercise data protection, we are committed to:

- Restrict and monitor access to sensitive data
- Develop transparent data collection procedures
- Train employees in online privacy and security measures

- Build secure networks to protect online data from [cyberattacks](#)
- Establish clear procedures for reporting privacy breaches or data misuse
- Include contract clauses or communicate statements on how we handle data
- Establish data protection practices (document shredding, secure locks, data encryption, frequent backups, access authorization etc.)

A breach of data protection policy will invoke disciplinary and possibly legal action.

Dress Code Policy

Help to Home values a relaxed and comfortable work environment, and we believe that allowing employees to dress in a way that makes them happy and productive is an important part of that. As such, our everyday dress code is casual, but it is not revealing. From time to time, you may be asked to wear business attire for meetings and functions.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Help to Home reserves the right to randomly drug test employees, volunteers, and clients. Help to Home realizes that the misuse of drugs and alcohol impairs employees and volunteer's judgment and productivity. Drug and alcohol problems result in unsafe working conditions for all employees, volunteers, and clients. Help to Home is committed to maintaining a productive, safe, and healthy work environment, free of unauthorized drug and alcohol use.

Employees or Volunteers involved in the unlawful use, sale, manufacturing, dispensing and possession of controlled substances, illicit drugs, and alcohol on the premises of Hope Village, or working under the influence of such substances, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal and referral for prosecution.

If an employee, volunteer, or client is on medical prescribed marijuana, the Chief Operating Officer should be notified.

Gifts

Employees and volunteers may periodically provide clients and/or their children with small, modest gifts (under \$10). Approval by the Chief Operating Officer or your supervisor is required if an employee or volunteer wants to give more elaborate gift. All gifts should be unrelated to the client's budget program.

Hiring Practices

Help to Home provides equal employment opportunities to all employees, volunteer, and applicants, hiring based on merit, competence, and qualifications. We do not consider race, gender, age, or disabilities when hiring employees (as long as the candidate can complete the duties as stated in the job description).

Money On Hand

No money will be on hand in the Hope Village office. Having sufficient money for laundry is part of a client's case plan.

Orientation & Training

Help to Home will provide on-the-job training for all employees and volunteers. The amount of training and the type of training will vary depending on the position. All employees will undergo a full onboarding program that includes payroll, taxes, and direct deposit paperwork. We are grateful for the services provided by volunteers who do not receive compensation for the work they perform for Help to Home.

Parking

Parking is provided to employees, volunteers, and clients. After vehicles are registered, employees, volunteers and clients will receive a permit to park. Parking permits (blue for employees, yellow for residents, and pink for visitors) should be visible in the vehicle.

Photography / Videography Policy

For confidential reasons and the safety of our clients and their children, employees and volunteers are prohibited from taking pictures of or videoing any client or their children. Photographs or videos taken for Help to Home media coverage must have written permission of Help to Home clients.

Reimbursement of Expenses Policy

To obtain reimbursement for personal funds spent, all expenses must be approved by the employee's or volunteer's supervisor prior to making any purchases. When expenses are approved, the employee or volunteer must submit an Expense Reimbursement form and include all receipts for the expenses incurred.

Safety Policy

Employees and volunteers must observe safe practices when performing their jobs. The personal safety and health of each Help to Home employee and volunteer is of primary importance. Our objective is a safety program. Employees and volunteers are responsible for wholehearted, genuine cooperation with all aspects of the safety program – including compliance with all rules and regulations and for continuously practicing safety while performing their duties.

Rules to be observed include the following:

- **Money** - Employees and volunteers should leave valuables, including money, in their vehicle.
- **Transportation** - Employees and volunteers must have prior permission from the Chief Operating Officer or supervisor to have a client and/or their children in their vehicle.
- **Personal Space** - Employees and volunteers should never bring a client and/or their children to their home or the homes of friends and family for any reason. Watching a client's children in the employee's or volunteer's home is prohibited except when approval from COO is given. In addition, employees and volunteers should not share their home address with clients. The only personal information a client should have for an employee or volunteer is their phone number and the Help to Home email address.
- **Client's Unit** - Employees and volunteers meet often in a client's home to perform job functions. If an employee or volunteer feels threatened or in any way unsafe in the client's unit, the Chief Operating Officer or supervisor should be notified immediately. If an employee or volunteer feels they are in immediate eminent danger, call 911.
- **Behavior/Relationships** - It is a violation of our safety program and the Help to Home code of conduct policy for employees and volunteers to have intimate relationships with clients and will result in immediate separation from Help to Home.
- **Office** – The Help to Home office will be always secured with a keypad locking system. The code to the keypad should not be shared with a client. Hours of operation will vary based on client needs.
- **Client Non-Compliance or Eviction** – From time to time a client may need to be evicted from their unit or a discussion about a client's compliance status may need to take place. When these situations arise, the employee or volunteer should notify the COO that this is occurring and the police. Police should be asked to be present when this type of action takes place.

- All accidents and safety risks must be reported to your supervisor immediately. An incident report should be completed and submitted to the COO within 24 hours.
- All injuries occurring at Hope Village must be reported immediately to the employee's or volunteer's supervisor.

Smoke Free Workplace Policy

Employees and volunteers are prohibited from smoking at any time on Help to Home property. We expect employees and volunteers to respect this policy. Employees who violate this policy may face consequences up to and including termination.

Social Media Policy

Employees and volunteers are allowed to access their personal social media accounts (e.g. social networking websites, blogs, personal webpages, etc.) at work. But we expect employees and volunteers to act responsibly and ensure productivity is not affected. We also expect employees and volunteers to restrict personal use of social media to a few minutes per workday.

Help to Home employees and volunteers are **prohibited** from taking or distributing any photos or recordings of clients, their accommodations, and/or other personal information. We expect everyone to always adhere to our confidentiality policies. Not following this policy may lead to disciplinary action.

Solicitation

Employees and volunteers are prohibited from distributing any materials during his or her working time. "Working time" includes all time during which an employee or volunteer is assigned to or engaged in the performance of job duties but does not include scheduled breaks or meal periods during which time the employee or volunteer is not expected to perform any job duties. In addition, it does not include the time before and after the employee's shift.

Termination of Employment

When it is necessary for an employee or volunteer to leave their service to Help to Home, we ask that they follow the guidelines below. When it is necessary for Help to Home to terminate an employee or a volunteer, Help to Home would notify the employee or volunteer of the problem area(s) and develop a written plan to address the concerns.

Employee

Our employee termination policy outlines our expectations for employees and the steps we will take when making the decision to terminate an employee's employment.

1. Employees may be terminated for a variety of reasons, including poor performance, violation of company policies, or failure to meet job expectations.
2. Before making the decision to terminate an employee, we will follow a fair and consistent process. This may include providing the employee with performance feedback, offering support and coaching, and giving the employee an opportunity to improve.
3. We carefully review any applicable employment laws, to ensure that the termination is being handled in accordance with these guidelines.
4. In cases where a termination is being considered, our company will review clear and documented records that support consideration of termination, including any performance issues or policy violations. These documents will be referenced in subsequent meetings that lead to a decision.
5. In cases where an employee's termination is not for cause, we will provide the employee with appropriate notice and severance pay, in accordance with applicable laws and company policies.

6. We will treat all employees with respect and dignity during the termination process, and we will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible.

Volunteer

Volunteer positions may conclude at the end of a particular project, event, or set time, but volunteers are also free to end your volunteer service at any time. To ensure our needs are met, we ask that volunteers provide at least a week's notice of departure and a reason for your decision.

Help to Home may also remove a volunteer from the program for any cause, including, but not limited to: excessive absences, misconduct, inability to perform assignments or inability to accept supervision.

An employee or a volunteer may be asked to leave immediately for unethical conduct or for violation of policies listed in this manual.

Violence and No Weapons Policy

Our violence and no weapons policy applies equally to all employees, volunteers, contractors, public visitors, clients, and anyone else whom employees meet during work. Workplace violence is taken extremely seriously and should be reported immediately, *especially any early signs or threats against children*.

Weapons of any kind, including but not limited to guns, switchblades and pocketknives, are **not** permitted on Help to Home property. We want to provide our employees and volunteers with a safe workplace where mutual respect is given.

Policy Elements

"Violence" refers to physical acts of violence or threats to harm a person or property. Abusive behaviors, whether verbal, psychological or physical, are also considered violence. More specifically:

- Verbal abuse can be using unwelcome, embarrassing, offensive, threatening, or degrading language.
- Psychological abuse is an act which provokes fear or diminishes a person's dignity or self-esteem.
- Sexual abuse is any unwelcome verbal or physical assault.

We cannot always predict violent acts, but we ask everyone to be vigilant. Report any concerns or violent acts to a Staff member as soon as possible. Examples of violent behavior among co-workers include but are not limited to:

- Intimidating or bullying others
- Abusive language
- Physical assault
- Threatening behavior
- Concealing or using a weapon on the premises/property (weapons must be kept in a lock case in your locked vehicle).
- Sexual or racial harassment

We maintain the right to conduct periodic inspections, using reasonable methods, with volunteers' or employees' consent.

Grievance Procedure

Everyone on our premises/property is responsible for implementing our policies and ensure that all procedures are free of discrimination.

Employees or volunteers who witness or suspect violence, or are victims of violence, can report to a Staff member or the Chief Operating Officer (COO) who will investigate quickly and discreetly. We aim to protect victims from harassment and victimization. If a volunteer or employee has reasonable suspicion of neglect or endangerment of a

child, the employee or volunteer should first contact the COO. Once the COO is aware of the problem, the employee or volunteer will file the appropriate report with the online Florida Department of Children & Family. To file a report:

- Call the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1.800.962.2873 or
- Online Florida Department of Children & Family (www.myfloridafamilies.com)

If there is immediate or eminent danger, notify the police. Call 911 and the COO immediately.

Disciplinary Consequences

Help to Home does not tolerate violence. Any such behavior will trigger appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, removal from boards or committees, as well as potential criminal charges.

Workplace Harassment Policy

Our anti-harassment policy expresses our commitment to maintain a workplace that's free of harassment, so employees and volunteers feel safe at work. We will not tolerate anyone intimidating, humiliating or sabotaging others in our workplace. We also prohibit willful discrimination based on *age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, religion or disability*. This workplace harassment policy applies to all employees, contractors, public visitors, volunteers, customers and anyone else whom employees meet at work.

Policy Elements

Harassment includes bullying, intimidation, direct insults, malicious gossip and victimization. Here are some instances that we consider harassment:

- Sabotaging someone's work on purpose.
- Engaging in frequent or unwanted advances of any nature.
- Commenting derogatorily on a person's ethnic heritage or religious beliefs.
- Starting or spreading rumors about a person's personal life.
- Ridiculing someone in front of others or singling them out to perform tasks unrelated to their job (e.g. bringing coffee) against their will.

Sexual harassment is illegal, and we will seriously investigate relevant reports. If an employee is found guilty of sexual harassment, they will be terminated.

How to Address Harassment

If you're being harassed, whether by a colleague, customer or vendor, you can choose to talk to any of these people:

- **Offenders** – If you suspect that an offender doesn't realize they are guilty of harassment, you could talk to them directly to resolve the issue. This tactic is appropriate for cases of minor harassment (e.g. inappropriate jokes between colleagues.) Avoid using this approach with customers or stakeholders.
- **Staff member** - If customers, stakeholders or team members are involved in your claim, you may reach out to a Staff member who will assess your situation and may contact a senior Staff member if appropriate.
- **COO** - Reach out to our Chief Operating Officer (COO) in any case of harassment no matter how minor it may seem. For your safety, make contact as soon as possible in cases of serious harassment (e.g. sexual advances) or if a Staff member is involved in your claim. Anything you disclose will remain confidential.
- **Board** – If there are issues with the COO, then contact a Help to Home board member.

Disciplinary Consequences

Punishment for harassment depends on the severity of the offence and may include counseling, reprimands, suspension or termination.



I have received the H2H/Hope Village Policy Manual.

I agree to abide by all the policies and uphold the privacy of all clients in the H2H Program at Hope Village.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____