

UCM
United Community Ministries

VOLUNTEERING
*The Life Blood of Our
Community*



UNITED
COMMUNITY
MINISTRIES

At the Heart of Community

Your Handbook

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WELCOME

This handbook is for you — a UCM volunteer. What makes you special? You are giving your time to build a community. Community means we are more than just individuals living in a defined area. Instead, we are people who feel connected to each other and who care about each other. Together, we are building community and changing lives.

This handbook explains items of general interest, giving you facts about our services, outlining core principles, and listing basic guidelines. Information about specific programs is attached. This handbook will allow you to catch on more quickly to our system, to work with the utmost satisfaction, and to provide services appreciated by people in need.

Our volunteers serve an **essential and integral role** in the function of the agency. If you have **any suggestions or concerns**, please let us know! You can speak to a supervisor or anyone on the Executive Leadership Team.

UCM exists to mobilize community resources, to help people obtain immediate need and to achieve long-term independence and stability. In addition, we work to foster community engagement, since isolation is a major predictor of problems in a neighborhood.

Our volunteers are multiple and diverse. Some volunteers participate once a year at annual programs; others work a weekly schedule. In 2013, UCM volunteers recorded over 17,000 hours of service. Volunteers make many special programs possible and increase the service and satisfaction of clients and employees. Volunteers augment program activities and work directly with UCM staff.

Our volunteers come from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds, from students to older adults. Each individual brings a set of unique and valued skills. The rewards of volunteerism are many, including:

- Satisfaction from helping others and making a difference
- Opportunities to use skills you enjoy, or to learn new skills
- The chance to meet energetic and involved individuals in your community
- Opportunities to gain career advice and experience in the work force

A British survey found that volunteer activity in the community is associated with better health, lower crime, improved education performance, and greater life satisfaction. *When we focus on the needs of others, we also reap benefits ourselves.*

On behalf of all our clients, staff, and Board of Directors: welcome to UCM. We appreciate your help and are pleased to assist you in any way possible.



Marcos A. Castillo
Volunteer & Community
Relations Coordinator

United Community Ministries [UCM]

MISSION

To mobilize community resources to assist families and individuals to improve the quality of their lives in a manner that builds their self-reliance and fosters their ability to function at the greatest level of their economic and social capacities

In other words: **To build STRONG FAMILIES and a STRONG COMMUNITY!**

HISTORY

UCM is a non-profit, community-based organization founded in 1969. Our focus is preventing homelessness and moving people on to greater success.

Community and faith leaders formed a grassroots movement to assist low-income families and individuals living along the Route One Corridor of Fairfax County, Virginia. This was and is an impoverished area in an otherwise wealthy county. UCM grew from a small group of concerned citizens offering emergency food and clothing into an organization offering comprehensive services.

That means not only meeting immediate needs, but also teaching independent living skills and supporting families in their journeys toward stable housing and more self-sufficient lives. UCM is also a leader in engaging community residents. This transformative process helps individuals and families to learn and use leadership skills to improve their lives and those of their neighbors.

A surprising number of individuals and families require emergency assistance as well as the resources, support and training necessary to lead stable lives. UCM services include emergency assistance, employment placement and training, early learning childcare, youth services, overcoming domestic violence services, homelessness prevention, and child abuse and neglect prevention.

Emergency services include in-kind gifts of food, clothing, furniture, household goods and infant supplies; emergency financial assistance for rent, utility and medical needs; comprehensive information and referral; budget counseling; and holiday help. Self-sufficiency services include job counseling and placement; self-employment and job search assistance; computer skills training; youth services; abuse prevention; supportive services for people in transitional housing; and a comprehensive child development center, called the Bryant Early Learning (BEL) Center.

Several local organizations, including shelter, medical and educational programs, began as UCM projects.

UCM is a 501(c)3 charity and all donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.



Role of the Volunteer Coordinator

The role of the Coordinator of Volunteer Services is to provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer management within the agency, and to direct and assist staff and volunteer efforts to jointly provide more productive services. The coordinator shall bear primary responsibility for planning for effective volunteer utilization, for assisting staff in identifying productive and creative volunteer roles, for recruiting suitable volunteers, and for tracking and evaluating the contribution of volunteers to the agency.

Volunteer Guidelines

Personal Conduct: We hold a high standard of work conduct for both our staff and volunteers.

Dress Codes: We ask volunteers to meet a reasonable standard of professional appearance that reflects favorably on our agency and respects clients. Specific recommendations include:

1. **UCM’s Fordson Road Headquarters (office and counseling volunteers):** No cut-offs, torn clothing, sweat clothes, or tight-fitting or revealing clothing.
2. **UCM’s Cynthia Hull Food Pantry:** Wear comfortable but neat work clothing. Sweat clothes and jeans with no holes are considered appropriate wear. No shorts, halter type tops or tops with the midriff showing, or tightly fitting clothing. Covered regular or athletic shoes are mandatory for safety reasons. Sandals or open toe shoes are not acceptable.
3. **UCM’s Work Force Development Center:** For positive role modeling, volunteers are asked to dress in professionally appropriate business casual.
4. **UCM’s Creekside Community Center & UCM’s Sacramento Neighborhood Center:** Wear comfortable, but neat work clothing. Sweat clothes and jeans with no holes are considered appropriate. No shorts, halter type tops or tops with the midriff showing, and no tightly fitting clothing. Covered regular or athletic shoes are mandatory for safety reasons. No sandals.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VOLUNTEER COUNSELORS AND HOME VISITORS	
Acceptable	Inappropriate
Polo Shirts (UCM included)	T-shirt with slogan (other than UCM slogan)
Knee length shorts	Tight or revealing clothing
Skirts or dresses (appropriate length)	Halter tops or midriff showing
Slacks (appropriate length)	Tank tops
UCM T-Shirts	Plunging necklines
	Sheer fabrics

5. **UCM’s Back Porch Thrift Shop:** No shorts, halter type tops or tops with the midriff showing, or tightly fitting clothing. Covered regular or athletic shoes are mandatory for safety reasons. No sandals or open toe shoes.
6. **UCM’s Bryant Early Learning Center (BEL Center):** Smocks are provided for all classroom staff. Note that volunteers often sit on the floor or ground and play with children.

BEL CENTER DRESS RECOMMENDATIONS	
Acceptable	Inappropriate
BEL smocks	T-shirt with slogan (other than UCM/BEL slogan)
Knee length shorts	Tight or revealing clothing
Skirts or dresses (appropriate length)	Halter tops or midriff showing
Jeans (no holes or tears)	Tank tops
Slacks (appropriate length)	Plunging necklines
Sweats (matching and in good condition)	Sheer fabrics

Requirements of Each Supervisor of Volunteers: Each volunteer who is accepted to a position with UCM has the right to expect a clearly defined job, adequate training, tools to do the job, adequate work space, cordial relations with paid staff and other volunteers, feedback (positive and negative) on their work, appreciation, and the opportunity to discuss issues or problems concerning their work.

Each volunteer must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor shall be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance. In addition, the supervisor will be responsible to disseminate information to volunteers and perform periodic evaluations of volunteer performance.

Volunteers/Staff Relationships: Volunteers and staff are considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programs of the agency, with each having an equal but complementary role to play. It is essential for the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.

Ethical Conduct: Ethics is behaving the same whether someone is watching or not. If you have a question as to whether something is appropriate, please ask. We are happy to help!

Conflict of Interest: Employees and volunteers should be aware that conflicts of interest can arise through various relationships including, but not limited to, family relationships, economic relationships and personal or intimate relationships.

No volunteer or employee of United Community Ministries, Inc. shall operate or act in any manner that is contrary to the best interests of United Community Ministries, Inc.

Conflict of Interest is created when:

- a. A director, officer, employee or volunteer, including a board member, is a party to a contract, or involved in a transaction with United Community Ministries, Inc. for goods or services.
- b. A director, officer, employee or volunteer, has a material financial interest in a transaction between United Community Ministries, Inc. and an entity in which the director, officer, employee or volunteer, or a family member has an interest or relationship.
- c. A director, officer, employee or volunteer, (or a family member of the foregoing) is engaged in some capacity or has a material financial interest in a business or enterprise that competes with United Community Ministries, Inc..

Volunteers may not receive benefits from UCM Staff or from other volunteers. In addition, steering clients to private businesses with which you are associated is forbidden.

Preferential Treatment: No volunteer may expect or receive preferential treatment in a program unless the guidelines allow for special consideration.

Sworn Disclosure Statement: Any program which connect volunteers with youth or children requires a signed Disclosure Statement, signed Volunteer Guidelines, criminal background and Child Protective Services checks (paid for by UCM). These programs include:

- Creekside Community Center
- Sacramento Neighborhood Center
- Basic Needs and Journeys

Other programs, such as the BEL Center, may have additional documentation requirements.

Confidentiality: It is the policy of United Community Ministries, Inc. that any unauthorized disclosure or distribution by any means including electronic transmission or copying of United Community Ministries, Inc.'s confidential information, or that of its employees, volunteers, and donors is prohibited.

United Community Ministries, Inc. values the protection of confidential information. During the course of service for United Community Ministries, Inc. an employee or volunteer may learn confidential information, such as financial, personal, or medical matters affecting the lives of other employees or volunteers, or people served by United Community Ministries, Inc., or those affecting the business operations of United Community Ministries, Inc.

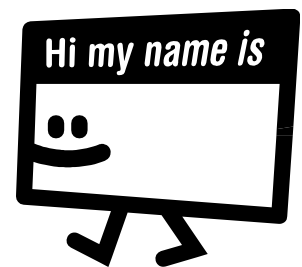
Any employee who discloses confidential information learned from his/her work for United Community Ministries, Inc. will be subject to disciplinary action including possible termination. Unauthorized disclosure by volunteers and board members will subject the volunteer/board member to comparable sanctions.

Solicitation: Volunteers are under no obligation to contribute or purchase goods offered by other employers/volunteers/clients.

Name Badges: For safety reasons and proper identification by others, volunteers and staff must wear name badges (or smocks) at all times. Any volunteer without a name badge will be asked to immediately obtain one.

Community Service Hours: Community service hours are tracked on a designated Monthly Time Sheet or Time Card, provided to the volunteer at each site.

Internet Security: The web is a powerful tool for information but can also result in wasted time and inappropriate usage. UCM computers are only to be used for UCM related work. They are not for purchase of personal items or browsing.



In order to maintain security, UCM specifically prohibits staff and volunteers from participating in non-work related chat rooms and from downloading personal files. UCM retains the right to monitor, block, or log Internet usage by volunteers. **Email that is sent or received on a UCM computer is considered to be the property of UCM and subject to its moderation.** Volunteers are not allowed to send emails on behalf of UCM without permission from their supervisor. Language used in e-mails sent from UCM workplaces should not be likely to offend readers.

Work Product: All supplies, materials and work product(s) of a volunteer shall remain the property of United Community Ministries, Inc. after resignation, discharge or layoff of the employee or volunteer. The employee or volunteer may retain any personal files, but work files and other papers shall remain with United Community Ministries, Inc.

Use of Photographs: UCM will not use any agency materials in public presentations without their express and written permission. While performing community service at UCM, volunteers may not take photographs of participants without permission from supervisors and the participants.

Cell Phones: In order to maximize each volunteer's experience, repeated use of cell phones and other personal communication devices is prohibited. Except in an emergency, such communication must be done during breaks and lunch time. Additionally, we ask that personal conversations be done away from the work area and in a manner that will not disturb other staff and volunteers.

Harassment: Harassment is a concern for everyone and we share a responsibility to maintain a harassment-free workplace. All of UCM's supervisors, employees and volunteers must create and maintain a work environment where everyone is treated professionally and with dignity and respect.

UCM strictly prohibits the use or abuse of official authority or position to intimidate, coerce, or harass. Harassing conduct includes but is not limited to: actual or threatened assault including hitting, tripping, kicking, punching or unwanted touching; malicious or insulting gestures; unwelcomed verbal remarks, jokes, innuendos or taunts causing offense or embarrassment; and name calling, swearing, bullying, expressing or insinuating threats, incessant teasing, wolf whistling, or the spreading of rumors.

Sexual Harassment: Inappropriate conduct includes verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as physical contact including, but not limited to:

- Sexual gestures or comments such as slurs, jokes, suggestions, or conversations containing sexually explicit comments.
- Unwelcome sexual flirtation or advances.
- Repeated requests for dates, requests for sexual favors, or requests for sexual activity in exchange for favorable treatment or continued employment or community service opportunity.
- Inappropriate materials with sexual connotations such as posters, magazines, cartoons, screen savers or clothing of any type.
- Inappropriate contact such as unnecessary, unwanted, or unsolicited touching, patting, pinching, hugging, grabbing, cornering, or repeated brushing against someone's body.

Anyone who believes he/she has been harassed should discuss this with a supervisor and immediately report it to the Human Resources Department to either the Director of Human Resources (703)768-7106 ext 302 or to the Human Resources Assistant (703)768-7106 ext 340, or to the Executive Director.

Medical Coverage

Should a volunteer require medical treatment as a direct result of his/her volunteer activities, UCM provides an Excess Coverage policy. This means that with any medical expense, the volunteer's personal health insurance coverage would be the primary coverage and UCM's Excess Coverage policy would pay towards any unpaid portion of the medical cost that the volunteer's primary coverage did not pay. Volunteers are not eligible to be covered under UCM's Worker's Compensation coverage. Each volunteer is expected and encouraged to obtain his or her own medical or health insurance coverage.

Photographic Release

Each volunteer does hereby grant and convey, unless specifically objected to noted by the volunteer to UCM's Volunteer Coordinator, all right, title and interest in any and all photographic images, video and audio recordings made by United Community Ministries, Inc. during the volunteer's activities with UCM including, but not limited to any royalties, proceeds, or other benefits derived from such photographs or recordings.

Need to Know – BEL Center

VISION

To provide families a nurturing early care and learning environment that is child-centered and focused on holistically preparing children for lifelong learning.

PHILOSOPHY

At the Bryant Early Learning (BEL) Center, we believe in a holistic approach to education. We believe in nurturing and supporting the cognitive, social, emotional, physical, independent, and creative development of a child. Our goal is to provide a stimulating, developmentally appropriate, safe, nurturing, and creative environment in which our children thrive. Our teachers and staff are extremely dedicated, enthusiastic, and energetic individuals, who make learning and play come to life.

It is our belief that to fully support our children, there must be collaboration among families, teachers, staff, and the community. When we all work together, we build a strong foundation for our children's futures.

ETHICS

All staff members are required to thoroughly review the following National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) position statement (copy to be provided) regarding ethics (included in the staff handbook) and sign the related acknowledgement statement form. Staff members are also expected to be familiar with the NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP).

According to the NAEYC, "The Statement of Commitment is not part of the Code but is a personal acknowledgement of the individual's willingness to embrace the distinctive values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood care and education. It is recognition of the moral obligations that lead to an individual becoming part of the profession."

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

The Bryant Early Learning Center is required to have the following items on file for volunteers prior to their first day of assignment:

- Tuberculosis Screening
- Resume
- Adult Volunteer Application
- Signed copy of Volunteer Guidelines
- Age verification/copy of driver license or valid govt. issued ID w/birth date (volunteers must be at least 18 years old)
- Signed Sworn Disclosure Statement
- CPS registry release of information (returned record)
- Criminal History Record (returned record)
- At least 2 references
- Any educational records (degree, diploma, certifications, training, etc.)

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

“As an individual who works with young children, I commit myself to furthering the values of early childhood education as they are reflected to the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. To the best of my ability I will;

- Never harm children
- Ensure that programs for young children are based on current knowledge and research of child development and early childhood education.
- Respect and support families in their task of nurturing children.
- Respect colleagues in early childhood care and education and support them in maintaining the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.
- Serve as an advocate for children, their families, and their teachers in community and society.
- Maintain high standards of professional conduct.
- Engage in an ongoing process of self-reflection, realizing that personal characteristics, biases, and beliefs have an impact on children and families.
- Be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from the suggestions of others.
- Continue to learn, grow, and contribute as a professional.
- Honor the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.”

CONFIDENTIALITY

Because the staff at the BEL Center works as a team, all observations and other assessment data may be shared with all staff members. Information about family situations, special needs, and other sensitive issues is shared on an as needed basis. Other adults working within the center are only informed of such sensitive issues when they are a part of keeping the child safe or supporting the child’s inclusion.

We have zero tolerance regarding gossip in the work place. Employee’s personal problems should not be discussed at work. Discussions in the center regarding children, parents, or co-workers should be positive, work-related and shared only with those who need to know.

In accordance with licensing guidelines, official written records for each child are kept in files in locked cabinets within the center. These files include enrollment forms, health assessments, and results of health screenings, incident reports, individual education plans, and other related

documentation. All conversations held with parents will pertain to only their child and will not include the names of other children to avoid violating confidentiality or engaging in gossip.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The BEL Center provides care and early learning to all. The BEL Center expressly prohibits any form of harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, handicap, or disability. Improper interference with the ability of a child to develop and thrive is not tolerated.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The BEL Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Children must arrive by 10:00 am or by 12:00 pm with a doctor's note and must be picked up within 10.5 hours of arrival. We do not provide part-time, before school or after school care.

Need to Know –WORK Center (WC)

UCM's Work Center office hours are Monday-Friday, - 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.

If you have questions about your volunteer position with WDC, please contact the Service Coordinator at: 703-360-9088 ext 200.

UCM's Work Center offers job counseling, training, and placement to residents of the Mount Vernon, Lee, and Springfield districts [South Fairfax County].

Primary location:

Work Center Office Location Effective – 8305 Richmond Hwy., Suite 4A, Alexandria, VA 22309 (Mt. Zephyr Business Center)
(703) 360-9088 Ext. 200

English as Second Language (ESL) Volunteer Instructors

- Use the instructional materials that are provided to teach groups as large as 20 students
- Be patient and compassionate when working with students, realizing that they may not be literate in their native language
- Administer Pre and Post proficiency tests to track progress

Front Desk/Clerical Volunteers

- Answer phone calls and respond to questions or transfer caller to the right person as appropriate
- Put files away, make copies, help clients fill out registration forms, enter service codes into database and perform other tasks as necessary in the front desk area
- Monitor the computer lab by ensuring computer lab rules and regulations are being followed

Volunteer Computer Instructors

- Use knowledge of MS Office Programs to teach groups as large as eight students
- Curriculum materials will be provided by the Work Center Manager.

- Administer Pre and Post tests to track progress
- Be patient and compassionate when working with clients

Thank You: By accepting your volunteer assignment, you have taken the step to make a difference in the lives of others in the community. Thank you for taking the time to familiarize yourself with this handbook.

Evacuation and Emergency Procedures

The Managers at each of the volunteer location will provide information pertaining to emergency procedures and emergency evacuation. Floor plans that include exit locations are provided in Appendix A. Please be certain to review the building layout and the emergency exits as part of your orientation discussion with your on site supervisor.

Thank You

By accepting your volunteer assignment, you have taken the step to make a difference in the lives of our neighbors in need here in our community. Thank you for taking the time to familiarize yourself with this handbook. Please fee free to ask any questions or to seek clarification on any aspect of your volunteer experience.

I have read and understand the policies contained in this volunteer handbook.

Last Name, First, Initial	Signature	Date
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Note: If volunteer is a minor, a parent or legal guardian must also sign below:

Last Name, First, Initial	Signature	Date
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Castillo, Marcos A. UCM's Volunteer & Community Relations Coordinator	Signature	Date
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The volunteer assignment for a minor will be in a non-hazardous environment and will comply with all appropriate requirements of the child labor laws. There will be adult supervision of all volunteers who are under the age of 18.